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etc), and encouraging some of the well established members of our community to sit on it. It would have the aims of developing strategy, generating support, especially financially, and initiating action. To this end a report will be presented to MGC, who will hopefully be able to provide direct support for the working party. I hope to be able to bring further news before long.

Steve Thompson, Scunthorpe Museum

REVIEWS

CONSERVATION AND THE HERBARIUM - CONFERENCE REPORT.

"If an extreme caricature were to be painted between the attitudes of botanist and conservator, the conservator might be seen by the botanist as a come-lately to the field, ignorant of the 400 year tradition of botanical curation. The conservator might paint an equally black picture of the botanist as thoughtlessly following out-of-date practices without any understanding of conservation principles and modern methods." Angus Gunn, Conservation and the Herbarium Conference Report.

The Institute of Paper Conservation's conference took place at Liverpool Museum on 14th May 1993 (see BCG Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 2.). Its aim was to bring together botanists (i.e. curators/researchers) and conservators, both in terms of speakers and delegates, to air their views and experiences on a topic of common interest and so dispel any hint of the above stereotypes. Angus Gunn concluded his paper with a request for more dialogue and that is exactly what this report represents. 41 pages of curatorial points-of-view and conservational experiences introduced and edited by Bob Child (Head of Conservation, N.M.W.).

The order of papers in the report is at variance with that of the day and so, in keeping with this, this review pays attention to neither. There are two papers from Cardiff. Firstly, Bob Child's "Environmental and Pest Control in Herbaria" provides a marvellously comprehensive and yet succinct account of exactly what the title suggests while Vicky Purewal (conservation officer, N.M.W.) details how a wide range of conservational parameters and a variety of specimen material were combined to carry out a

"Collections' Condition Survey of Herbarium and Non-herbarium Material in the National Museum of Wales Botany Storerooms".

Curatorial perspectives are put forward by Angus Gunn (curator of the Extra-European Herbarium, N.M.G.M.) and Rob Huxley (Head of Curation Division, Department of Botany, N.H.M.). In "Past and Current Practices: The Botanist's View" Angus Gunn provides a brief history of herbarium methods and weighs up the need for information retrieval from the specimen versus their preservation, stating a museum fundamental - "herbarium specimens are collected to be used". Rob Huxley continues this theme in "Aspects of herbarium Conservation and Management at the Natural History Museum", identifying conflicts between use and conservation and describing his departments attempts to minimise these. Brief mention is also given here to a means of indicating the state of collections and identifying priorities for conservation by formatting data on specimen and label condition into a matrix.

The remaining three papers constitute case studies of ongoing conservation projects. Kate Edmondson (senior paper conservator, Kew) describes "The Conservation of Botanical Prints and Drawings at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew" through the establishment of the Preservation Unit, its consequent preservation programme to stabilise the collections and the particular hands-on conservation techniques employed. Returning to Liverpool, N.M.G.M.'s under-construction Conservation Centre heavily underlines its interest in developing conservational expertise. Two papers relating to current project serve to illustrate this. Firstly the conservation of one of Liverpool Museum's most important collections, the 10,500 strong Royle Herbarium, is described in detail (complete with photographs) by conservator Donna Hughes and senior paper conservator Nicola Walker. This exemplifies a joint project between the Paper Conservation and Botany Departments with the collection being simultaneously conserved and re-curated. Secondly, organics conservator, Tracey Seddon catalogues the range of equipment and materials (including saliva!) experimented with and ultimately used in the conservation of Liverpool Museum's mixed-media anatomical plant model collection. Two means of

transporting such large, and yet delicate, specimens are outlined.

Having read the report two things have stayed with me. Firstly, the balance, conciseness and readability of the papers and secondly, the amount of conservational equipment and material referred to, complete with lists of supplier addresses. My only question mark was to why the abstracts appeared at the end, and not at the beginning, of the papers.

The report (ISBN 0 9507 268 6 9) is available from The Institute of Paper Conservation, Leigh Lodge, Worcestershire, WR6 5LB priced £10.00 Members, £15.00 Non-members.

Mike Palmer, Natural History Centre, Liverpool Museum, NMGM.

CATALOGUE OF THE BRAMBLES OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND in the collections of the Liverpool Museum (LIV), by Michael Palmer, edited by John Edmondson. Published by the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside as Liverpool Museum Occasional Paper no.8 on 3 Nov.1994. Price £12.00 net (ISBN 0-906267-70-0). Copies available from NMGM Enterprises Ltd, PO Box 33, 127 Dale Street, Liverpool L69 3LA.

This publication is taken from a much more extensive computerised database of the *Rubus* collections at Liverpool Museum. However it is not merely a list of data extracted from specimens as it also includes additional information provided by a great many people.

The 223 species of bramble in the catalogue, whose collection dates span over 160 years, are arranged in alphabetical order and are brought up to date using classification from Edees & Newton (*Brambles of the British Isles*, Ray Society, 1988) and Kent (*List of Vascular Plants...*, BSBI, 1992). In advance of publication, confirmation and redetermination of specimens were made, notably by Edees and Newton who during preparation for their own publication, examined *Rubus* specimens in many herbaria, including Liverpool.

Geographical accuracy is also brought up to date with the addition of a National Grid Reference on each entry. These were all checked with the vice-county recorders of the Botanical Society of the British Isles, enabling about 40% of the specimens to be given grid references to an accuracy of 1km.