

## THE ELTON ARCHIVE

The Elton Archive mostly comprises the Field Notes compiled 1942-1965 by Charles S. Elton, FRS, CBE (1900-1991) while he was Director of the Bureau of Animal Population, a research group affiliated to the Department of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy (from 1963, Department of Zoology), Oxford University. Further material (not yet transcribed) is held in the Bodleian Libraries Special Collections.

The texts are split into 38 Books of a variety of lengths, assembled into 12 loose-leaf files. They were deposited in the University Museum (now known as the Oxford University Museum of Natural History), care of the Hope Department of Entomology (now known as the Hope Entomological Collections). The Field Notes comprise two series:

OXFORDSHIRE, BERKSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE (EXCLUDING  
WYTHAM AREA)                      18 books

WYTHAM AREA                      19 books by Elton alone, +1 book compiled in 1960  
mainly by his assistant Stephen W. Hurry, and edited by Elton.

Also included in this Archive are transcriptions of a seminar that Elton gave in 1962 to mark 30 years of the Bureau of Animal Population, apparently delivered to a small audience in the library of the Magdalen labs., and that of a similar event in 1993 by Dr. John R. Clarke, Elton's research student and long-time collaborator. The original manuscripts were held in private archives, as were those of the accounts of three Expeditions from Oxford University to the Arctic archipelago now called Svalbard in 1921, 1923 and 1924.

They were transcribed and edited 2013-4 by Caroline M. Pond (Emerita Professor of Comparative Anatomy, The Open University and honorary Senior Research Associate in Zoology, Oxford University) as a volunteer recruited by the Joint Museums Volunteer Service and supervised by Nigel Fisher (Wytham Woods), Darren Mann (Hope Entomological Collections) and Keith Kirby (Department of Plant Sciences). Voice-activated software (Dragon and Talkingpoint) was used throughout. The Editor would like to record that she attended Elton's lectures as an undergraduate in the 1960s, and was a colleague of Stephen Hurry (1932-2008) at The Open University when he worked there 1979-92.

The material is arranged chronologically, with each page headed with date, location(s) (often with details of time(s) and weather conditions), obviously transcribed from hand-written notebooks compiled in the field, following the pagination of those records. The nearly 1500 sheets of quarto paper are mostly typed on both sides, with numerous hand-written corrections and additions, in many cases added many years after the original observations.

The original layout and typography are followed as closely as electronic systems allow, although to enable both sides of a quarto sheet to appear on a single 'A4' page, the margins are omitted and blank spaces may be reduced. The original pagination is faithfully followed, although it entails numerous absent pages, plus some inter-chelated material, some of which has to be placed on supplementary pages. The page numbers are inserted manually and '{reverse side}' indicates material on the underside, which often, but not invariably, relates to the following sheet (i.e. would be on the left page in an open book). Drawings and some inter-chelated material are scanned and inserted as near to the original size and position as pagination allows.

Elton typed the material himself on a manual typewriter with cloth ribbon. There are remarkably few errors, though numerous inconsistencies of spelling and punctuation, e.g. ‘dragon-fly’ or ‘dragonfly’; ‘meadow-sweet’ or ‘meadowsweet’, ‘inch’, ‘in.’, ‘ins.’ etc. There is far more punctuation than would now be usual. Most of these idiosyncrasies have been faithfully reproduced, though proper names, e.g. Degeer, De Geer, De-Geer have been standardised to facilitate electronic searching. Ambiguities and the Editor’s suggestions are shown {sic..}. Species names that were underlined in the original manuscript (and Latin phrases) have been edited to italics, but other underlined material appears as it was. Users should note that some vernacular and many scientific names of species have changed since these notes were written, e.g. ‘willow wren’ is now usually known as ‘willow warbler’ *Phylloscopus trochilus*; green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) appears as ‘green wood-pecker’, ‘green yaffle’ or ‘yaffle’. Most abbreviations, including compass points, initials of collaborators, institutions, committees and places, a.= abundant; r. = rare; c. = circa, common; y.=young, yellow etc. are expanded to full words, but as this list shows, some are ambiguous! Others are explained in the glossary below. To save space, the widely used ‘n.k.’ and standard abbreviations of taxonomists’ names are retained.

All the specimen numbers (many, but not all, originally in the right margins headed ‘C.E.’ (or S.H.) on the top sides, and left margins of the reverse sides) are shown as A and 00, or A and 00 as in the original and placed as near to their subject as possible. At least some of the items so identified still exist in the Hope Entomological Collections (contact Darren J. Mann [darren.mann@oum.ox.ac.uk](mailto:darren.mann@oum.ox.ac.uk)) or Oxford University’s Department of Plant Sciences Herbarium (contact Stephen Harris [stephen.harris@plants.ox.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.harris@plants.ox.ac.uk)). Many of the photographs mentioned are in the Museum (contact archivist Kathleen Santry [kathleen.santry@oum.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kathleen.santry@oum.ox.ac.uk)) or with the Wytham Conservator Nigel Fisher (contact [nigel.fisher@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nigel.fisher@admin.ox.ac.uk)).

Each Book has a title page named ‘Wytham’ or ‘OBB’ with the dates (and specimen numbers) that it covers. To facilitate electronic searching, all the Wytham Area material (including that by Hurry) is assembled into a single file, which is 783 pages long. The Oxfordshire, Berkshire & Buckinghamshire (OBB) material is similarly assembled into a single 629-pages file.

### MISCELLANEOUS ABBREVIATIONS & NOTES

The following abbreviations and terms may be unfamiliar to modern readers.

B.A.P.	Bureau of Animal Population (part of Department of Zoological Field Studies) founded 1932, closed 1967.
Berks.	Berkshire*
Bucks.	Buckinghamshire
Brit. Mus.	British Museum (includes Natural History Museum Collections)
Compt./Comp.	Compartment
D.B.S.T./ B.D.S.T./D.S.T./2 S.T.	Double summer time (i.e. 2 h ahead of GMT), in force c. May-Aug. 1941-45 & 1947
D.C.A./D.Z.C.A.	Department of (Zoology) and Comparative Anatomy (in Science Area, Oxford University)

Det.	Determined/detailed (species name)
E.J.E	Elton's wife (Edith) Joy Elton née Scovell.
F	Most temperature measurements are in Fahrenheit scale
F.C.	Forestry Commission
ff	Col. Raymond ffennell or his widow, owners of Wytham Abbey and Wood.
<i>fide</i>	Latin legal expression = by faith, by testimony/report
ft.	foot (Imperial Unit) = 30.5 cm
G.M.T.	Greenwich Mean Time, now known as Coordinated Universal Time (UTC = Temps Universel Coordonné)
G.W.R.	Great Western Railway
H.N.S.	Henry Neville Southern (1908-1986) always known as Mick, ecologist and ornithologist who collaborated with Elton 1939-1967.
Hope Department	Hope Department of Entomology and its extensive collections in Oxford University Museum, now called Hope Entomological Collections.
in./ins.	inch (Imperial Unit) = 2.5 cm
lb.	pound (mass) (Imperial Unit) = 454 g
L.U.S.	Land Utilization/Use Survey
Museum	Oxford University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford, now called Oxford University Museum of Natural History.
(N.) N.R.	(National) Nature Reserve
N.R.I.C.	Nature Reserves Investigation Committee set up in 1942
O.E.S.	Oxford Ecological Survey
O.O.S.	Oxford Ornithological Survey
O.S.	Ordnance Survey
Oxon.	Oxford/Oxfordshire*
s.	shilling (= 5 p = £0.05)
S	Spring (sometimes stream)
<i>sensu lato/sens. lat.</i>	Latin phrase meaning "In the broad sense"
S.S.(S).I.	Site of (special) scientific interest
S.S.T./1 S.T./B.S.T	Single (British) summer time (i.e. 1 h ahead of GMT)
T	Trough (= natural depression, or a construction for watering livestock, usually fed by a spring)
T.F.	Tullgren funnel
V.C.H.	Victoria County History, begun 1899 (particularly extensive for Oxfordshire)
WA	Wytham Area
W.E.S	Wytham Ecological Survey
W.L.M.	Wytham land management
yd.	yard (Imperial Unit) = 0.914 m

\* N.B. From the 11<sup>th</sup> century until 1 April 1974, the area known as Vale of the White Horse, including parts of Oxford City west and south of the Thames, Abingdon, Bagley, Botley, Compton, Cumnor, Faringdon, Swinford, Tubney, Wantage, Wittenham and Wytham, was part of Berkshire. The sale of Earl of Abingdon's estates in and around Wytham in 1920 (to Col. Raymond ffennell, né Schumacher, who donated Wytham to Oxford University) facilitated the area's transfer to Oxfordshire in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972.