

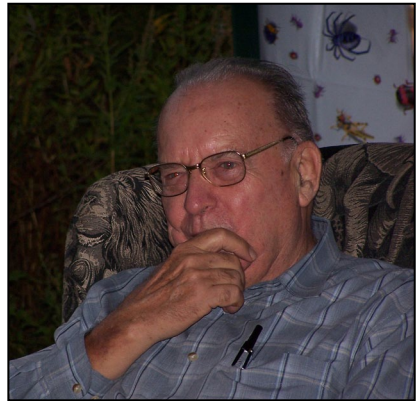
**H**enry Fuller Howden died 21 May 2014 in Victoria, British Columbia just 2 months shy of his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. Working on a manuscript up until the end, he maintained his sense of humour and joked with doctors and nurses at the Royal Jubilee Hospital that they still hadn't found a cure for old age.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, 19 August 1925, Henry began collecting insects at an early age. By the time he was 12, his moth and butterfly collection was comprehensive enough to win him an honorary membership in the Maryland Academy of Sciences. A few years later he liquidated his Lepidoptera, used the proceeds to purchase his first set of Cornell drawers, and then focussed on building up his beetle collection, especially scarabs. After completing his schooling at a local military academy, he was accepted into the Department of Entomology & Zoology at the University of Maryland in 1941. His undergraduate training was interrupted in 1944 when he turned 19 and received a draft notice. Enlisting in the U.S. Army, he hoped to join their entomology corps, but instead was assigned to the Air Force as a non-commissioned officer. After completing his military service at Hamilton Field near San Francisco, he returned to Maryland to finish his BSc in 1946 and was accepted directly into their graduate program.

With all of the entomology positions taken, he made a brief foray into the Zoology Department to study fish for an MSc, then returned to insects and received his MSc in Entomology in 1949. This same year he married Anne Elizabeth Thompson, who was also an avid entomologist and recent graduate of the University of Maryland. Leaving Maryland, the newly-weds moved to North Carolina State University (NCSU) where Anne studied the succession of insects on pig carcasses for her MSc, and Henry worked on the taxonomy and biology of Geotrupine beetles under Professor Paul O. Ritcher. Anne would later switch to working on weevils, a group with more agreeable feeding habits, in the eyes and noses of many observers.

During their graduate time in Raleigh, Henry and Anne became good friends with Henry K. Townes, the Ichneumonid specialist, and his wife Marjorie. Both couples were avid collectors and would go on field trips together in the U.S. southeast. On one occasion, Howden recounts that he got a useful lesson in frugality from the elder Henry. During a break in collecting, the group headed to a local restaurant for dinner. Towards the end of the meal, Townes asked his wife to put the excess bread rolls into her purse so they could enjoy them the following day. Marjorie complied with the request, which was observed by the owner of the restaurant. The owner came over and asked if they would like any more rolls. Completely unflappable, Townes replied "yes, that would be nice", so the owner was obliged to bring over another basket of rolls. These were promptly transferred into Marjorie's bag before the bill was paid and the two couples returned to collecting. Learning to pinch pennies in order to extend fieldwork was a foundation of the Townes philosophy, and one that Henry Howden with his Scottish ancestry, was quick to adopt.

Henry was awarded his PhD in 1953, and with it the distinction of being the first to receive a Doctorate in Entomology from NCSU. He joked that it stood for Post Hole Digger, a tool that he found useful for excavating scarabs from deep sandy burrows. With five publications completed, he accepted a teaching job at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He taught general biology, entomology, and evolution for the next few years, while continuing his research on beetles.



**Henry F. Howden  
(1925 – 2014)**

Since he was only paid by the university during the academic year, he supplemented his income by becoming a consultant to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission at Oak Ridge during the summer months, investigating the effects of radiation on insects. Henry's enthusiasm for field work, support for the newly-founded Coleopterists Society, and his publication record caught the attention of entomologists at the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa. They were keen to recruit him to work north of the border. After some negotiations, Henry accepted a position as a research scientist with the Canada Department of Agriculture and moved the family to Ottawa in August 1957. He spent the next decade building up the beetle collection at the Canadian National Collection (CNC) through extensive field work, while continuing to publish on the taxonomy of scarabs and other beetle families, as well as papers on insect biogeography.

In 1967 at the invitation of Phil Darlington, Henry took a 6 month sabbatical at Harvard University. He continued to develop the concepts of biogeography as they applied to insect evolution, as a visiting Agassiz Lecturer. When he returned to Ottawa, he extended his leave of absence from the Entomology Research Institute (Canada Department of Agriculture) and began lecturing at Carleton University at the invitation of Herbert H.J. Nesbitt, the Dean of Science. Henry apparently enjoyed teaching and the academic freedom of the university, and certainly didn't miss the ever-increasing red tape and bureaucracy of government. He formally resigned his government position on 31 August 1970, having accepted a full professorship in the Department of Biology at Carleton. His position in the Department of Agriculture was promptly refilled by Aleš Smetana, who had been at the CNC for several years on a visiting fellowship.

Once established at Carleton, Henry was successful in getting NSERC grants that allowed him to purchase a scanning electron microscope, hire technicians, and carry out field work during the summer months. For the next 25 years he taught courses in systematic entomology, evolution & biogeography, and animal systematics. He supervised numerous undergraduate honours theses, as well as 9 MSc and 10 PhD students, and several Postdoctoral Fellows. While most of his graduate students were entomologists, a few studied fish, birds, or amphipods. The academic year at Carleton was broken up by spring break and summer holidays. In most years, Henry and Anne would arrange collecting trips to Central or South America to coincide with these breaks. The numerous insects collected by beating, black-lighting, or pitfall trapping would be brought back to Ottawa in Whirl-pak bags or glass vials charged with ethyl acetate, to be mounted up and studied over the following winter. Specimens not of interest would be passed on to other specialists in their large circle of friends. Many of these exchanges took place in person at the Entomological Society of America (ESA) and Coleopterists Society annual meetings, which both Henry and Anne tried to attend on a regular basis. Their attendance at Entomological Society of Canada (ESC) meetings was much less frequent as Henry explained, because most of the taxonomists in Canada worked in Ottawa or at least passed through it on a frequent basis. Henry's love of field work and his "itchy feet" meant that sabbaticals from teaching were taken on a regular basis, and far from home. The typical destination was Australia, where he and Anne were welcomed by the CSIRO as visiting scientists, and given logistical support to study the scarab and weevil fauna "down-under". In return, all holotypes selected from their Australian material were deposited in the Australian National Insect Collection in Canberra.

The long-term care of insect collections was of major concern to Henry. In 1989 he represented the Canadian Society of Zoologists at a Parliamentary hearing in Ottawa into Bill C-12, the Museums Act. He highlighted the importance of collections and urged support for the Museums Act. Putting his money where his mouth was, he encouraged the director of the newly re-named Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) to hire an entomologist by offering to donate his and Anne's beetle collection to the museum, along with a sizeable cash endowment. After all, how could the museum purport to represent nature, when it lacked insects, one of nature's most successful

animal groups. Henry's argument was sound, and he got a signed agreement that the CMN would accept their collection plus the endowment. This would eventually lead Henry and Anne to donate over 463,000 specimens and \$300,000 to the CMN in the years to follow.

Henry retired from Carleton in the spring of 1995 as he approached his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Retirement from the university didn't slow down his research, as both he and Anne were welcomed as Honorary Research Associates at the CMN where they were provided office space and support. They worked there for the next 11 years, continuing to travel, publish and curate specimens. Details of their time at the CMN can be found in the recent article by Smith et al. (2014).

In May of 2006 Henry suffered a stroke while travelling to western Canada to visit family. This effectively ended his field work and taxonomic research. After a period of rehabilitation, he devoted his efforts to writing up his 60 years of field notes. These were initially made available in a series of 47 instalments running under the title *In Past Years* in the online newsletter *Scarabs* from May 2007 to December 2011. Feedback on the series was positive, so Henry reorganized the text into chronological sequence, adding additional images and text with the view to publishing it as a book. Like all big projects, this took much longer than anticipated, and was only completed posthumously (Howden et al. 2014). This was to be his last publication, number 186.

Henry's support to the entomological community has been long and unwavering. As a graduate student at NCSU, he joined both the ESA as well as the fledgling Coleopterists Society. He was News Editor of the *Coleopterists Bulletin* in 1953, Contributing Editor in 1954, and served two terms as President of the Coleopterists Society in 1968 and 1969. He was elected Chairman of Section A, ESA in 1965 and joined the ESC in 1970 shortly after accepting his faculty position at Carleton. He served on the Board of the American Entomological Institute (founded by Henry Townes) from 1963 to 1996, and was Vice-President of the CanaColl Foundation (founded by another long-time friend Ed Becker) from 1976 to 1998. He started the Ottawa Entomology Club in the 1970's as an informal monthly gathering of people interested in insects, which continues to this day. Henry was a long-time member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Sigma Xi - The Scientific Research Society, and the Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. In recognition of his support to science and entomology, he received many awards including being elected Fellow of the ESC in 1985, Honorary Member of the Coleopterists Society in 2003, and Fellow of the ESA in 2005.

Henry's frugality was only exceeded by his generosity, as he provided guidance and advice to students and colleagues, as well as funds to support field work or specimens for research. Out of town visitors in particular were often hosted or entertained at 23 Trillium Avenue, and the Howden guest book reads like a veritable "Who's Who" of distinguished entomologists. If the visitors were fortunate enough to be scarab or weevil workers, then the "in-door" collecting could prove very productive indeed! Henry's legacy will live on with his important contributions to our knowledge of scarab beetles. He is survived by his wife Anne plus their 3 daughters and families, and will be remembered fondly by many friends and colleagues from around the world.

## References

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