

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE FRITSCH COLLECTION OF ALGAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Elizabeth Y. Haworth

Freshwater Biological Association

Professor F E Fritsch began to systematically file published figures of freshwater algae by species, on foolscap sheets, according to his very basic classification, and then alphabetically by genera and species for ease. In 2012 we celebrate the Centenary of this unique Collection and welcome all users by phone, email, letter or personal visit.

Fritsch's Collection came to Dr J W G Lund at the Freshwater Biological Association after his death in 1954 and it is continuously updated. There are now over 100,000 sheets and several million algal entries, with an author index of c. 25,000 references. It is used to check on species identification and morphology, the original publication and the subsequent varieties. Where records are sufficiently numerous they also provide information on the global locations.

All figures and text are labelled with author and date, and cross-referenced to the original publication, many of which are in the FBA's own library. A recent study suggests that the Fritsch Collection contains about 70% of the original illustrations and/or the diagnoses, i.e. the type information.

Illustrations are entered as published (including errors in some cases, especially in authority citation!) and changes are occasionally made. Cross-references are frequently noted. We are currently checking authorities and identifying types and duplicate naming in the desmid section which has been part of the pilot study of digitization to provide searchable internet access. Part of the author index is already searchable at www.fritschalgae.info