Notes RBG Edinb. 42(3):594 (1985)

Book Review

British and Irish Herbaria.* This book though based on the 1957 edition is greatly revised and updated and has increased in volume by 60%; also the new type-face gives a clearer presentation than the previous edition. What is more this new book uses different criteria for drawing up alphabetic lists of the known contents of British herbaria.

The opening chapter very clearly lists the abbreviations employed for the various institutional herbaria. The second section alphabetically lists, under the town, the numerous universities, museums and other institutes possessing herbaria, together with their principal collections and contributors.

The following two thirds of the book is an alphabetically arranged list of plant collectors, giving their floruit and the location and size of their collections, as well as notes of any geographical (especially vice-county) or taxonomic specialization.

The fourth chapter is devoted to privately owned herbaria formed by living botanists. To the collectors names and addresses is added the approximate number of sheets (where known) and any specialist data e.g. geographical area or genera.

Chapter five classifies locations of collections with strong representations of local floras. It is traditionally arranged in the Watsonian vice-county order.

The sixth chapter provides a similar cross-reference for collections of critical groups, genera and species. Although constituting a very small portion of the book this will be most useful to botanists with specialist taxonomic interests.

Section seven gives negative information in the form of the names and addresses of institutes that may possess herbaria but for which details are wanting. It would seem to be a bad (or sad) reflection on those institutes, or their governing bodies, for not knowing what they have or, more likely, not bothering to reply to requests from the authors of this book.

Finally there is a bibliography which could well help a researcher in finding out about a particular collector.

In summing up I strongly recommend this invaluable reference work to all botanical institutions and botanists who require to consult herbarium material. The authors and the B.S.B.I. are to be congratulated for presenting the extensive and complex data with such clarity in a book of not unreasonable cost.

D. R. McKean

* Kent, D. H. & Allen, D. E. *British and Irish Herbaria.* Pp. 333. Botanical Society of the British Isles, c/o British Museum (Natural History), London. 1984. ISBN 0 901158 05 4. £9.