

Natural History Collections
Bioblitz Review

An Update

Jo Hatton & Russell Dornan



Overview

Aim

To improve our understanding of the collection leading to a strategy for its long-term development

Objectives

Develop a new review method using expert reviewers

Focus on highlighting the strengths and weaknesses

Share knowledge and experience

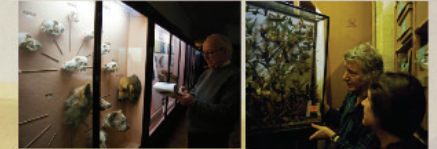
Involve different audiences and user groups to guide future use

Raise our profile & get collections online



Planning

Blitzing



Sharing

Drawer —

Box —

Aim

To improve our understanding of the collection leading to a strategy for its long-term development

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20-22 NOVEMBER 2013
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Comment
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Bioblitz!
Russell Dornan, 22.04.2013

How the Horniman is reviewing its collections in record time

Collection review methods can sometimes be daunting, complicated and unwieldy. As a result, implementing them and using the results can be difficult.



Sharing

Methodology

Data Capture

The process
The information
The recommendations



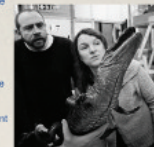
Sustainable

Actionable
No long reports
No complicated analysis
Quick, reliable results
Available to all



Post-Review

Scrutinise the collection as a whole
Solving unresolved issues
"Benchmarking" Stars and Deaccessions
Perspective: are we happy with the results?
Longer term collection development strategy
Disposal proposals



Staff | Audience | Mission

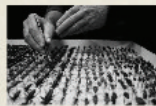
Transparent

Open/transparent with ourselves and reviewers
Want to hear what others think
Engaged with community groups openly
Informed the sector and public regularly in different ways



Application

Effective
Easy to grasp
Efficient
Easy to record



250,000 specimens looked at in some way over 25 days with 10 experts

Development

What else was out there?
Inspired by outdoor Bioblitzes
Reviewed the reviews

Expert reviewers
4 Criteria
Stars and Deaccessions
Bread and butter?



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Historic



Scientific



Public Engagement



Rarity/Uniqueness



4 Criteria

3 Star Grades

3 Star Grades



meets 2 criteria to a high standard



meets 2 or 3 criteria to a very high standard



meets 3 or 4 criteria to very high standard

Criteria	Definitions
Scientific	Is of international/national/regional taxonomic or other research importance; likely to have been cited/published.
Historic	Is associated with a known collector, maker, donor, locality, site, discovery, date, institution, etc. It supports social/cultural research in this area.
Rarity/Uniqueness	Is internationally/nationally/regionally important; is extinct or endangered species; rare in museum collections; from an important locality or site; has a high monetary value.
Public Engagement	Is iconic; aesthetically impressive (not always large); has a good story of national/international/regional interest; has good public engagement potential (e.g. display, learning, events / activities, publicity, enquiries, etc.).

Criteria	Definitions
Scientific	Has no traceable data; has little taxonomic or other potential for scientific research and is of limited value in this respect *
Historic	Has no specific traceable connection to collectors, other people, places and dates and is of limited value in supporting social/cultural research in this respect *
Rarity/Uniqueness	Is a common species and/or very frequently encountered in collections / the museum's own collection.
Public Engagement	Is poorly prepared or badly damaged; is not easily identified; has little other contextual information; has limited future potential for public use and engagement. May be H&S risk.

Historic



Scientific



Rarity/Uniqueness



Public Engagement



Deaccessions



Potential Destruction



Re-use

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Data Capture

The process
The information
The recommendations

Information
NH.Z.311
Kakapo
Strigops habroptila



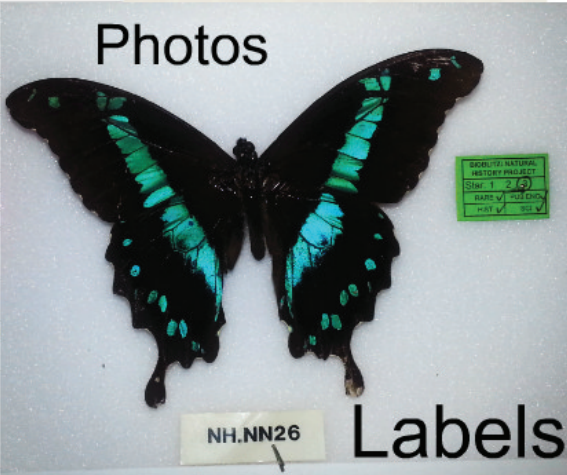
Links
Activities (5)
Authorities (5)
Other (2)

OBJECTS

- WholePart (0) WHOLE
- Collection Natural History: Zoology
- Group Vertebrates
- Category Birds
- Common Name (1) Kakapo
- Scientific Name (2) Strigops habroptila
- Higher Taxonomy Animalia; Chordata; Aves; Psittaciformes; Psittacidae; Strigops; Strigops habroptila
- Collection Name S. Prout Newcombe Collection
- Collector (0)
- Place Collected (1) New Zealand (Aotearoa), Polynasia, Ocosania
- Date Collected (1) before 1934
- Maker (0)
- Place Made (0)
- Geological Period / Date Made (0)
- Sex
- Age
- Stage
- Item Count (0) 1
- Specimens Form (1) taxidermy mount
- Portion
- Measurements (1) without mount: 420 mm x 270 mm x 190 mm
- Description (3) Taxidermy mount of Kakapo (Strigops habroptila).
- Inscriptions (0)
- Accessories (0)
- Note CITES Annex A, Appendix I (2011-01-17 PV), NH.61.17d
- Location Horniman Museum, Natural History Gallery
- Location Levels FH; 3/63; 1
- Location Date 2007-07-30
- Provenance (0)
- MultiFields (2)

* MultiField	* Value	DATE	USER
Bioblitz	1-star object	2013-01-24	Fuller, E
Bioblitz	checked in register	2013-07-19	

Photos



Labels

Database

Bioblitz Natural History Collections Review

Statement of Significance report

Group	Non-molluscan marine invertebrates	Reviewer	R N Bamber	Date of review	May 2013
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The non-molluscan marine invertebrate collections of the Horniman Museum were examined to determine whether they were of merit to the collections of the Museum. They were assessed against four categories of merit:

- Items of academic (scientific or historic) value
- Items for use in display
- Items for use in public engagement
- Items of no use for any of these.

Significance Reports

The conclusions are explained below.

Dried material

The most substantial part of the collection was of coral skeletons. There was also a significant proportion of dried sponges. Almost all of these had no provenance with them.

Much of this material is attributed to "Prout Newcombe"; in itself this may not be academically significant unless the collector has historic value. The staff at the Museum are aware of this collector.

One specimen of coral had a label alluding to a "Fig. V", suggesting that it is a figured specimen. This has potentially significant academic value, and needs further investigation to confirm where it is figured.

There is inference that material attributed to "J Morgan" may relate to the Challenger Expedition (see below).

Material collected from Loch Sunart by Henry Moore does have provenance, and as such has some academic merit.

The diversity of the undamaged corals and sponges gave them some merit as display material, particularly the few large and impressive fan-corals, as well as an educational value in demonstrating the diversity and beauty of coral morphology, as well as tactile education from, in particular, some sponges. Some of this material has

Information

NH.Z.311

Kakapo

Strigops habroptila



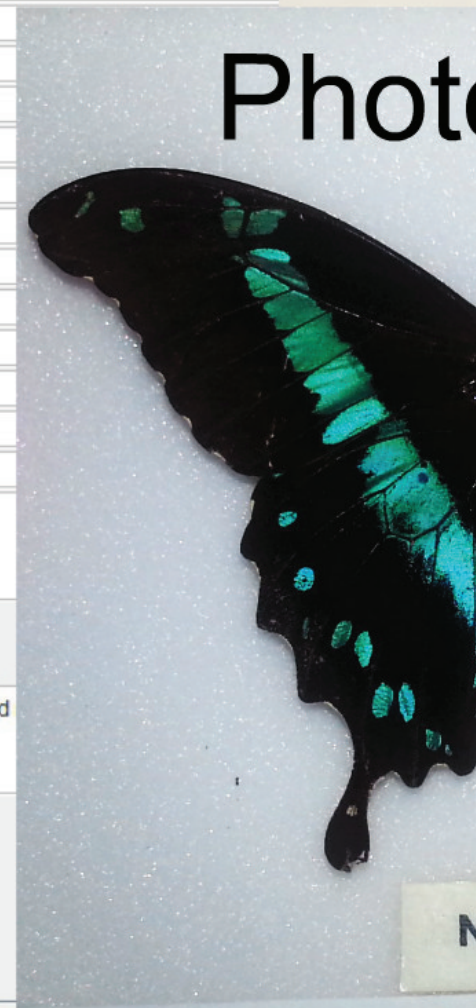
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- Activities (5)
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Database

OBJECTS

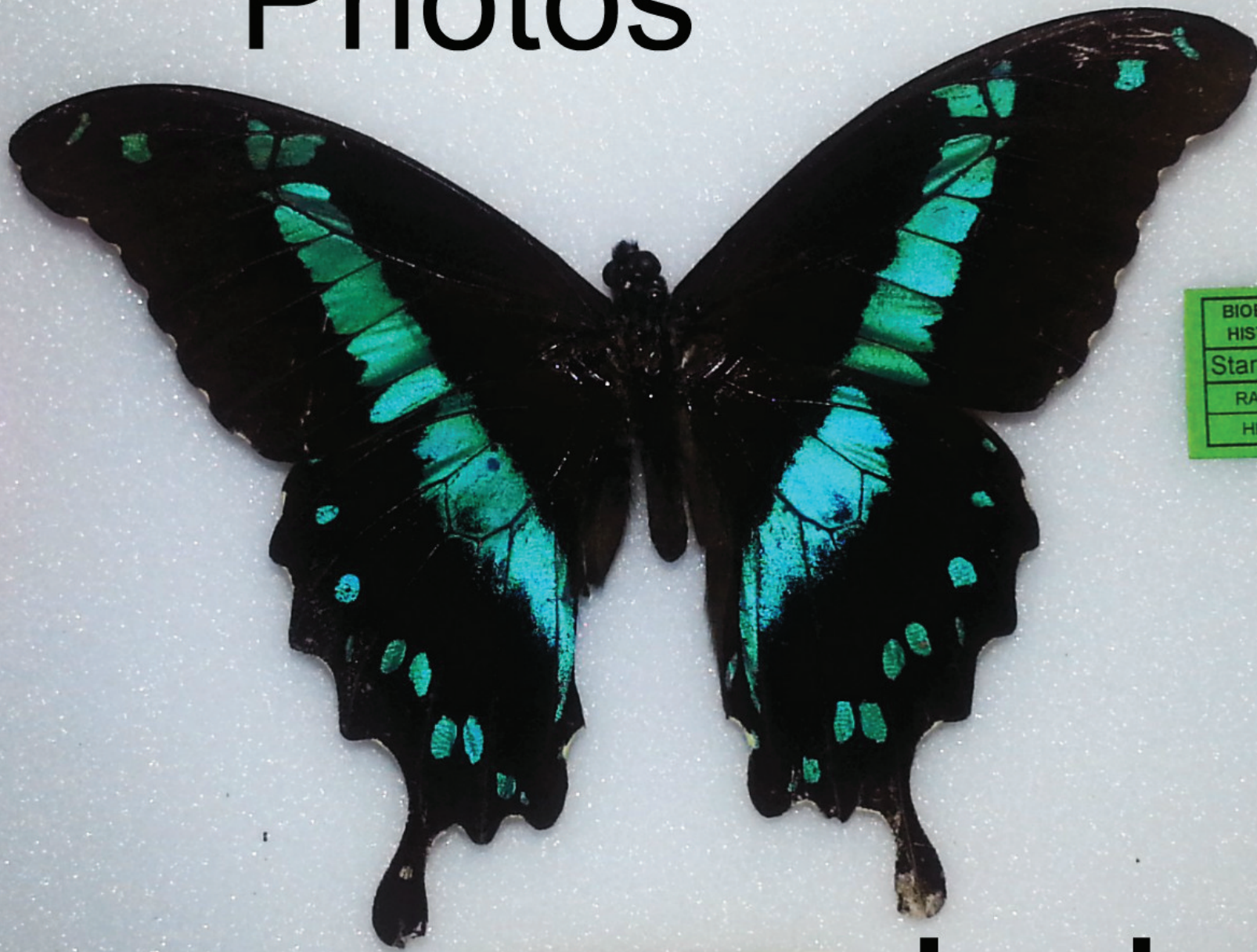
Whole/Part (0)	WHOLE
Collection	Natural History: Zoology
Group	Vertebrates
Category	Birds
Common Name (1)	Kakapo
Scientific Name (2)	Strigops habroptila
Higher Taxonomy	Animalia; Chordata; Aves; Psittaciformes; Psittacidae; Strigops; Strigops habroptila
Collection Name	S. Prout Newcombe Collection
Collector (0)	
Place Collected (1)	New Zealand (Aotearoa), Polynesia, Oceania
Date Collected (1)	before 1934
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Item Count (0)	1
Specimen Form (1)	taxidermy mount
Portion	
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Note	CITES Annex A, Appendix I (2011-01-17 PV). NH.61.17d
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MultiFields (2)	



* MultiField	* Value	Note	
Bioblitz	1-star object	2013-01-24; Fuller, E.	1
Bioblitz	checked in register	2013-07-19	2



Photos



BIOBLITZ: NATURAL HISTORY PROJECT	
Star: 1	2 (3)
RARE ✓	PUB ENG ✓
HIST ✓	SCI ✓

NH.NN26

Labels

.17d

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Disposal proposals



Staff | Audience | Mission

Results



Entomology

IDs

Context

History

Collectors

Improved knowledge

~ 140 Stars | ~ 700 Deaccessions



Outcomes

Community Engagement - future uses for deaccession/main collection

Digitisation of online material

Improved collections knowledge

Raised profile

Inform specialist groups

Building inter/intra-connections for the Horniman

Resourcing

In advance/during/after blitzes

Costs

Works out at 20p per specimen

2/3 of budget for project co-ordinator, documentation assistant and photography

£4000 on 25 review days
£1000 on community engagement
£500 on volunteer expenses

£50k funding from **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**

Preparation time

Documentation: 12 weeks

Collections Management: ~ 30 days



Departmental support

Documentation
Collections Management
Conservation
Digital Media
Learning
Press
ICT
Exhibitions
Library



Reviewer time

Average 2.5 days per review

Time spent disproportionate to collection size

Report writing time to be factored in



Manpower

1 project manager (???)
1 full-time co-ordinator (12 months)
1 full-time documentation assistant (4 months)

Curatorial support

Photographer (6 days + 2 weeks editing)

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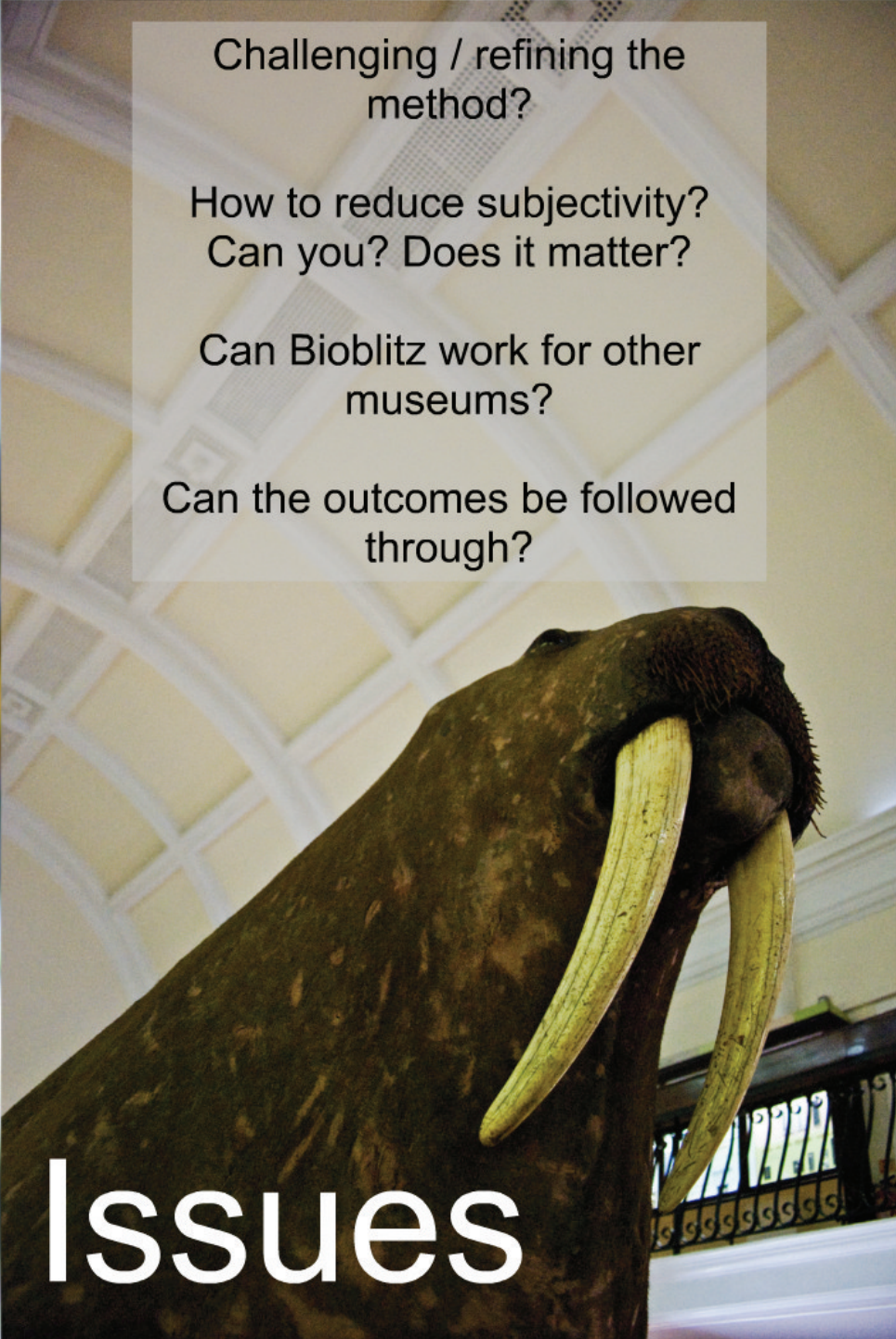


Challenging / refining the method?

How to reduce subjectivity?
Can you? Does it matter?

Can Bioblitz work for other museums?

Can the outcomes be followed through?



Issues

Challenging / refining the
method?

How to reduce subjectivity?
Can you? Does it matter?

Can Bioblitz work for other
museums?

Can the outcomes be followed
through?

Accessing Experts



Who to choose and why
What you want / need
How to find experts
Constraints

The background of the slide features three glass jars containing preserved biological specimens. The leftmost jar holds a dissected animal, possibly a rodent, with its internal organs exposed. The middle jar contains a small, brown, preserved mammal. The rightmost jar holds a larger, more detailed specimen, which appears to be a primate or a similar mammal, possibly a monkey or a small ape, preserved in a clear liquid. The jars are set against a blurred background of what looks like a laboratory or a museum display.

Expert knowledge

Mode of exchange

Questionnaire

Skills Sharing Swap Shop