

## Creating Post Soulsby Numbers

### Background :

The creation of an on-line union catalogue of Linnaean material requires that there be a common link between items held at different institutions. After considerable discussion and debate, the Linnaeus Link Project team decided that the Soulsby number is the most logical link between copy-specific items. Using the Soulsby number to identify publications will allow catalogue records to be replicated by participating institutions and then altered with copy specific details.

Basil Harrington Soulsby (1864-1933) compiled the standard Linnaean bibliography *A catalogue of the works of Linnaeus (and publications more immediately relating thereto) preserved in the Libraries of the British Museum (Bloomsbury) and the British Museum (Natural History) (South Kensington)*. London: The British Museum, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 1933. This is available on-line as a .pdf file at <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/projects/linnaeus-link/>

Details of the arrangement of the content of the catalogue are given in the Introduction prepared by A. C. Townsend. Essentially, the items are grouped thematically under twenty headings and within those headings, works are listed chronologically by publication date. "Translations, adaptations, facsimiles, and indices follow in chronological order the editions of the original work to which they refer." The catalogue covers works published up to 1931, and there is an appendix as well as addenda and corrigenda.

According to Soulsby's system, a unique number is assigned to each book, to each edition, to each translation, to each altered edition and each journal article, which worked well with items known prior to 1931, the date of publication of Soulsby's book.

### Issue:

Currently, there are no internationally recognized Soulsby numbers available to assign to items published from 1931 on. Occasionally, it has also occurred that material published before 1931 has not been assigned a Soulsby number.

### Proposal :

It is proposed that the use of Soulsby numbers be continued using a different method. This will require assigning new or Post Soulsby Numbers to material published from 1931 on or to items unidentified prior to 1931. These items will be identified by a unique Post Soulsby Number. Using these numbers will help us achieve a common link between electronic records of the same title held at different institutions and allow for an accurate, efficient internationally accessible on-line union catalogue.

The Post Soulsby Number will be a sequential continuation from the last Soulsby number 3874. The first Post Soulsby Number is 3875.

The assignment and recording of the Post Soulsby Number sequence will be maintained electronically on the Linnaeus Link Project Web site at <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/projects/linnaeus-link/documents/assets/postsoulsby.pdf>. This will enable Linnaeus Link Project Partners to assign Post Soulsby Numbers for post-1931 or previously unknown pre-1931 items held in their collections. This resource however will not be made available until such time as the catalogue of Natural History Museum (NHM) Linnaean material is made available through the union catalogue.

### Case Study - NHM Soulsby Numbers :

In the Library of the NHM a rather complicated system evolved of uniquely identifying Linnaean items that were published or became known after 1931. This involved assigning to existing Soulsby numbers an alphabetic code indicative of the date of publication, in order to place the item within the sequence of numbers as recorded in the Soulsby bibliography. These alpha-numeric identifiers are confusing and difficult to use. Additionally the alpha-numeric identifiers are not used outside the NHM meaning a common that a common Soulsby number link between institutional items for post 1931 material is not possible.

In order to implement the proposed Post Soulsby Number system for items that were published or become known after 1931, NHM staff reviewed and edited their existing records. Items identified by an NHM Soulsby number were assigned a new, sequential Post Soulsby Number.

Both the Soulsby number and Post Soulsby Number are recorded in the MARC 510 field. Standardized data entry requires that the data be recorded in the following way: Soulsby no. 5; Post Soulsby no. 3875. It is the data in this field that will be used to establish links to copies held in other institutions.

The old alpha-numeric number assigned in-house by staff at the Natural History Museum is recorded in MARC field 597. Standardized data entry requires that the data be recorded in the following way: NHM Soulsby no. 3120apa.

The implementation of the Post Soulsby Number system has necessitated physical change. Blue slips of paper associated with each item on the shelf have been edited to show the newly assigned Post Soulsby Number. The items will need to be re-shelved according to their new number arrangement. The number of items affected by the decision to implement the Post Soulsby Number was deemed few enough to make the task achievable.

### Conclusion:

As a result of assigning Post Soulsby Numbers, an international union catalogue of Linnaean material can be created. However, this will require that Linnaeus Link Partners adopt the use of the Soulsby and Post Soulsby Number systems. It is essential that all Partners use Soulsby and Post Soulsby numbers. Without these unique identifiers there will be no way within the union catalogue to link copy specific records from other institutions with the core bibliographic record catalogued from the NHM Linnaean collection.