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THE F. R. WOODWARD COLLECTION OF FRESHWATER
BIVALVES (MOLLUSCA; LAMELLIBRANCHIA: UNIONACEA).

The collection, consisting of dry shells and preserved animals of recent species plus some fossil material, together with an extensive library of Molluscan books and reprints, specially rich in papers on Unionidae, was presented to Tyne and Wear Museums in 1977.

The fossil material includes remnants of specimens used in the preparation of a monograph of British Tertiary Unionidae, together with Mesozoic material accumulated for a proposed monograph of British Mesozoic Unionidae. It includes paratypes of Unio cumberlandi Woodward and Unio andersoni Hudson. (The bulk of the Tertiary Unionid material was presented to the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow in 1969, whilst the holotype of Unio cumberlandi is in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, paratypes being in Liverpool, Hunterian, Tyne and Wear County Museums Service and the British Museum).

The recent collection consisting of over 5,000 specimens, contains a considerable number of types, figured and cited specimens including a large proportion of the material upon which the Revision of the freshwater bivalves of Lake Nyassa was based, further material being in the possession of T. Pain and T.E. Crowley. It has been built up since 1956 by purchase and exchange and includes material from the collections of H.H. Bloomer, P.T. Deakin, H.H. Overton, J. Linton, A.E. Salisbury (including a large proportion of the stock formerly belonging to the dealers Sowerby and Fulton), H. Genge, Stelfox, etc.

Also many additions have been obtained from correspondents abroad, including the remnants of Carlos J. Risso Dominguez collection of Unionids from the area around Buenos Aires, a formerly rich molluscan area but now virtually barren due to pollution. (A larger collection was presented by Carlos J. Risso Dominguez to the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard, soon after the war). Other workers providing material in recent years include Fritz Haas, S.P. Dance, L.W. Stratton, A.H. Clarke (Junior), Dick Dell, Major Earle, T. Pain, T. Crowley, D. McMichael, D. Stansberry, R. Brandt, Dr. Bonnetto, J. Knudsen, R.I. Johnson and Mahomed el Noir.

Amongst the more historically important material mention should be made of an example of Pleiodon McMurtrie Conrad, 1834, TWCMS: B11767 (= Pleiodon ovatus (Swainson, 1823)), believed to have belonged to Mrs. Corrie of Birmingham and possibly sent her by Conrad. In the 1830's she was reputed as having probably the finest collection of Unionidae in Europe and Isaac Lea made her acquaintance

during a visit to Europe resulting in his naming Unio corrianus Lea, 1834 (= Lamellidens marginalis (Lamarck) in her honour. The collection also includes specimens from Isaac Lea, J. G. Anthony, Hugh Cuming and others, and is still being actively added to. It is hoped that at a future date a more comprehensive history of the collection can be published, together with a list of all type, figured and cited specimens.

Fred Woodward
South Shields Museum

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COLLECTIONS RESEARCH IN NORTH EAST ENGLAND

The need for research into the location and condition of named collections in the natural sciences has been explained admirably by Geoffrey Hancock (1977, 1978a, 1978b), in describing the origins and function of the North West Collections Research Unit (NWCRU). The achievements of NWCRU are remarkable, raising collections from obscurity and making 'rescue' operations feasible. The lead taken by curators in the north west has been followed by those in the north east - an area defined as the counties of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Cleveland, and equivalent to the area covered by the North of England Museums Service.

North East England is a fairly compact unit, with the major museums being located in the industrial zones of Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. There are at least 8 museums with natural science collections, but only two of these (the Hancock Museum and Sunderland Museum) have full-time curatorial staff with responsibility for biological and geological specimens. There are a number of smaller (and remote) museums - Berwick for example - many private collections (Wallington Hall, Craggside), and two major Universities housing collections. Obviously a great deal of potential for collections research! Two factors acted as a catalyst to the development of the work now in progress. Firstly, the regular meetings of the Natural History Panel of Museums North - a potential 'collections unit' in all bar name, and secondly the presence of NUMAC (Northern Universities Multiple Access Computer) and the proven ability of the available package SPIRES (Stamford Public Information and Retrieval