

*image
not
available*

Written Evidence Received Up to 21st May, 1991, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Lords. Select Committee on Science and Technology, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Lords, H.M. Stationery Office, 1991, 0104841915, 9780104841914, . .

DOWNLOAD <http://bit.ly/17w7Cf2>

, , , , , ,

Disney, R. H. L., 1991. Evidence from Dr R. H. L. Disney, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge. House of Lords session 1990-91 Select Committee on Science and Technology Systematic Biology Research. Written evidence received up to 21st May 1991. HL paper 41. London: HMSO. Pp. 71-73. Disney, R. H. L., 1992. Evidence from the University of Cambridge, Department of Zoology. House of Lords session 1991-92 Select Committee on Science and Technology Systematic Biology Research. Volume II Oral evidence and written evidence received after 21st May 1991. HL Paper 22-II. London: HMSO. P. 305.

While the extra funds for Beta Taxonomy, mainly for molecular phylogenetics, was a most welcome outcome resulting from the 1990's report, along with the use of molecular data in Gamma Taxonomy, the support for Alpha Taxonomy has got worse. The study of Alpha Taxonomy is essential for Biodiversity assessments and conservation evaluation as well as in relation to pathogenic organisms, pests, vectors of parasitic infections, insects, etc., in forensic cases and the use of biological control agents.

While the response has been sympathy and agreement, the funding of Alpha Taxonomy has continued its decline. Thus in my own field of entomology, the majority of specialists on large families of small insects are now retired professionals (like myself) and amateurs. Most of the latter tend to be parochial (eg only studying the British species of a family). With regard to funding support for professionals, before retirement from 1984 until 1998 I was entirely funded by private trusts. Every application to NERC was turned down, despite precisely the same applications being funded by a private trust (eg Leverhulme, Isaac Newton Trust, etc.). NERC would have funded the use of molecular data to solve problems (such as sibling species versus polymorphism) but NOT the basic research that would reveal such problems in the first place!

Since retirement I have existed on small grants and occasional fees for undertaking forensic work. The result is that I cannot afford the use of molecular methods unless a collaborator has funding. Likewise I now rarely use the Scanning Electron Microscope because of the cost. I have virtually ceased to attend scientific meetings because of the costs involved.

With regard to my standing as an entomologist, I am recognised as a world specialist on the scuttle flies (Diptera: Phoridae), which are the ultimate in biodiversity in that the larvae exhibit a greater range of larval habits than any other family of insects that have ever existed. My driving force has been a desire to advance knowledge of these habits, but in order to do so, I have had to undertake

an immense amount of Alpha Taxonomy as the family has long been notorious for the complexities of species recognition. The result is that I have published more than most: and collaborated with more co-authors (mainly field workers) than most. I summarise my publications record thus:

I trust these highly personal comments will serve to illustrate that, despite not receiving a penny from NERC, I have tried to make a contribution to Alpha Taxonomy—which is the branch of taxonomy that is increasingly starved of funds. Other advances, such as web-based keys and catalogues are most welcome, but increasingly they tend to ignore the fact that the majority of species remain unknown to science.

<http://eduln.org/5800.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/814.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/4486.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/5600.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/2350.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/4252.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/1823.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/4821.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/2030.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/808.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/4930.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/724.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/2095.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3904.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/2079.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3196.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3123.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3320.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3692.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3567.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3809.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/2775.pdf>