



NatSCA

Natural Sciences Collections Association

<http://www.natsca.org>

Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: National Butterfly Museum - or is it?

Author(s): Not Listed.

Source: Not Listed. (1982). National Butterfly Museum - or is it?. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter*, Vol 3 No 2, 125.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1471>

NatSCA supports open access publication as part of its mission is to promote and support natural science collections. NatSCA uses the Creative Commons Attribution License (CCAL) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/> for all works we publish. Under CCAL authors retain ownership of the copyright for their article, but authors allow anyone to download, reuse, reprint, modify, distribute, and/or copy articles in NatSCA publications, so long as the original authors and source are cited.

National Butterfly Museum - or is it?

Is this operation a "National Museum of Butterflies" or a simple commercial operation disguised by words such as "curator" and "museum"? If the latter, then what advantage would this confer on a business for profit? As a matter of semantics it cannot be objected to legally. This is unfortunate, as has been pointed out in similar cases before, because although there is nothing wrong with "National" by itself, in conjunction with "museum" it means something other than private enterprise.

The image of museums in the eyes of the public is particularly at threat in this case. Most curators will have had visitors wishing to buy specimens obviously under misapprehensions as to the function of a museum. The National Butterfly Museum, however, it appears from its own publicity and advertisements, is the place to go specifically to buy insects. What ethical problems arise if a collector leaves his life's work to the N.B.M. thinking that it is a "museum" and the rarities are sold off to pay for the central heating costs? None, of course, because it is not a publicly accountable museum and can do anything. Further confusion is added because there is already a National Museum of Natural History with one of the world's biggest collections of butterflies. (With the National Motor Museum there was no competition and respectability was conferred with central government blessing after a period of time; no doubt being a peer of the realm helped). There is also the National collection of Lepidoptera, being the amalgamation of the Rothschild/Cockayne/Kettlewell collections in South Kensington.

The inescapable conclusion is that this concern in West Sussex is using its title to give a certain status to its activities by using the word 'museum' in a way which the majority of curators would like to see strictly controlled. This control can only be achieved by supporting the Museums Association in its efforts over a broad front and especially through the new Museums and Galleries Commission. Private institutions can be excellent museums and, of course, some public museums are appalling. What is needed is a working system of accrediting museums, a legal definition of the word and this will only be achieved when our profession shouts loudly enough with a united voice.

BUTTERFLIES
© The National Butterfly Museum, the best suppliers in the world. Send SAE for free literature to: National Butterfly Museum, Steyning, Sussex, BN15 1JH. Tel: 0903 813158. P. 51

ST. MARY'S AND THE NATIONAL BUTTERFLY MUSEUM, BRAMBER, NEAR STEYNING, WEST SUSSEX, BN4 3WE, ENGLAND. Telephone: Steyning (0903) 813158

The National Butterfly Museum (formerly The Saruman Museum) is Britain's only museum devoted to entomology and is independent. Funds for the museum are raised in part from the supply of specimens, equipment, books, photographs etc., to other museums, university departments, schools and private collectors worldwide - a service that has operated since 1970.

TERMS OF BUSINESS

Orders must be PRE-PAID and on the official order forms provided. Cheques and postal orders should be made out to 'St. Mary's'.

Specimens are supplied in two ways:

- with the wings folded in a triangular paper envelope - these are relaxed and set (see opposite). UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED (for mounted specimens) ALL SPECIMENS LISTED ARE OFFERED PAPERED. If you require SET SPECIMENS 25p per specimen should be added to the price (including postage and VAT).

and no ...
virginiensis ...
L. and a series of extreme ...
he took himself. The remarkable ... collection on entomological pins, supplied ...
Copper which he took at Wembury Point in ... of mounted specimens necessitates ...
Museum (Natural History) but the remainder of this collection of these are higher.
sold in 1975 and is in the National Butterfly Museum at Bramber ...
Afterwards he formed another collection of butterflies, ...
and arranged and containing some fine vars. taken