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THE HERBARIA AT BANKFIELD MUSEUM, HALIFAX (HFV)

The herbaria at Bankfield Museum, Halifax have almost entirely been added since 1970. The present collections are the result of a vigorous collecting policy and several generous donations. For many years, several important 19th century herbaria (including those of S. Gibson, S. King and R. Leyland) were housed at Belle Vue Museum, Halifax (the home of all the Natural History collections before their transference to Bankfield Museum in 1964). I have not been able to find out what happened to these herbaria, or when, but I strongly suspect that they were thoughtlessly destroyed some time prior to 1964. If this is so, then Gibson's type specimens no longer exist. Fortunately, there are some duplicates of Gibson's types in the Babington herbarium at the Botany School, Cambridge, and at least one of these (Hieracium hypochaeroides Gibs.) has since been selected as a lectotype.

Since 1970 I have endeavoured to build up the collections once again, with particular local bias. My main interest has been in lichens, but we now also have substantial collections of bryophytes and fungi and a small collection of vascular plants. Details of all these collections are as follows:-

(1) Lichens

This herbarium consists at the present time of some 3,300 packets, although many further specimens are still being studied and will subsequently be added. All but a very few of these specimens have been collected from the British Isles over a period of eight years. There are some 1400 or so lichen species in the British Isles and our herbarium contains nearly half of these. The herbarium is particularly strong in Yorkshire specimens (335 different species) and also in specimens from the Isle of Man, Huntingdonshire and Scotland (the latter mainly collected by my assistant P. R. Stewart). At present we have no types, although several species were first British/European records when found. A number of specimens have been or are to be cited in various publications. Several species being studied at the present time are thought to be new to science. The genera Lecanora and Lepraria are particularly well represented in the herbarium. The lichen herbarium is the only major modern lichen collection housed in a public museum in northern England, and is available for study, either by personal visit to the museum or by postal loan, to all serious students and researchers.

(2) Fungi

The fungus herbarium has mainly been built up since 1973 and consists of 400 packets of collected material together with c.100 packets of donated material. The collected material is nearly all from Yorkshire and includes examples of most groups, although being particularly strong in

members of the Ascomycetes. We have recently (1978) had a donation of c.100 packets of fungi from the University of Leeds. This collection consists mainly of members of the Aphyllophorales and was collected by Dr. J. D. Lovis in the early 1960s. The majority of the specimens are from Yorkshire.

(3) Algae

This is a small collection of 13 sheets of marine algae collected by my predecessor, Mr. R. Penrose, from Filey, Yorkshire in 1966 and 1967.

(4) Bryophytes

In 1974, Bankfield Museum was donated a major plant collection by the Hebden Bridge Literary and Scientific Society. The bulk of this collection consisted of bryophytes collected by two local men, namely James Needham (1849-1913) and William Sutcliffe. The Needham collection consists of 448 packets of bryophytes from all parts of the British Isles. These were mainly collected by Needham between 1880 and 1910, but there are a few earlier specimens collected by John Nowell in the 1850s and the 1860s. Although Needham was a well-known botanist, I have been unable to find any information of William Sutcliffe, except that he lived at Slack, near Heptonstall (VC 63). There are c. 500 packets of bryophytes in Sutcliffe's herbarium and these were mainly collected in the 1850s and 1860s. A large percentage of these specimens were collected locally. Some of the bryophytes were collected by well-known bryologists of the day e.g. W. Wilson, Dr. J. B. Wood, H. Boswell etc., but I think it likely that these came to Sutcliffe via John Nowell. There is no mention of Sutcliffe in "The Flora of the Parish of Halifax" (Crump and Crossland, 1904) which is very strange indeed. Sutcliffe's herbarium is at present being thoroughly checked by Mr. T. Blockeel with the view to publishing the information in the near future.

In 1972, Mr. F. Murgatroyd presented us with a bryophyte collection made by another local man, Harold Walsh (1881 - 1962). There are 415 packets in this collection with 141 of these being from the Halifax region. The collection was made between 1940 and 1950. In 1978, Mr. G. Shaw of Leeds University donated to us a small collection (18) of bryological slides also made by Harold Walsh. In recent years, I have also added a small number of Yorkshire bryophytes to the herbarium.

(5) Vascular Plants

As well as presenting us with bryological herbaria the Hebden Bridge Literary and Scientific Society also donated a small collection of vascular plants. These were mainly collected by John Dewhurst and total 168 sheets of specimens. They were collected between 1870 and 1903 and are principally

from Yorkshire (the rest being mainly from Lancashire and North Wales). A few specimens were collected by James Needham.

While searching in vain for the herbaria of King, Gibson and Leyland in the attics of the old Belle Vue Museum I did find a single small collection of vascular plants. These were presented to the museum by a Colonel Akroyd and were collected by numerous people, in particular by J. Ward, and also by such eminent botanists as Dr. Hooker. There are 81 sheets in all, mainly dating from 1821 to 1841 and being from all parts of the British Isles, with only 13 sheets of local specimens. A further folder with 9 sheets of plants collected between 1852 and 1868 was also found. These specimens were all collected from the Halifax area but bear no collectors name.

Finally, we have a small collection of vascular plants made in 1966 and 1967 by my predecessor, Mr. R. Penrose. There are 76 sheets of vascular plants all of which are from the Halifax region. I hope to be able to continue and enlarge this collection in the future.

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Calderdale Museums Service, Halifax.

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STORAGE OF MOUNTED BIRDS AND MAMMALS (Bradford Museums)

The problems faced in Bradford in 1974 were:-

1. two museums' collections of mainly British mounted birds and mammals (nothing larger than a swan or fox) to be amalgamated and safely stored for future use. Many specimens were already uncased; others needed rescuing from cases in poor condition; and some were in better cases, sound or repairable and fit for future display.
2. storage space in various sized, irregularly shaped rooms on the first floor of a former workhouse, without a lift, and with many windows, poor insulation, bare floor-boards, and central heating pipes and radiators round most walls.
3. no written record or catalogue for many of the specimens.
4. a need for mounts to be readily available for temporary exhibitions in three museum buildings.
5. a need to sort through all existing material to determine its future.