

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

### *Concerning the origins of this enterprise, and the people engaged in its execution*

THIS FASCICLE on the Sphingoidea, by Dr. Ronald W. Hodges, is not only a complete revision of the group, but is also the first part of the total work to be published. So it seems an appropriate time to tell how the project started, rather than to wait for the publication of the General Introduction which will be many months away. The beginnings of this enterprise were small, our collection was small, and our working laboratory was small. What was evident, however, was that a vast lepidopterous fauna was all about us in confusing array and profusion. Identification of so many species had become an increasingly bewildering task, especially as new but similar moths appeared as the seasons advanced. Under the circumstances of course even Holland's *Moth Book*, the old stand-by, was useless. The vast numbers of gray geometrids alone, of so many sizes, hues and seasonal variations, struck us with a sense of dismay. During the early summer of 1967 our friend, Dr. Douglas C. Ferguson, was visiting and busily collecting, happily spreading his specimens and not in the least perturbed by our problems. "Where do we turn?" we asked Doug. "There seems to be no up-to-date, comprehensive, well-illustrated volume to cover the Moths of America." "There isn't, and furthermore," replied Doug, pointing to a fresh specimen of a *Lytrosis* still in one of our relaxing boxes, "here is a *Lytrosis* that is undescribed and new to science." "In that case," said we in all innocence, "we must write and illustrate such a book!" Doug gave us a searching look as though we were in profound need of professional mental help. We hastened to modify our suggestion. "You write the book and we'll illustrate it." Doug's expression remained essentially unchanged.

The months went by, the collecting continued, but the germ of an idea had been born. Soon Dr. John G. Franclemont and Dr. Ronald W. Hodges and a bit later Dr. Eugene G. Munroe joined to form the nucleus of principal authors. Mr. Eric Classey of London, himself an enthusiastic and knowledgeable collector as well as a distinguished entomological publisher and book-dealer, joined our forces. He in turn introduced us to Mr. Basil Harley, Managing Director of The Curwen Press in London, who entered into the project with the enthusiasm of a dedicated naturalist. Moreover, his company sets the exacting standards of one of the finest of printing houses. It was agreed that the plates should be done in four-color lithography, with the possible addition of other colors should any special need arise.

This left in our hands the problem of producing color transparencies of sufficiently good quality to illustrate the moths on a format of approximately  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by 10 inches accurately and with pleasing contrast. Very early in the course of our discussions we had eliminated any idea of photographing the moths singly and then superimposing them on to a common background. The plates, we decided, must be photographed as a whole, the moths pinned to a

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background of a suitably neutral shade, with the elimination of all shadows cast by either direct or indirect illumination. By the same token it became incumbent on us to process all our own color film if we were to guarantee an absolute standard for our work over the years. The Color Lithography Department of The Curwen Press, under the able guidance of Mr. Alan Easton, can do wonders with a good transparency, but naturally no reproduction can be expected to be better than the quality of the original work.

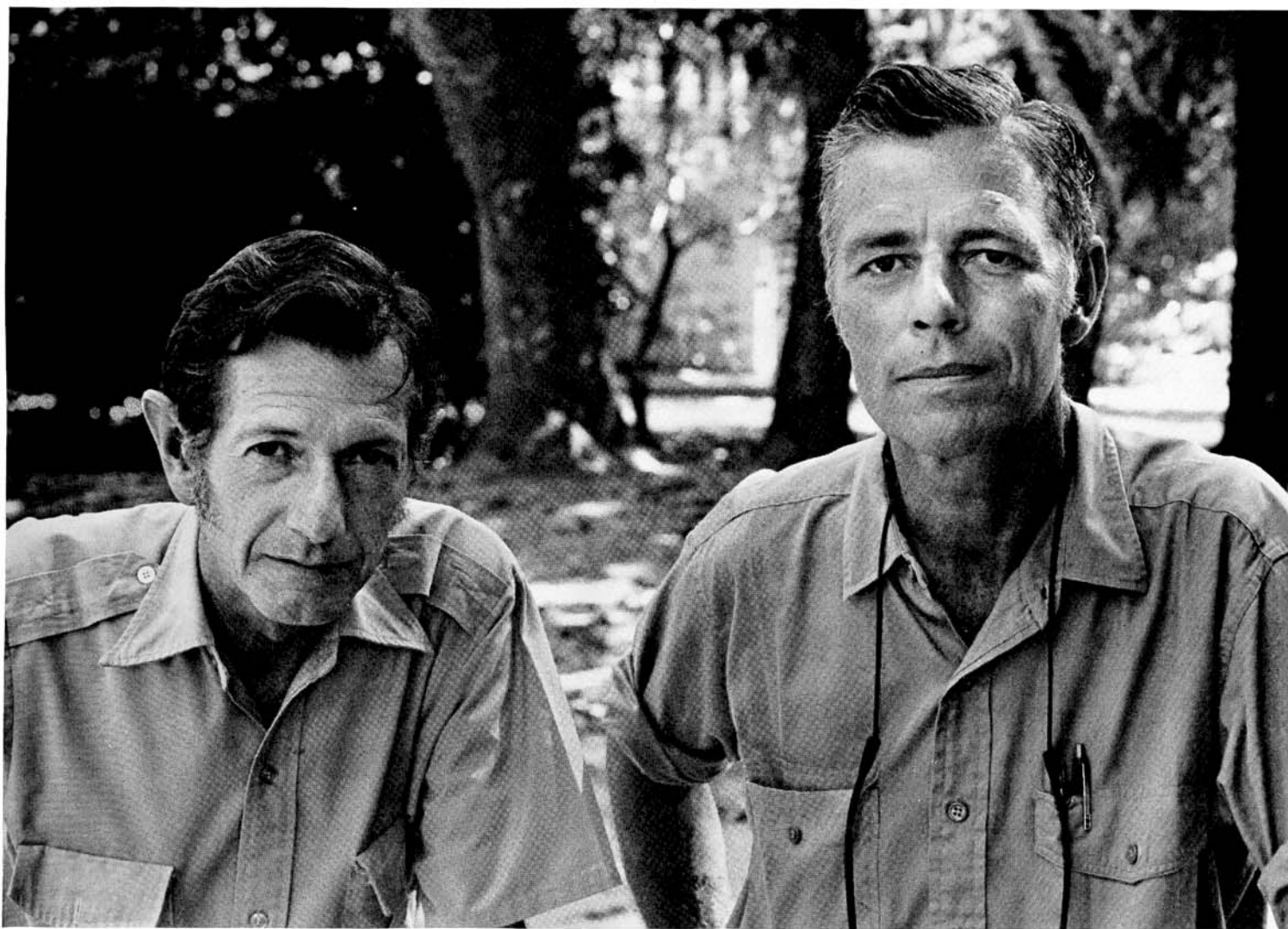
Suffice it to say that it took us the better part of two years of experimentation before we felt able to produce work in our darkroom that would be a credit to our authors and to The Curwen Press. Even now, during the actual course of production of the plates, we are finding new ways of improving their quality. Without the help, advice and guidance of numerous individuals whom we have consulted and who have given generously and freely of their time and experience, we should never have been able to achieve the results which we feel The Curwen Press has rendered so beautifully.

First and foremost, our thanks and unending gratitude go to Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Norvell, of Norvell's Camera Exchange in Charleston, South Carolina. And, "Camera Exchange" it was! We have lost all track of the number and kinds of different cameras, lenses, lighting equipment and other paraphernalia they provided and exchanged for us, until we were finally able to settle on the ideal for our purpose, a Linhof Kardan B 4×5-inch camera system with a 40-inch bellows extension and a 150 mm Symmar lens of outstanding quality and depth of field. Our very special thanks go to Mr. Warren Illes of Berkey Photo, Inc. (Kling Photo Corp.) in Astoria, New York, who almost single-handedly arranged exchanges of equipment for us and took it on as his personal responsibility to cut through the red tape of a large organization which would otherwise have slowed down our experimental progress to a grinding halt. To Mr. Jerry O'Malley and Mr. Philip E. Parker, Technical Sales Representatives—Professional Photography, of Eastman Kodak Co., go our thanks for advice on lighting and processing techniques that have made the difference between mediocrity and excellence. We thank Mr. John Brooks of E. Leitz, Inc. in New Jersey, for introducing to us the glass fiber which made possible the diffusion tent that forms a basic part of our set-up. We also thank Dr. Karl Heitz, of his own firm at 979 Third Avenue, New York City, who supplied us with the major portion of our basic lighting arrangement.

Mr. Maurice Sawyers and Mr. Francis Greenaway of the Department of Photography of the British Museum (Natural History) in London deserve our special thanks. They listened patiently to our very early problems, and set us on our way with careful demonstrations and explanations, convinced, we are sure, that no one but a pair of mad Americans would attempt such an undertaking. They continue to this day to contribute new ideas that challenge us to further improvement.

Our thanks go to Mr. Robert E. Logan, Head of the Department of Photography of The American Museum of Natural History in New York City, whose advice and criticism have helped us out of more than one sticky hole.

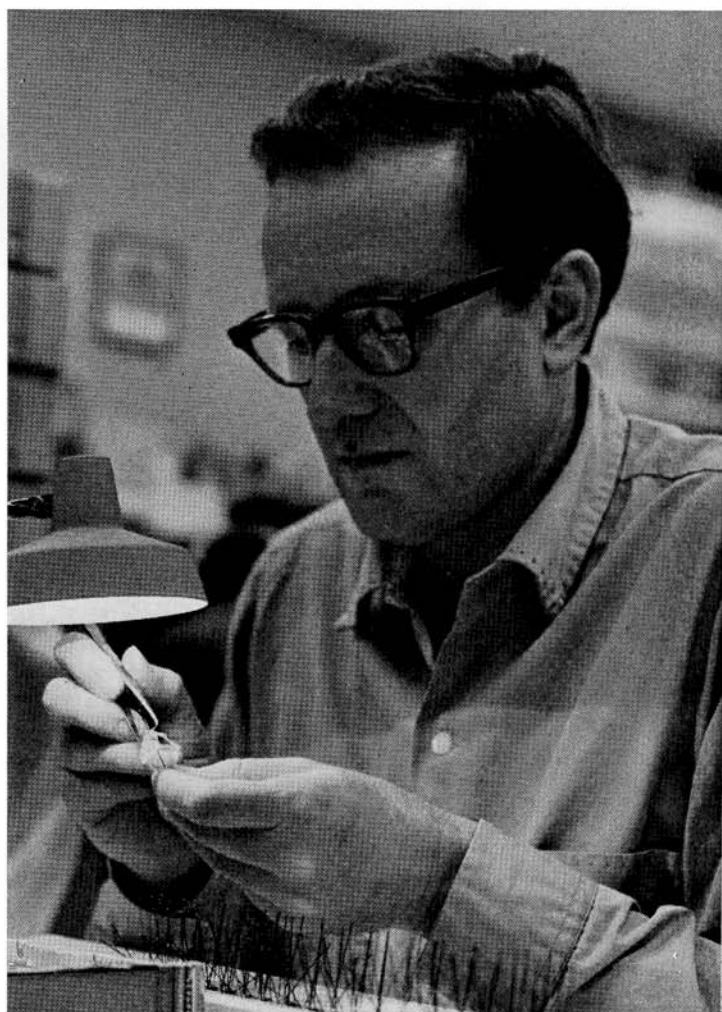
We owe many thanks to D. B. Waddell, H. R. Jackson, and G. Merritt of the Scientific Information Section, Research Branch, Canada Department of Agriculture, Ottawa for comments on some of our previous work. Dr. Eugene Munroe brought some of their superb photographs down with him when he arrived with the moths to be illustrated in the first twenty-five plates for the *Pyraloidea* fascicles 14 and 15a, the next entity to be published after the *Bombycoidea*. We are, at this very moment, half way through the photography of these plates, and our careful analysis of those outstanding Canadian transparencies together with the attendant suggestions have led us to gather the courage to try a new experiment with a roving flood-lamp. This has enabled us to capture successfully the iridescent sheen on so many



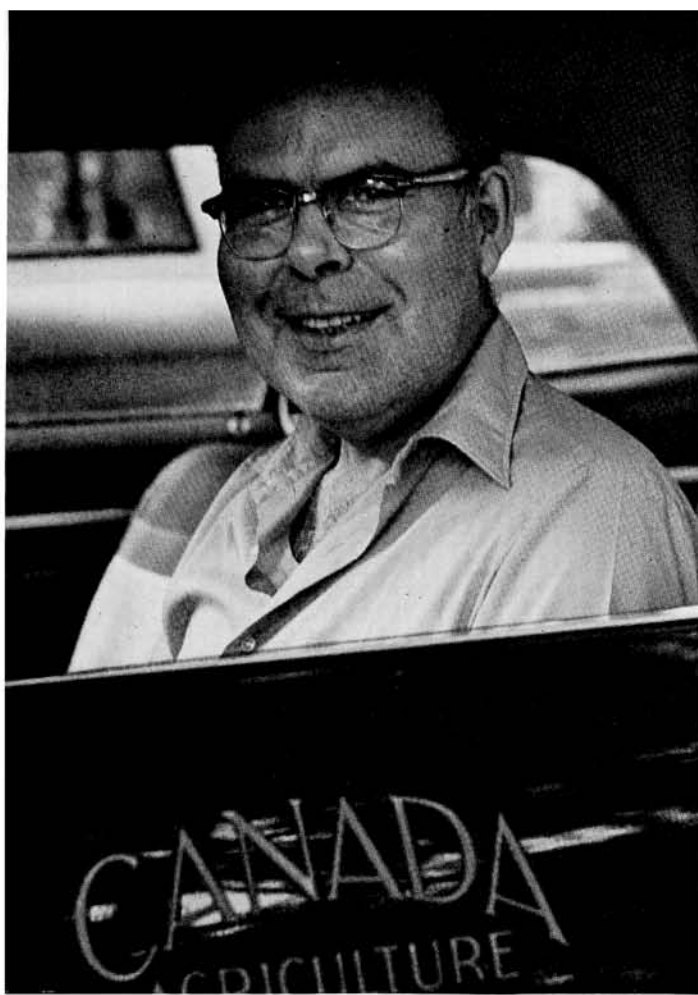
Charles R. Edwards and Richard B. Dominick



*Above:* Ronald W. Hodges  
*Above right:* Elaine R. Hodges



Douglas C. Ferguson



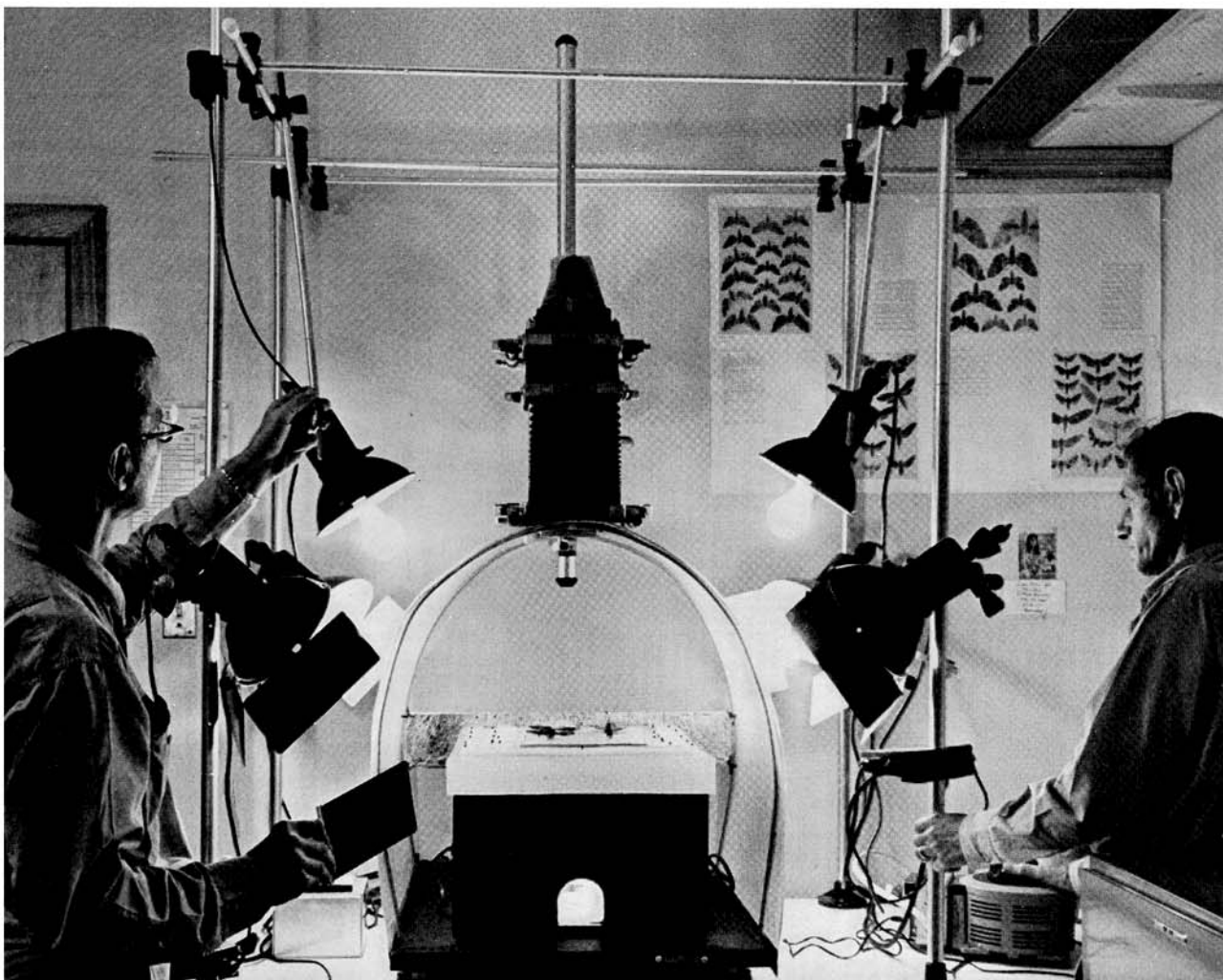
Eugene G. Munroe



John G. Franclemont and Cho



Basil Harley and Eric Classey



The Wedge darkroom

*Photographs by  
Christopher Blackwall  
Harold Norvell  
and Jim Porter*

of the specimens now appearing out of Gene Munroe's boxes. It represents a great step forward in our photographic techniques and has overcome what had seemed a most worrisome problem.

To Warren and Bill Beagle, our local electricians in Georgetown, South Carolina, go our thanks for their never-ending interest in our project. They have contrived various ingenious gadgets for us in their own spare time, among them a unique low-voltage de-pinning machine made up of old radio parts, and an inspired flashing "No Entry" sign for our dark-room door.

Our wives, Tatiana and Zuline, deserve special mention. They have not only put up with us but have encouraged our efforts, and have taken an active part in the preparation of our basic blocks of paraffin—a task requiring care, skill, patience, and a tolerant blind eye to the unholy mess in their kitchens after our own manly efforts. The day they found wax spattered not only on the floor but on the ceiling as well, they did not revile us. They merely shook their heads in wonder and quietly took over. They have boosted our morale when new experiments failed, reassured us with sound advice, and rejoiced with our successes.

We must put in a particular word of praise for Elaine R. Hodges, Ron's wife, whose line drawings appear with such competent authority. She switched her professional talents and artistic eye from mosquitoes to moths as we got the project under way, adding even more of a family feeling to our group. Nor must we forget Mr. John F. Walsh of New York City and Mr. Peter S. Crane of London, who have helped and advised us on problems beyond our ken and who freely admit to the spirit of adventure gained by association with individuals engaged in a pursuit so far removed from the ivory towers of their usual duties. We want to thank Miss Maria Nomikos for the reams of typing she has done for us, deciphering without fail the innumerable inserted scrawls and addenda. Goodness knows how many thanks are due to Mrs. Mair Sandercock of The Curwen Press who has transcribed similar hieroglyphics across the Atlantic Ocean. We also wish to thank Mr. Michael D. Van Buskirk of Seattle, Washington, who has given us valuable suggestions and criticisms, and whose enthusiastic interest in our progress has been most refreshing. He has been especially helpful in the field of larvae and plant taxonomy, for we are giving thought to the possible addition of a fascicle later on devoted to color plates of the life histories of as many various species as we can properly do.

We are more than grateful to Christopher Blackwall for the kindly persistence with which he pursued and calmed us and for the resulting excellence of his portraits.

A unique team has been forged from our mutual association, and a more happily integrated group working together would indeed be hard to imagine.

Doug Ferguson and Jack Franclemont, the latter invariably shadowed by "Cho" the canine mop—a dog of immense personality, arrived together this past winter with the specimens we were to photograph for the next fascicle, the Bombycoidea. They came in a large station wagon and when they began to unload, we could not believe our eyes. Boxes were tied together in bales. Bale followed bale until it began to look like a conjuring trick. Our eyes widened in wonder, for we had asked Doug how many plates to prepare for. "Oh, about eighteen, I guess," he had said. We were a bit suspicious at that "I guess" and had prepared ourselves for the possibility of a few more, but since they only planned to stay a week, and since each plate requires well over two hours to prepare, photograph and process, the sight of what was emerging from that automobile left us quite speechless. "*How* many plates did you say?" we breathed. "Oh, a couple of dozen or so," answered Doug cheerfully. "You can run through six plates a day, can't you?" Our mouths felt dry as they further assured us that they could not possibly extend their visit beyond one week. So there was nothing for it

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but to get into high gear and go to work. We shall long remember Doug, standing on a low stool gazing thoughtfully down on his current layout of moths, his hands before him as if in supplication—in reality he was checking their alignment—while Jack Franclemont, Cho busily snoozing at his feet, stood quietly at the other end of the room carefully recording data for the plate legends. To sum it up, we achieved twenty-nine plates in six days and on our longest day, the last, we managed eight, despite on that day of all days the electric power failing for three hours! At the end of the week we felt like a pair of moles emerging into the sunlight. But it was worth it. Holotypes and many other unique specimens had appeared. One *Callosamia carolina* Jones ♀ (which has now been reverted to *C. securifera* (Maassen)) is one of Jones' original "cotypes". Three of the saturniids are the very same specimens that Holland figured in his *Moth Book* nearly seventy years ago; and other equally impressive specimens kept emerging from those Pandora boxes. Those bales of boxes did indeed contain treasure awesome to behold.

Ron Hodges merits special introduction. His specialty of course is the Microlepidoptera, but his broad talents have enabled him to write this fascicle with complete authority. It is a never-ending source of fascination to watch Ron at work spreading his minute creatures, using implements some of which are of a size befitting a stonemason. The outcome nonetheless is a board upon which stands a forest of setting needles which he then turns upside down. By dint of a sharp rap with his fist he extracts all the setting needles in a shower on to the table beneath while one shudders with dread, and yet not a single antenna falls out of place. There is Gene Munroe, a large and genial person whose imperturbable and kindly nature brought forth the remark one spring day, "My smiling muscles are becoming tired". Each is impressively competent, thorough, and exacting. We can picture them now, as we prepare a fresh pinning surface on one of the wax blocks, intently conferring together at the other end of the laboratory on the proper usage of the nomenclature to be standardized throughout the work.

Eric Classey, witty and energetic, has been known to leave a mint julep in mid-air in order to spring for a butterfly net and race full tilt across the lawn in pursuit of a new specimen. And Basil Harley, a naturalist, ornithologist, conservationist and entomological collector in his own right, is uncompromising in the proper usage of the English language and in the quality of work produced by The Curwen Press. Miss Truda Temkin deserves our special thanks for typographical design of a highly complex work. One must actually visit the Press in order to gain an appreciation of the interest taken by every single member of the plant in each step of the production of this work. It is as though each individual working there feels a personal pride in its outcome, and it is a most heart-warming experience.

One must undoubtedly be slightly mad to engage in the pursuit of Entomology, but one day Dr. Franclemont looked across the laboratory from his microscope and made the ultimate remark: "How fortunate", said he, "is that man whose vocation is his avocation."

*Richard B. Dominick*  
*Charles R. Edwards*

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McClellanville, South Carolina

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