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Author(s): Mackenzie, F.

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UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY
CAMBRIDGE

TELEPHONE
CAMBRIDGE 58717 (STD Code 0223)

DOWNING STREET
CAMBRIDGE
CB2 3EJ

Steve Garland,
Editor, BCG
Bolton Museum
Le Mans Crescent,
Bolton

10.02.86.

Dear Steve,

I am seeking help with a technical problem and thought of approaching BCG members for suggestions. We use a large proportion of spirit specimens in our displays, and to this extent I suppose are unusual. It may be therefore that other people have not come across our problem, which is this:-

We make our own pots using glass sheets joined with Aquaseal, the aquarium sealer. This makes a neat, attractive job and has proved highly satisfactory. Just recently however we have discovered a snag with the lids of those pots containing alcohol, in our case the majority. The bodies of the pots cause no trouble because Aquaseal cures in (damp) air before the contents are inserted. The lids, however, must cure in the presence of alcohol vapour and this apparently inhibits them. The Aquaseal does not cure properly and the seal remains soft.

We have been experimenting with ways to prevent this. On the basis that Aquaseal only cures in the presence of water, we assumed that the alcohol was dehydrating the air so made efforts to introduce very damp air to the sealing pots. Unfortunately this did not help. Now we are trying to put a temporary cover over the alcohol using Clingfilm. This can be withdrawn from the pot after the lid is stuck down, through a 1/4 inch diameter hole left in the lid. This hole is sealed with a cover slip in the usual way. We have great hopes for this method and preliminary trials are encouraging. However we would be interested to know if any other members have a) come across this problem and b) whether they have found any alternative solutions or better sealants (preferably transparent).

I look forward to hearing from members about this or any other useful tips for curation and display of spirit specimens.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jennifer A Clack
Assistant Curator.