

Collection Management Seminar

What?

"Taxonomy at a Crossroads."

When?

Thursday 25th February 2010, 2.30pm - 4pm

Where?

Flett Lecture Theatre, NHM South Kensington

Who?

Dr Rebecca Ellis, Lecturer, Geography Division, Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University.

Synopsis

This talk explores the shifting values and fragilities of museum biological specimens as they have recently become enrolled in the Barcoding of Life Initiative (BOLI); a global techno-scientific project which seeks to provide the 'barcode' to 'anyone anywhere' as a ubiquitous species naming device for all species on the planet. The reliance of BOLI upon museum collections for the industrialized high throughput sequencing necessary to rapidly accumulate DNA barcodes, Rebecca will argue, positions museum specimens in a newly configured relationship with a 'global populace' assumed to require instantaneous species information.

Rebecca will discuss how museum specimens, as scientific, epistemic objects are sites of evolving and contested meaning as alternative approaches to the potential (classificatory and possibly commercial value) of DNA barcodes continue to be negotiated within the taxonomic community. As such they are sites of lively and ever-emerging forms of material culture in natural history museums as they speak for multiple natural orders.

Who should come?

The seminar is open to all NHM staff but it is suggested that the following staff will find the seminar most useful:

Science Group: All senior departmental managers & collection management staff.

Public Engagement Group: Any staff who work with and use collections or manage staff who work with collections.

Directorate and Science Directorate Staff

Audit & Assurance Staff

We also welcome colleagues from other Institutions who would find the seminar of interest. There is no booking fee and only large parties need to notify the organiser for catering purposes.

Tea and coffee will be available in the Flett lobby after the talk.