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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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in the EDIT and INDEX sub-programs which have been ignored for the purposes of this comparison, as it is intended to eradicate them in the near future.

FAMULUS is currently upper-case only at Manchester and because of the complications involved in a upper and lower case implementation, Manchester GOS initially also would be in upper case only.

For both packages, however, it is relatively simple to convert some outputs from the package so they can be printed in upper and lower case, ie., a "cosmetic" job.

Charles Pettitt  
Manchester Museum

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#### THE BOTANICAL COLLECTIONS AT DERBY MUSEUM

The Derby Town and County Museum was founded in 1836. It was a private Society originally but in 1870 the collections were transferred to the Borough of Derby and were finally housed in the present building in the Wardwick in 1876.

Alexander Croall was Librarian and Curator from 1864 until 1873, and was a botanist of some repute, but sadly he does not appear to have contributed to the botanical collections, and we have no records of botanical specimens acquired by the Museum until 1878.

In 1889 the Rev. W. H. Painter published "A Contribution to the Flora of Derbyshire" followed by 'A Supplement to a Contribution to the Flora of Derbyshire including a list of mosses found in the county', 1902. His collections given to the Museum support many of the records in these publications, see below.

"The Flora of Derbyshire", by William Richardson Linton was published in 1903, and much of his herbarium is now in the collections of the Merseyside County Museums in Liverpool. There are only a few plants collected by him in the Gibbs Herbarium at Derby.

In 1949 a committee of local botanists was formed to work on a revision of Linton's Flora. A. L. Thorpe, Curator of Derby Museum from 1942-1971, was one of the members and in 1968, "The Flora of Derbyshire", ed. A. R. Clapham was published. Subsequent recording stimulated by this publication necessitated 'a Supplement to the Flora of Derbyshire', in 1974. Many recent specimens in the Herbarium support records for these publications.

## The Herbarium

### Vascular Plants

There are four main collections:

#### Rev. William Hunt Painter 1835-1910

1878 Derbyshire Herbarium. The catalogue entry states '29 Folio Volumes', a later entry, now known to refer to the Whittaker Collection, but erroneously added to this entry. Painter subsequently donated more than 340 sheets between 1880 and 1891. The collection is combined with the others in the Herbarium and is estimated at 1,350 sheets. In his Supplement to the Flora of Derbyshire, Painter states that 'Specimens of nearly all the plants recorded in my 'Contribution', and in the following 'Notes', have been placed in the Derby Museum, ''.

#### John Whittaker 1823-1894

1894 This collection of 2,200 sheets is bound in 29 volumes, and having been catalogued, is being incorporated with the Herbarium, as the specimens are in danger of damage when the books are opened.

The earliest specimen is 1807 but most were collected between 1830-70. All British, many from Breadsall, nr. Derby, and a fair proportion collected by H. H. Crewe, another local botanist.

Many specimens are vouchers for records contributed by Whittaker to the Floras of Linton and Painter.

#### Rev. Canon Edmund Carr 1826-?1916

1916 Herbarium, approx. 1,350 sheets. British with only a small proportion of Derbyshire specimens, some of which support Carr's records contributed to Painter's Flora.

#### Thomas Gibbs 1865-1919

1919 British Herbarium, approx. 2,000 sheets. A high proportion is Derbyshire material, some being voucher specimens of Gibbs records contributed to the Derbyshire Flora by Linton.

Since 1968 a further 700 sheets have been added to the collection by local botanists, principally the County Recorder.

Recently the Rubus specimens have been checked by A. Newton.

### Bryophytes

- c.1960                      The collection made by F. Crosland contains approx. 560 species, of which 300 are Derbyshire specimens, the remainder British. Collected between 1910-50.
- There are also two Victorian collections perhaps of historical interest, 'Mosses of Derbyshire', and 'Ferns & Mosses of Derbyshire' in bound, printed volumes which may have been produced in some quantity. There is no locality data with the specimens.
- 1916                      Another volume, "The Sphagnaceae or Peat Mosses of Europe and America" by R. Braithwaite, 1877, was given as part of the Carr Herbarium. Approx. 80 species.

### Algae

- 1919                      33 species. British, collected 1860's. Miss J. Clark
- 1929                      8 volumes, probably all collected by C. E. Hurt, mid 19th century. Approx. 450 specimens. British and specimens from Labrador and Jersey.
- 1966                      40 species. N. Wales. S. Herriott.
- 1882                      Another small folder is probably commercially produced and of historical interest. Ferns, Mosses and Seaweeds of New Zealand. Those dated were collected in 1860.

### Fungi

- 1969                      200 freeze dried specimens, duplicates from the D. A. L. Davies Collection. See B. C. G. Vol. 2, no. 2, p. 66.

Data associated with the Herbarium includes the original records for Clapham's Flora of Derbyshire, on foolscap sheets, and subsequent records of Derbyshire plants stored on standard 8" x 5" index cards.

Botanical site records are housed separately and cover a large number of sites in the county. There is also a considerable amount of historical information relating to local botanists, and perhaps another collection should be included here, 180 herb and spice samples collected as a record

of the stock of local Medical Botanist, A. R. S. Proctor, the fittings of whose shop were acquired by the Museum after his death in 1971.

Sue Patrick  
Derby Museum

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THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS A SOURCE OF BIOLOGICAL RECORDS -  
THE NORTH EAST EXPERIENCE

Unfortunately the majority of biologists working in museums do not have sufficient time or opportunity to spend on field recording, the luxury of days spent in the field now being largely the prerogative of STEP (formerly JCP) assistants - indeed a useful means of distinguishing permanent and temporary staff in an examination of skin pigment in September. However, the boom in 'leisure' and ready access to the countryside has resulted in many more people making contact with the natural environment and discovering their local wildlife. One would imagine that here is an extremely useful source of information if only it can be tapped in a way which will yield meaningful results. Natural History curators in north east England meet on a regular basis as the 'Natural History Panel' of Museums North (the N. E. equivalent of Federations) and have tried to obtain biological records from the general public in the form of three regional surveys (amphibia, squirrels and the hedgehog) carried out since 1975. The following notes are a brief examination of the ways in which the surveys were conducted, the problems encountered and the value of the results.

First choose your animal...

The choice of subject is arguably the most difficult decision to be taken, and a number of criteria need to be met:-

1. Is the animal large enough to be seen, or if small is it conspicuous?
2. Is the species relatively common?
3. Is the animal comparatively easy to recognise?

In other words there is little point in asking a non-biologist to look out for a species there is little chance of seeing or which he cannot identify.

4. Has the animal got 'public appeal'? (a cuddly, furry animal is much more likely to solicit a response)
5. Is there an interest angle? (An absolute essential for publicity)