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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Houbara or MacQueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata macqueenii*

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sometimes all that is known is the surname of a person whose collection was destroyed by fire many decades ago. All the information is grist to the mill, however small, but if nothing else is known, or can be readily discovered, then it cannot be invented.

The only way a new edition of British and Irish Herbaria can be more comprehensive than the data base at Manchester is for under-represented (i.e. under-manned) museums to be visited by willing and competent botanists with an extensive knowledge of the history of the subject and the biographies of the men who made the collections. Obviously a small number of people, on a voluntary basis, are going to be extremely busy and expend not a little money travelling around the British Isles. Perhaps even this could only be achieved in an ideal world. Let us hope not, for the effort necessary to make this BSBI project as complete as it ought to be will be of enormous benefit to the scientific community. If only there could be about twenty peripatetic David Allen's who could visit every little museum basement, library attic and open every school room cupboard.....

Houbara or MacQueen's Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata macqueeni*

Four British records are quoted for this species in the Handbook of British Birds by Witherby, etc. Are any of these specimens in your collection?

Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincs. Oct. 1847
Redcar, Yorks (ad. male) 5 Oct. 1892
Spurn, Yorks (male) 17 Oct. 1896
St. Fergus, Aberdeen (female) 24 Oct. 1898

There is a fine bird in a private collection in Warwickshire, mounted by Henry Shaw of High Street, Shrewsbury (therefore presumably c.1890), but without further details. It is most probably of foreign origin, but just might be the second bird above.

Information on these or any others would be of great interest.

Mrs. Pam Copson,
Warwickshire Museum,
Market Place, Warwick.

The Butterflies and Moths of Shropshire

by Adrian M. Riley, published by Shropshire County Museums, 1981, 24 pp.

This is a list of the macrolepidoptera of the county of Salop with an asterisk system for indicating relative abundance of records. There is, however, no discussion as to why some species are less frequently recorded than others. No information is given on the methods of sampling although collections have been consulted, from those of local lepidopterists still in private hands up to the BM(NH).

Only records since 1965 have been included so that an up-to-date picture is presented to compare with earlier efforts. This might also help encourage further recording to fill the gaps but geographical coverage is not indicated to assist in this. Copies are obtainable from John Norton, Ludlow Museum (no price given).