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## Conservation Project Reaches Milestone

In 1992 a project was launched to conserve the Roylean herbarium held at Liverpool Museum. John Forbes Royle amassed the core of the collection between 1823 and 1831 when he was superintendent of the Saharanpur Botanic Garden in India. There are also examples of material from as early as the 1760's. Most of the specimens were gathered in the Himalayas but later Royle added plants from South Africa, Siberia and Chile.

Royle's widow donated the herbarium to the Liverpool Royal Institution after his death in 1859. However, it was effectively lost to science until it was rediscovered among the remnants of the Institution's museum in 1952. In the 1990's it was decided to launch two projects to conserve and document this important historical collection.

The collection was in a very poor state. Conservators from the Paper Section of NMG and curators collaborated to arrive at a method in which to proceed with the project. This successfully combined the knowledge and standards of paper conservation with the techniques of plant mounters and the requirements for use by researchers.

At the outset of the project it was thought that there was a possible 100 Type specimens within the collection. After intensive re-curation, following conservation, it is now estimated to contain over 600.

In the first week of September this year the 10,000th specimen was conserved (the collection possibly contains 13,000) by Aileen Collis, Assistant Conservator. To celebrate this milestone an event was organised to re-unite all the staff, past and present, who have worked as Conservators or Curators on the collection. The local press were invited to view the 10,000th specimen (*Cyperus corymbosus*) along with other parts of the collection.

Details of the methods used in this project can be found in:

Walker, N. & Hughes, D. (1994) *The Royle Herbarium - a Conservation Approach*, in Child, B. (ed) *Conservation and the Herbarium. The Institute of Paper Conservation*: Leigh. ISBN 0 9507268 6 9



*All staff past and present, conservators and curators, who have been involved either on the conservation or documentation project, got together to mark the event.*

*Pictured left to right are: Leander Wolstenholme, Claire Smith, John Edmondson, Angus Gunn, Aileen Collis, Nicola Walker, Donna Hughes and Carrie Cotgrove.*