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William Hunter's Insect Collection and emerging descriptive taxonomy in the Eighteenth Century (NatSCA News, 4, 2004) - addition and Appendices
- E. G. Hancock, Hunterian Museum (Zoology), University of Glasgow

Since this article was written (Hancock, 2005) I have been able to visit London and examine some parts of Joseph Bank's collection in The Natural History Museum. It is now clear that Banks' collection contains many more specimens than the number given by Fitton & Shute (1994). The reason for this is that figure of just over 4,000 specimens is based on those which were laid out in the 1860s and at the time were listed in the accession records. These specimens were so treated at the time because they were perceived to be the possible types, mainly of Fabrician names. However, there are a number of other specimens that were left unsorted and generally remain so to the present time.

Using the Coleoptera as an example, Banks' collection contains c.1880 specimens laid out systematically with their original and other cabinet labels but there are about another 1800 specimens that have not been dealt with in this manner. Although it would be inadvisable to extrapolate from these figures across all the orders clearly Banks' collection is larger than I had believed. This is a more satisfactory situation as it did appear anomalous that his collection was smaller than William Hunter's unless significant losses had occurred with time.

I was able also to make an estimate of relative numbers of Banks' Tenebrionidae to compare with William Hunter's. No judgement has been applied to the accuracy for species identification or of the claimed type status. This is a simplistic attempt using a convenient example to gauge an impression of these two eighteenth century collections.

Number of Tenebrionidae species present: Banks, 50; Hunter, 74
 Number of specimens: Banks, 67 (plus 70 unidentified) 137; Hunter, 105*
 Possible types: Banks, 30; Hunter, 5

*It should be noted that all of Hunter's tenebrionids have recently been identified to species level by Dr Julio Ferrer (in July 2004) but before then 36 specimens had been un-named. If Banks' unidentified material were treated similarly his species total would obviously change.

Reference

- Fitton, M. & Shute, S. 1994. Sir Joseph Banks's collection of insects. (in *Sir Joseph Banks: a global perspective* (eds R.E.R. Banks *et al.*) Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 209-211.)
 Hancock, E.G. 2005. William Hunter's Insect Collection and emerging descriptive taxonomy in the Eighteenth Century. *Natural Sciences Collections Association News* **4**; 8-13.

Appendix 1

List of contents of Hunter's Insect Collection by group

Insecta

Ephemeroptera	8
Odonata	50
Plecoptera	8
Orthoptera	171
Phasmida	21
Dermaptera	10
Blattodea	46
Mantodea	34
Isoptera	1
Heteroptera	234
Homoptera	158
Neuroptera	40
Mecoptera	12
Lepidoptera	2855
Trichoptera	23

Diptera	270
Hymenoptera	991
Coleoptera	2639
Scorpionida	7
Amblypygi	3
Araneida	6
Myriapoda	8
Total	7599

Appendix 2

Collectors or contributors to Hunter's insect collection:

Joseph Banks, during Cook's first voyage (1768-1771); possibly material also present from his earlier voyage to Newfoundland in 1766.

Pierre-Marie-Auguste Broussonet (1761-1807), a Montpellier-based naturalist.

Dru Drury, specimens given or sold to Hunter by Drury at various times during their joint life time.

Johann Reinhold Forster; and/or son *Georg*, naturalists on Cook's second voyage.

John Fothergill (1712-1780), left his natural history collections to Hunter, for which documentation exists regarding the transfer of the important collection of Ellis & Solander corals at least. Insects are present, possibly being those with a small paper label on the pin simply with a capital 'F' but more research is needed to resolve matters concerning Fothergill specimens.

Edward Whitaker Gray (1748-1806), it is possible Hunter's collection contains material from a number of other contemporary acquaintances such as Gray

J. G. Koenig (1728-1785), mainly Madras, India.

Francis Masson, botanist commissioned by Banks to collect in South Africa.

Lady Monson, some specimens present (Gaonkar, pers.comm.)

David Nelson (died, 1789), botanist on Cook's third voyage, later to die after the mutiny on HMS Bounty, during which voyage he had been engaged to look after the breadfruit trees.

von Rohr, a West Indian collector.

Henry Smeathman (1742-1786), Sierra Leone, commissioned mainly by Drury, and also in the Caribbean.

Nils Samuel Swederus (1751-1833), some specimens possibly bearing labels in his handwriting
W. Wood, surgeon based in Philadelphia and a former pupil of Hunter's sent insects from Grenada and Rhode Island in 1778.

Thomas Pattison Yeats (died 1782), his collection was offered in its entirety to Hunter. This included other kinds of natural history specimens and man-made artefacts in addition to insects. Fabricius selected material from it on Hunter's behalf (Gaonkar, pers. comm.) who as a result paid Yeats' trustees a lesser sum. It is most probable that Fabricius would have picked out at least the specimens of those that he himself had described as new species. This proposition could be tested using Hunter's collection database, when completed, to check the names against the specimens. For many names this does indeed appear to be the case.

Names of collectors or at least suppliers of specimens for whom nothing is currently known. Should anyone recognise these names in the context of the period the Hunterian Museum would be keen to be contacted.

Bl. or *Blom.*, relates to a person called Blomfield, London-based but the specimens are from Canada

Coudarc / Couderc, based in or sent material from Surinam

Eaton, unknown

Hills, a person (?) based in Jamaica

Mrs R., Mrs Robinson, Antigua

Rae, based in Constantinople

Ryder / Ride, appears to have been based in Madeira

Sautier or *Santier*, specimens from Carolina (USA).

C. Yeats, sent material from 'Hispania'; possibly a relative of T. P. Yeats