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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Book Review: An Atlas of the Carabidae (Ground Beetles) of Northumberland and Durham

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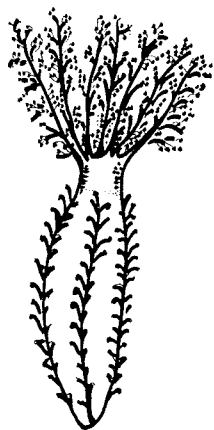
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chlorophyll in plants. It is one of the few solutions which does actually preserve the respiratory pigment and this can be confirmed by spectroscopic analysis.

On page 32 it is stated that freeze drying is not essential for sponges in the dry state. I would suggest that it is essential that freeze drying be carried out to maintain cellular integrity.



On page 37 the authors talk about the preservation of anemones in plastics and are unsure (from the source quoted) whether colour is preserved. The answer is that the colour will not be preserved because of the oxidation effect on the anemone tissues by the polymerising plastic. Freeze drying does preserve colours in coelenterates and they can be kept in plastic boxes or glass jars and can also be wax impregnated.

On page 70 the use of formol-acetic-acid is described carefully into the freshly killed lobster, taking care not to drip the reagent on to the exoskeleton, followed by drying in a warm dry cupboard after positioning will preserve the blue colour of the lobster and any other colour of selected crustacean so treated.

On page 146 reference is made to the microscopical preparation of insects and this is very well demonstrated. It is a pity that the same type of information is not available for the other invertebrate phyla. The authors do recognise this absence on page 3 of this volume.

On page 178 it is suggested that small amounts of liquid nitrogen be applied to a specimen to be positioned etc. On no account should any specimen come into contact with this liquified gas. The vapour only should be used. Failure to do this will result in cracks appearing in prepared specimens months or even years after treatment.

Chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13 are concerned with aspects of display, modelling and diorama preparation. Whether these methods are likely to be used or practiced by curatorial staff in museums to which these volumes seem to be directed is a matter of opinion. The sheer amount of information and illustrations are most attractively presented.

My comments in no way detract from the immense amount of work that has been carried out to produce these two volumes. Whether the price of £95.50 will inhibit the sale of such a work remains to be seen. I think that these two volumes have a place on the shelves on any Area Museums Service Library.

R.H. Harris

A note from Steve Garland (Bolton Museum) about the Ordnance Survey Gazeteer on microfiche.

Having recently purchased the Landranger Gazeteer and found it very useful I thought other BCG members may be interested. It is a set of 34 fiches containing an alphabetically listed, grid-referenced directory of all names appearing on the 204 1:50000 scale Landranger maps of Great Britain. Absolutely invaluable for finding those elusive one word locality names on old specimens. Price £80 + VAT from: Fixed Price Services, Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, Maybush, Southampton SO9 4DH.

AN ATLAS OF THE CARABIDAE (GROUND BEETLES) OF NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM

by M.D. Eyre, M.L. Luff and S.G. Ball

Northumberland Biological Records Centre, Special Publication No 2, 1986. The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne. Price £5.50 (inc p+p).

This atlas follows the Special Publication No 1 which dealt with water beetles. It is in the same A4 spiral-bound format and it maps by tetrads 114 of the 210 species listed in the text. It is somewhat difficult to read off the co-ordinates of the tetrads on the computer-printed maps, but excellent distribution patterns are shown due to the remarkably even coverage which has been achieved right across the two counties.

The text includes tetrad records of all non-mapped species (i.e. those recorded from less than ten squares) and post-1950 records are indicated by bold type, although the printing quality does not show this up well.

For anyone working on this beetle family the book provides one of the few available up-to-date assessments of status in northern England and is therefore invaluable. For Northumberland and Durham coleopterists the introduction, with its potted history of collectors, collecting and recording in the counties, is very important and should enable anyone new to the area to find quickly any papers and collections relevant to their studies.

Steve Garland
Bolton Museum and Art Gallery