

changes might be beneficial. The idea of having the Insecta part as a separate entity might be advantageous. At all events I certainly think we need discussions at a high level.

Yours sincerely,
M.W.R. de V. Graham,
Hope Dept of Zoology (Entomology),
University Museum, Oxford, UK.

31 May 1978

Dear Sir,
What has happened to the *Zoological Record*? Bouček in his letter has asked that. I write to support his enquiry. Bouček has underlined the essential points—ZR is a unique abstracting journal of inestimable value to the zoological community. Its value is derived from indexing literature in depth from a taxonomic perspective and doing so in timely fashion. The first ZR apparently still plans to do, but for the second it has failed miserably. While zoologists may patiently wait for ZR because of its unique qualities, that patience is limited. The ZR has no competitors because it has filled its niche so well in the past, but potential competitors do exist (Biological Abstracts and Company, ISI (Chemical Abstracts, Citation Index, Current Contents), IRP (Entomology Abstracts), etc.). Clearly the proper action for zoologists is to call attention to this intolerable situation and thus encourage either ZR, or someone else, to eliminate it.

Sincerely,
F. Christian Thompson,
Systematic Entomology Laboratory,
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C. 20560, USA.

Subspecies

24 April 1978,

My good friend Torben Larsen (*Antenna* Jan. '78, p. 2) drew attention to 'superfluous subspecies' and suggested a remedy. It seems that his points (a)–(h) cover all important criteria but one:

- (i) The type-material of all related taxa—at least within the relevant species-group—should be examined.

However, I am somewhat pessimistic about attempts to limit the 'description and naming mania' this way. There will always be irresponsible authors working with zeal

disproportional to their wisdom and uncritical editors anxious to fill their journals with 'discoveries'—however dubious they may be. There are still many lepidopterists, amateur and professional, who confuse senseless naming of their 'discoveries' with making contributions to the advancement of their scientific discipline. Although I share many of Torben Larsen's views, I believe that the problem of the subspecies as a taxonomic category is much deeper than is generally accepted, being like an iceberg, still 9/10 obscured. Nonetheless, before it becomes possible to tackle the roots of the problem, some of the remedies suggested by Larsen might, if generally accepted, reduce the superficial results of the ill-fated taxonomic category by preventing, to some degree, future increases in the number of available names.

Yours sceptically,
Otakar Kudrna,
Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut und Museum Alexander Koenig, Adenauerallee 150–164,
D–5300 Bonn 1, Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Frustrated, New Guinea

5 May 1978

Dear Sir,
My last *Antenna*—October 1977—arrived in April 1978. Would it be possible to pay extra and have them airmailed to me?—if so, how much and I will send a bank draft.

Yours faithfully,
Peter B. Clark,
Division of Wildlife, Insect Farming and Trading,
Box 129, Bulolo, Papua New Guinea.

Slow production (April's issue did not appear until 18 May—our apologies) coupled with postal delays are in danger of completely vitiating the whole idea of Antenna. Peter Clark's letter is typical of several we have received. Other societies air mail their equivalent publications; should we do the same? Editors.

Automophagous entomobiles

26 May 1978

Dear Editor,
With reference to 'Entomophagous automobiles' (*Antenna*, Apr. '78, p. 45): Although automobilophagous insects

antenna

ISSN 0140-1890

Volume 2 Number 3 July 1978

Editor: Peter Hammond
Assistant Editors:
V.K. Brown, A.E. Stubbs
and R.I. Vane-Wright
Business Manager: G.G. Bentley

Bulletin of the Royal Entomological Society of London

Contents

Correspondence	68
William Herbert Potts	71
Of Butterflies and Broken Hearts	72
Of Bishops, Bugs and Things	73
Diary	74
News	80
Reports	82
The British Insect Fauna	89
Society News and Notices	90
Current contents of the Journals	93

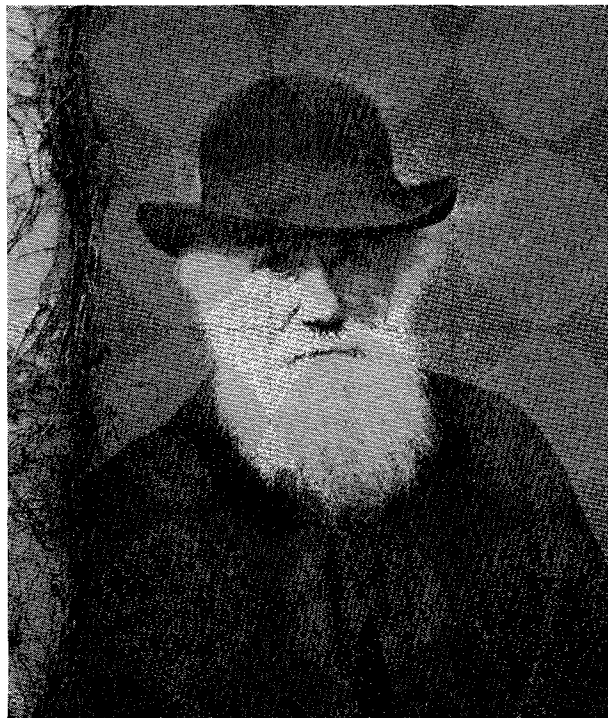
April's Cover

was a stereoscan micrograph of segments 4 to 6 of a *Platystethus oxytelinus* (Fauvel) antenna. This small staphylinid beetle is found in the mountains of North Africa and southern Spain. Notice the change of segment type between 5 and 6. Segments 4 and 5 have relatively little in the way of surface sculpture and bear only the usual long tactile setae. Segment 6 has a smooth basal disc, and the main body of the segment bears close-set pubescence. In some species of *Platystethus* and related genera the change of segment type is gradual, in others it is sudden, but the change may occur between segments 2 and 3, 3 and 4, 4 and 5 or 5 and 6. These differences and other surface features of the antennae are most useful in assessing relationships within this group.

Devolution evolution

It is curious to think that the first ordinary meeting of the Society to be held outside London will take place later this year (in Manchester—see p. 90). Founded in 1833, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1885, and regarded as one of the world's leading entomological associations, it has nonetheless remained steadfastly a *London* society. We hope this out-of-town venture will be the first of many, making the *RESL* a truly National as well as International society.

London will, of course, remain the major focus of activity. But how well are Britain's biologists served by the big London societies? An area where all share a common interest is evolution; it seems strange that the capital has no regular forum to further the works of Darwin, Wallace and Bates. With the present upsurge of activity in our Society, should we approach the Zoological and Linnean Societies of London to consider joint meetings on biology's fundamental theme?



No Darwin Society?