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BOOK REVIEW

British and Irish Herbaria. An index to the location of herbaria of British and Irish vascular plants.

by D.H. Kent and D.E. Allen.

120 x 180mm, 333pp. London (Botanical Society of the British Isles): 1984. £12. ISBN 0 901158 05 4.

This book is a new and much enlarged edition of D.H. Kent's earlier work, British Herbaria, published by the Botanical Society of the British Isles in 1958. It consists of eight chapters of which the main section (chapter 3 of 204 pages) is devoted to an index of collectors whose herbaria of British and Irish vascular plants are contained in British and Irish institutions. Some references are also made to overseas institutions. The other chapters include a list of the abbreviations of the names of institutions to which reference is made in the text, a list of privately owned herbaria, a classified index to the locations of collections with strong representation of local floras, a classified index to the location of collections of critical groups, genera and species, a list of universities, museums and other institutions which may possess herbaria and a bibliography.

To members of the B.C.G. it will prove an invaluable reference book. It is however, disappointing that the authors do not refer to the work of FENSCORE and it is to be hoped that the information contained in the work will be incorporated into the data base at the Manchester Museum. In view of the more extensive work B.C.G. members are carrying out in assembling data on collectors and collections the publication of British and Irish Herbaria serves as a timely reminder of what can be done in a remarkably short time by dedicated people.

The main section on collectors is particularly good with a wealth of associated detail. The conflict between botanist and museum curators concerning the use of abbreviations for institutions remains with the authors following Index Herbariorum. They make no reference to the Museum Documentation Association. Chapters giving indexes of collections with strong representation of local floras and critical groups are less satisfactory largely because the data is not readily available. When modern technology is more widely used in museums and herbaria information of this kind will be much more accessible.

In general, this is an excellent book and both authors and publishers are to be congratulated on publishing it.

E. F. Greenwood.