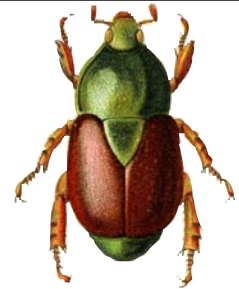


# SCARABS

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## *Stenothorax* Hunting in Winter

by Paul O. Kaufman

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As we dug through the frozen earth that sat atop my cover boards, I suddenly spied something shiny – a scarab! I exclaimed to my friend and fellow fool, Lynford Miller, “There’s one!” I gently moved the cover board aside and set it on top of the crusty snow. We peered down into the burrow with the flashlight, to behold...

We planned a trip to central Nevada in mid-January and I wanted to try some gopher burrow trapping. The area we planned to visit is called the Diamond Valley and sits on the west side of the Diamond Mountains at around 6,000 feet. It is a very flat farming area that grows tremendous alfalfa hay in the areas with pivots. I believed that pocket gophers should be plentiful, so we packed a small bucket with enough equipment for a few traps.

Lynford assured me that we could find some pocket gopher push-

ups but was skeptical about the beetles. There was 6-10 inches of crusty snow on the ground and it was cold – below zero at night and 30’s (F) during the day. Would there be beetles active under these conditions?

It took awhile Saturday morning to find the shovels, digging bar and pick, since it wasn’t digging season on the farm. The temperature was in the teens. Finally we were on our way to a neighbors pivot. Lynford had trapped all the gophers out of his fields – 800-900 in the last couple years.

We shifted the pickup into 4-wheel drive to get down the field lane that was drifted in with snow. About half-way in to the lane, we ground to a stop. We hoped that after setting the traps, we could get out without the help of the big tractor which was many miles away. There were patches of dirt strewn about on top of the snow half way to the pivot center – the work of badgers. This would be a

good place to work.

We gathered up the digging equipment and started toward the center of the field. The going was rough. We broke through the crust with nearly every step and the snow robbed our legs of energy and our lungs of oxygen. All the while, we were looking carefully at the snow surface for any telltale sign of gopher activity beneath. Finally Lynford spotted something different – a pushup barely visible under the snow.



Paul with sieves purchased at a mining supplies store. They fit nicely in a 5-gallon bucket, and are ideal for sifting sand or detritus for scarabs.

We shoveled away the snow on top and then set to work with the pick and digging bar. The soil was frozen down 6-8 inches and hard as a rock. We finally found an area with softer unfrozen dirt where the gopher had plugged the pushup. Lynford dug down through this area and found the run! He excavated this while I went back to the truck for the trapping supplies.

I set a gopher trap in each tunnel leading from our hole, then placed a deli cup containing antifreeze in the center. Suspended over this I placed a small portion cup of bait. I've been using dehydrated deer dung for bait and can testify that it is much more "user friendly" than anything else. We poured a little hot water from a thermos into the cup of dung to make a nice "tea". The hole was then covered with my cover boards and dirt. We would see on Monday morning what would happen.

The effort to get this one trap in was enough that we decided to not do any more. After all, there was little chance of success in this foolish waste of time. We wondered if the badgers would dig up our excavation and ruin everything.

We were anxious the next couple days wondering what was going on down in the burrow. Sunday was sunny and "warm" – in the 30's (F), but Monday morning dawned clear and cold. Lynford's thermometer said -3° F at 5:30 AM when we needed to head

out to check the trap. Before we returned an hour later it had dipped to -7° F.

Back to the beginning of the story... We were so excited – the folly had worked! We had a beetle and it was on the top of the cover board. Did that mean that these beetles had been active on the surface on Sunday during the “warm” afternoon? I had used 3 smaller cover boards to save space on the drive up, so it took some time to get them all cleared. We eventually found a second beetle on top of another board during our excavation, so our effort was a success – even if the trap was buried by gophers as many often are.

Our main flashlight battery had died. We were down to one smaller light and I was worried it would give out before we finished. Would the traps be buried and frozen into a block of rock-hard soil? How long would we have to pick at the blob to free my traps? We were both anxious as I carefully lifted the last cover board and Lynford shined the feeble light down the hole.

There was the deli cup – containing no dirt, but lots of beetles! There was also a single beetle on the tunnel floor near the cup. I wasted no time in pulling the pitfall out of the ground and carefully set it on the crusty snow. It would not do to spill that cup now! When I pulled on my trap cables, they both came free easily. There had been no gopher activity here over the weekend.

We filled in the hole as well as we could under the conditions and carefully carried everything back to Lynford’s truck as fast as we could. We were pretty well frozen by then but were elated at our success. The beetles keyed to *Stenothorax nevadensis* (Horn, 1887) by Paul Skelley and Bill Warner. I can hardly wait to do more trapping in the Diamond Valley!



*Stenothorax nevadensis* (Horn, 1887). Photo courtesy Paul E. Skelley.

# New Record for *Podischnus agenor* (Olivier, 1789) in Nicaragua

by Paul O. Kaufman

*Podischnus agenor* (Olivier, 1789) is a dynastine scarab beetle that occurs from southern México to Colombia, Perú, and Ecuador. It is widely distributed in western El Salvador, but no records existed for Nicaragua and Honduras. (Ratcliffe and Cave, 2006)

I recently received a shipment of specimens from my friend, missionary Pablo Yoder, from Waslala Nicaragua. There are many nice dung beetles (get ready Bill!) as well as a good selection of Curculionidae (Pablo's favorite). Among them was one very distinctive looking major male that



*Podischnus agenor* (Olivier, 1789)

I had not seen in person. A quick look through *The Dynastine Scarab Beetles of Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador* gave me the identity of the specimen – *Podischnus agenor*. The label data is as follows: 6-6-07, Big Horn, House, Pablo [Blue Label].

With either the European or U.S. method of abbreviating dates, this would be June 6, 2007 or for those who are “challenged” this way I will translate – 6.vi.2007.

From previous collecting trips, I can supply the following additional locality information: Nicaragua / Matagalpa / Waslala / 13° 19.933N / 085° 22.513W / 1, 200 feet.

Pablo did not include any information on the context of his discovery with the specimen. Having been found in countries bordering Nicaragua this record is not unexpected. Brett Ratcliffe said he would “not be surprised at this” (Brett Ratcliffe, pers. comm.).

My thanks to Pablo Yoder for collecting this specimen. A special thanks to Brett Ratcliffe for the wonderful book and confirming my identification.

## References Cited:

Ratcliffe, B.C. and Ronald D, Cave, 2006. *The Dynastine Scarab Beetles of Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador*. University of Nebraska State Museum, 424pp.

## In Past Years - VII - Late 1950's - Early 60's

by Henry F. Howden

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Before Anne and I moved to Canada in 1957, we went in the field with a good friend, Professor Jack Sharp of the University of Tennessee Botany Department. We forgave him being a botanist as his broad knowledge of plants, etc., was very handy and he was fun to be with in the field. The first time he saw Anne and me collecting with our beating sheets he swore he was going to write us up as a new disease of plants!

He also had some good stories about himself. When he was working in México he had a mule driver that seemed to be the only one who could make the mule move. Jack would load the animal, but could not get him to move. The mule driver would wet his fingers, reach into a small sac and disappear behind the mule. Shortly thereafter the mule would start rapidly up the path. Jack asked what he did, but got no answer until at the end of the trip the driver showed Jack a wet jalapeno pepper and said it always worked when placed in the mule's rectum.\*

Another time, when in a remote area of Guatemala with a guide that spoke the local Indian dialect, Jack and the guide would pass small groups of Indians. At first the Indians would smile and stand to one side. Jack would smile in return, wave and continue on. He noticed that, as he was leaving, all the Indians looked very unhappy,

while his guide was smothering his laughter. After this happened several times, Jack asked the guide what was so funny. The guide replied that the only people the Indians ever saw were priests and they were expecting to be blessed. Jack, a Presbyterian, thought for a minute and realized that the Indians probably didn't know Latin. The next group he met, he made a sign of the cross (Presbyterian style) and said "*Rhus toxicodendron*, *Quercus albus*, etc., and left the Indians smiling!

His field interest was contagious and about 12 of his students suggested a botanical field trip to southern Florida during the spring break. Jack had never worked in the area, so he and the students took off for a week, loaded with books and keys to the plants of southern Florida. After arrival Jack would find a flowering plant, break off samples, and ask the students to identify the sample. He often had to key out the plant himself as he did not know the area very well. South of Miami the class found a strange tree in bloom and Jack passed around samples to be keyed out. To everyone's horror it keyed to *Metopium toxiferum* (L.), the Florida Poison Tree. The next day everyone, including Jack, had a severe rash and they all came back to Knoxville several days early!

*\*Editors' Note: So that's the way to put some fire in the ass.*

Jack was also interested in our light collecting and volunteered to run a light at his house in the woods near Knoxville. His light was a 250-watt bulb hung over a wash tub filled with water. A day or so later he presented me with two paper shopping bags full of *Phyllophaga* drowned in the washtub, which he had collected the night before. As I had a two hour class then, I left the bags in my office to attend to later. To my surprise, most of the beetles revived from their “drowning” and were flying around in my office when I returned. It took two days to clear my office of live beetles and I took two gallon jars full of *Phyllophaga* with me when we moved to Canada. They were useful in training technicians and included some rare species; 4 uniques in about 2,000 beetles for a total of 19 species.

We moved to Canada in August, 1957, arriving in Ottawa on Friday, the 2nd. Emigration was simple in those days. All we needed was a chest x-ray, a doctor’s report saying we were healthy and a job to go to. All the paper work was done in 15 minutes and a strip of paper 2 inches wide and 6 inches long for each member of the family was issued at the Thousand Island crossing, and that was that. We had been invited to stay in the home of Bill and Edith Mason while they went away for a month’s collecting. Edith met us at their door and told me to go at once to the Neatby Building, home of the Canadian National Collection (CNC) on the Experimental Farm and sign in so that I would be

paid for the weekend. That done, we then learned that it was a long weekend, the Civic Holiday (first Monday in August) and everything was closed. By everything we mean the drug stores, gas stations, movies, etc. So we put off house hunting until Tuesday, found a place by Thursday (23 Trillium Ave.) and got established in my new office. The Coleopterist section consisted of Bill Brown, Ed Becker and myself (all originally from the U.S.), and two technicians. George Holland, our director, saw the three of us walking down the hall one Fourth of July and said “Here come the Yanks”. We replied “Better the Yanks than the Jerks”. The subject was not raised again.

As was usual in those days, during the first year at the CNC a new staff member was sent out to meet people at the various experiment stations across Canada. Anne, two children (a third was added later) and I left in our old ’49 Ford in April 1958 for British Columbia. We made a number of stops along the way before we got to Creston, B.C. There we met Gordon Stace Smith, a dedicated B.C. beetle collector and a true old-time character. We were due to meet on that day, but he wasn’t at home; we finally found him in the local pub. We then went back to his house and set up camp in his back yard. By profession, Gordon was a hard-rock miner and had worked in many parts of Canada. He fit the picture of an old miner perfectly: unshaven, well worn clothes and a distinct taste for large quantities of beer. His house needed some repairs: for example, three

pails were placed in various rooms to catch water from a leaky roof. A slop bucket resided on the side porch. This, our 4-year old daughter promptly fell into one day; it took hours to clean her up! To change the picture, Gordon had two books of very good poetry published and a beautifully mounted and identified collection of mostly B.C. beetles that now reside in the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Gordon was somewhat put out when we dug up an aphodiine that was new to him in a gopher nest in his yard. A six pack of beer helped him recover!

From Creston we moved on to Oliver in the Okanagan Valley of south-central B.C. and found a small motel at the southern end of a lake just north of town. It was run by a school teacher who taught in Vancouver and came out to tend to the motel on weekends. We were lucky to arrive on a weekend, as no rooms were rented during the week. We cooked and ate our meals at the motel. We quickly noticed how much business the owner was missing, so we suggested we could rent out rooms for him but did not want to clean them up. So we did and he was happy enough to let us stay rent-free the rest of the time! We had good collecting, saw the local rattlesnake, cactus etc., and met some interesting people, including George Ball and Karl Lindroth, who were on a collecting trip themselves (Photo 1). Later, one of the families we met wrote us that their first letter was blown up in the Oliver Post Office by the Dukhobors (a Russian religious

group that migrated to Canada in 1898 to escape persecution). They were protesting some government edict, usually by blowing up power lines, etc.

While still in the Okanagan, Dick Selander invited me to join him on a one month trip to México during August. I was very surprised when I got the OK from Ottawa! We left Oliver and drove, with some stops, to Vancouver, then back to Ottawa. I was home for a week or so, before leaving to join Dick in Urbana, Illinois. Dick had a car that took high test gas, and often in México we could get only “gasolina” which was closely related to kerosine. Our car knocked even on the level; Dick’s remarks will not be repeated here. We started collecting near Monterrey, Nuevo León, and for the first time I realized that we often had unwanted help (Photo 2, next page). My lighting consisted of a Coleman Lantern and some times the “help” added grasshoppers or other unwanted



**Photo1: George Ball and Carl Lindroth on a hill beside Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1958.**



Photo 2: Dick Selander at light with two “helpers” near Monterrey, Nuevo León, México.

items to our bottles of beetles. From Monterrey, we drove down the east coast side of México as far as the city of Veracruz and over to Chilpancingo in Guerrero. While Dick knew Spanish, I didn't and got thoroughly exasperated trying to tell a farmer why I was digging under dung in his field! However, it was a great introduction to México, even though I was frustrated much of the time. Dick was mainly interested



Photo 3: Cave entrance near Kerrville, Texas. Left to right: Hazen Wigmore (CNC Editor), Bill Mason, Ed Becker.

in flower-feeding meloids, and would stop for a brief period, then he would want to move on. I, having just found a pile of dung or a burrow to dig, would want to stay. Dick would usually get his way (it was his car), but in the long run I got to see far more of México than I would have at a slower pace. I did learn a few things, particularly the true meaning of the word “mañana”. At times we needed to get some clothes washed and we were told that they would be ready “mañana”. Two days later, when we had to leave, the clothes would still be soaking and we would have to leave with wet clothes draped all over the car and hanging out the windows; that happened several times. I also learned that such terms as “puente angosto” were not localities! It was a great introduction to México and made me work on my “Spanglish”.

In the 50's and 60's the Entomology unit of Canada Agriculture (included in “Science Service” at the time) sent groups of us into the field and in 1959 five of us spent April near Kerrville, Texas, and May in the Big Bend region. It was early spring when we arrived in Kerrville. The collecting was good when it wasn't raining, which it did frequently. Because of the rain, we decided to collect in some of the numerous caves that occurred in the area (Photo 3). Some new insects turned up, but more interesting was the histoplasmosis that a number of us came down with. Apparently it is common in bat caves and symptoms differ from person to person. My symptoms were like a bad cold with a nasty headache that lasted about



a week. A few months later my chest x-ray “looked like a rail yard with blackish lines” according to the doctor. We were slowed down a little, but not much. Most of our collecting was on the Kerrville experiment station where they were working on screw worm control. To get to the station one took a fairly long, straight, narrow dirt road that had a high wire fence on each side. Fields on each side, part of the station, were rather open, mixed forest, oak, dogwood, etc., and lots of deer. One night about 10:30 PM when leaving after running a black light, a deer ran in the field to the right, jumped the fence about 20 yards in front of me, got blinded by the car headlights and ran full tilt into the fence on the other side of the road. It backed off, shook its head and then ran directly at me. I had stopped the car by that time, but left the lights on. The deer ran full speed into the center of the hood, backed up, shook its head again and then jumped the fence on the left. I wondered what red tape would be necessary to explain why a government car had a dent in the hood. When I examined the car in the daylight all I found was a tuft of hair and, thankfully, no dent. How many times does a stopped car get hit by a deer???

At the end of April we moved to Big Bend National Park. The first thing the Head Ranger said to us - “Why come here in May? It is the hottest, driest month of the year”. We explained that no one had seemed to collect at that time of the year, so we thought we might find some different insects.

He shook his head and wished us luck. We settled into the Basin in our “cabins” which were merely plywood walls and a roof and floor with the same type of facilities as the camp ground. Meals were served in another building which also had other uses. The first four days were spent finding the few permanent springs around the main uplift. There were a number of insects at the springs including cerambycids, but no scarabs. Then on the fifth day it rained! There was enough rain to flood some of the “dry” washes and more insects started to appear. Black lighting started to be very productive and got even better when it rained again two days later. A day later Ed Becker and I had a chance to visit Black Gap Game Refuge just east of the park. A dirt road went to the Refuge, crossing a large dry wash and finally reaching the refuge buildings, then continuing on to the Rio Grande. That night it rained hard, so we did not run the black light. It poured all night and the next morning we started back to our Big Bend cabin, collecting along the way. About noon we arrived at the dry wash which was no longer “dry”; the wash was full of water and about 50 feet wide and four or five feet deep. One pickup truck was stuck in the middle, with the water covering its hood. One pick-up-truck was ahead of us on our side, and we could see several others on the other side. While we sat there wondering what to do, one of our tires went flat. We changed the tire, collected some beetles at the road side and then another truck came up behind us. The cheerful news was that the wash was likely to run for two or three

days! However the truck behind us had a long cable and figured that he might make it across and by leaving one end of the cable attached to the truck in front of us, he could be pulled out if he got stuck. If he made it across we could pull one of the trucks on the other side over and so on. Our station wagon was the last to be pulled over with water running over the hood. The truck that pulled us over had the back bumper bent into a broad “v” shape. We finally made it back to the Basin, tired and hungry.

For scarabs, black lighting was great at the lower elevations; we often went to Hot Springs, an old motel site near the Rio Grande. There we collected *Podostena*, and many other scarabs; but it was HOT, about 100° F at midnight. The most excitement we had came from a large solpugid that got inside my shirt. The shirt was short sleeved and not tucked in. The solpugid would pop out of one sleeve, and before Ed could brush it off it would go back under my shirt to appear somewhere else. The shirt came off rather quickly, minus some buttons, and the solpugid disappeared under a bush. We also had “fun” counting the number of rattlesnakes we saw on the road when driving back to the basin after black lighting—never less than three or four. When we left at the end of May, it had rained at least 9 inches and the ranger again just shook his head as it equaled the annual rainfall. Later we were told that the usual August rains did not come that year.

On our way back we stopped at Fort Davis for nearly a week. Shortly thereafter consternation prevailed; Fort Davis and the county was dry! I don't mean that it hadn't rained; they didn't sell beer or any other alcohol. It was a long drive to end the drought! The thing I remember most about Fort Davis was the number of *Pyrophorus* click beetles that illuminated the hillsides in Limpia Canyon for several nights. We arrived back in Ottawa with enough insects to keep all of us busy for some time.

Much of my field work in 1960 was in México with George Vogt, a saga which was mentioned earlier. When I left George in Texas I took the train to Lordsburg, New Mexico. I arrived there at 2 AM, went to the hotel across the road and asked for a call at 8 AM. When I asked the next morning about the bus to Portal (Southwestern Research Station) I was told it had stopped running several years ago. I then asked about a taxi and was informed that they, too, had gone out of business. I then tried to call the SW Research Station, only to be told that the line was out of service! My best bet, I was told at the hotel, was to cross the street to the service station and try hitch-hiking, and that is what I did. I had been at it for perhaps 5 minutes when a Bell telephone truck pulled up for gas. I told him that their service to Portal was down. He found this odd as he said he had just fixed it! He tried a call to Portal with no luck, called his office, and I had a ride! I still think having the line down was very kind of Bell. My week at the SW Research Station was largely uneventful except the darned bears kept tearing up my

traps at Rustlers Park. I then got a lift to Phoenix, flew home and survived a typical Ottawa winter, at that time with about 10 feet of snow.

Winter always produced itchy feet, so in May of 1961, Jack Martin, our senior technician and most experienced field man, and I headed for Durango, México. We drove a Ford station wagon pulling my home-made camping trailer. It was cool and dry most of the way to El Paso where we crossed into México. There it was the dry season and much of the way to the city of Chihuahua was barren and very dry. In Chihuahua we learned that there was a new National Park to the west of the city and were told that a dirt road went into the park. We left our trailer at a motel in town and drove to the park. No one had told us that once into the hills the "road" followed a dry creek bed with a number of lumber trucks churning up the creek bed. We later learned that the "National Park" was on paper only. At that time, the Director of parks for México had a secretary and an assistant, but no funds to leave México City. So the lumber trucks were busy removing all large trees out of the park. As we went up into the hills the driving became difficult, our car hitting bottom and bouncing over some large rocks. We saw a pack rat nest near the "road" and decided it was a good place to stop. When the nest was excavated, we found an adult female *Copris arizonicus* with brood balls about a foot beneath the floor of the nest. The brood balls contained teneral



Photo 4: *Cotinis* (perhaps *rufipennis* Bates) from packrat nest near Durango.

adults, probably waiting for the first rains before emerging. We turned back and when the "road" improved noted an odd thumping sound coming from the bottom of the car. Inspection showed that we had bent the drive shaft enough so that part of the universal joint hit the floor of the car with every rotation. We took the car to a garage recommended by the motel, expecting a long delay and a large bill. The drive shaft was loosened, a block of wood inserted, a sledge hammer used to straighten the shaft, and an hour later we were back on the road. The bill: ten U.S. dollars.

We headed for the city of Durango through some of the driest, most over-grazed areas we had seen yet. We stopped overnight in Durango City, got supplies and then headed west on the road to Mazatlan on the coast. We passed the lumber town, El Salto, and after about eight miles pulled off the road into a small clearing. It did not seem to be a good place to camp, so we started to move

on. To get back on the road we had to go up a fairly steep embankment with loose gravel. The car pulling our small trailer simply spun its wheels part way up, and after several tries we realized we were in trouble. If the trailer was detached, we could make it, but then how to get the trailer on to the road? Finally we drove the car and trailer as far as possible, then put a large rock under a back wheel of the car. We then gunned the car, let the clutch out quickly, which jumped the car forward a foot or so before stalling; another rock was then quickly placed behind a wheel.

Finally we got back on the road and a mile or so later found a good site well off the road in an oak-pine grove (Photo 5). There I set out a number of dung traps using small tin cans that we had emptied along the way. The following day I was puzzled to find most of my traps



Photo 5: Camp west of El Salto, Durango, 8,400' elevation, 1961.

missing! I had the answer the next day; I saw several Indians wearing a tin can with the ends cut out, as wrist ornaments. In the few remaining traps I did collect a few *Onthophagus*, but nothing unusual; it was still very dry.

The next day, as we started to pack up to leave, a man on horseback came up and informed us in good English that we shouldn't camp there as it belonged to the lumber company; he even gave me a card with the name of the company (this came in handy a year later). Apparently we had been observed for several days, but were told not to camp only when leaving!

Two days later we reached San Blas, Nayarit, which, at that time, had a small area of wet, coastal, tropical forest. There I found some activity, digging up fresh brood balls of *Copris* along with the adults plus other scarabs. There were also lots of nice (?) seed ticks. From there we headed to Guadalajara.

On the way the car started to over-heat and steam. On investigation the radiator cap seemed to be crooked, so using a cloth over the cap I took it off. I had not counted on the pressure build up, and hot water sprayed over part of my face and my left hand. Eye glasses saved much of my face and our host at Guadalajara, Dr. Morse, took care of my hand.

Collecting started to get better, *Diplotaxis* on *Acacia*; and *Anomala*, etc. on other plants, but nothing unusual. Left the next day, drove back to Durango through Zacatecas,

again dry, barren with not much green except yuccas.

After a night in the city, we drove to a camp site 30 miles west of Durango. Weevils on pine and fragments of *Geotrupes*, but still not much activity (May 5). Moved camp to “Buenos Aires”, 10 miles west of La Ciudad at the edge of the drop off to the coast. *Phyllophaga*, *Anomala* and *Diploaxis* came to light.

The next morning we drove to Mazatlan and that night took *Ataenius*, *Aphodius* and two species of *Phyllophaga*, plus cerambycids and other beetles at light.

We worked our way north along the coast to Ciudad Obregón, where we met Bill Gibson, who was living there at the time. Collecting was good near the beach and inland near the Obregón Dam. We even collected *Acoma*! We collected in the area until May 20 when Jack, Bill and I flew up in a small 4-seat Cessna to Yécora, Sonora.

At that time Yécora was a small lumber town, not set up for tourists (Photo 6). We arrived at 7 AM and spent until noon making arrangements for lodging and transport, both primitive. Our transport was an old pick-up-truck (the only transport in town) with a gas can hung on the driver's door; the fuel pump didn't work. It bothered us that the driver smoked! In the afternoon the driver took us to the nearby woods composed mainly of oak trees (the large pines long gone). It was dry and cool, the



Photo 6: Elaborate sign for Yécora, Sonora, México. Perhaps the town is bigger now.



Photo 7: Main street of Yécora, with our “hotel” on the left.

trees newly leafed out. Collecting was slow, so we started turning over rocks and were surprised to find some large scarab brood balls under some of the larger stones. These, when we returned to Ciudad Obregón, were left with Bill, reared to adults and were found to represent a new species of *Deltochilum*! We stayed out until dark, then went to our “hotel” (Photo 7) and tried to get something to eat. Some tortillas and beef jerky was all they had -

near the end of the dry season. We retired early to our burlap beds; Jack and I woke up about 1AM, both of us with “tourista”. No details are needed; we got out of town at sun up and wondered what one did with dysentery in a small airplane. We would be in Yécora for two more days and by evening went looking for something safe to eat. We went to every shop in town (all two of them) and could only find one old box of corn flakes and a can of abalone. There was no bread or anything else we considered safe, so that is what we had to eat for two days; fortunately there were plenty of soft drinks and beer. We spent the days in the forest and by the last day had mostly recovered; except we were getting hungry.

When we got back to town that evening, we learned that we were expected to go to a dance party as guests of the town. Three girls had just reached marriageable age and most of the town turned out for the occasion. We objected as



Photo 8: Gayle Nelson in the California desert near the México border, 1961.

we had been in our field clothes for four days, hadn't shaved, and also mentioned that field boots were not made for dancing. Our arguments didn't work; we were taken to the dance and found all the younger females in long, formal dresses and the men in jackets, ties, etc. We survived the evening, helped by lots of free beer, but were glad to fly back to Ciudad Obregón the next morning, May 24.

One day was spent cleaning up and curating, the next day we said goodbye to Bill and left for Hermosillo, Sonora. That night we collected about three miles north of town in a dry wash and took several species of *Acoma*, some *Phyllophaga* and a moderate number of other beetles.

The next day we arrived in the U.S. and camped that night at Pena Blanca Lake. Then on to Tucson, where I put Jack onto a plane for his return to Ottawa.

On May 29 I drove on by myself to Yuma and collected 12 miles north in a dry wash; took *Acoma*, *Polyphylla*, *Anomala*, *Cyclocephala*, and numerous other scarabs. The next day I drove to Colton, California, and met Gayle Nelson. Spent a day looking at his collection, then we both left on a short trip to San Felipe, Baja California. We collected for two days near there, getting two species of *Acoma* that I particularly wanted. Then we spent time collecting in the U.S. just along the Mexican border

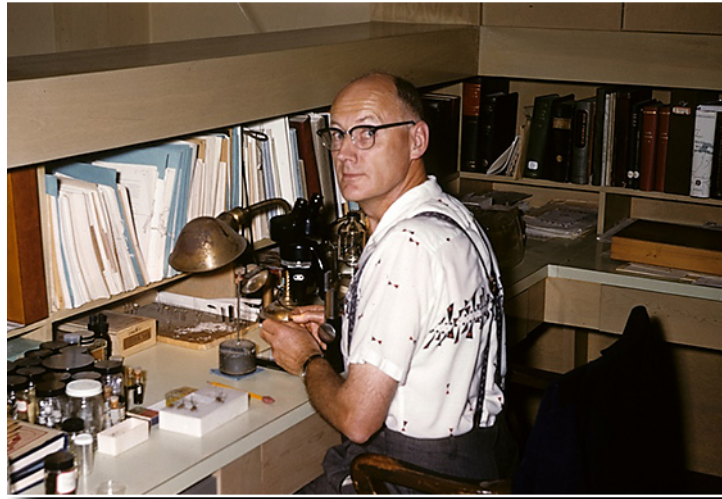
(Photo 8, previous page).

We pulled off the road one night into a sandy mesquite area to black light; we had some great collecting and started to leave about 1 AM. We hadn't noticed a small ditch by the road and got truly mired. We dug, jacked the car up, put brush under the wheels, all with no luck. We were STUCK. We had decided we were spending the night there when along came a small truck with four Mexicans. They saw our problem, took out a chain, and in less than five minutes had us on the road! We offered to pay them, but no, thanks was all they would take! I still remember them with gratitude.

A day later I dropped Gayle off and went north to China Lake where I joined Norman Rumpp. Two days were spent with Norman, partly admiring his beautiful collection of cicindellids. From there I went to the Wofford Heights area where I had some great collecting.

Then onto Bakersfield and the San Joaquin Valley; it was HOT (about 115° F in the shade). The Ford station wagon pulling my small trailer started over heating on the level and every 15 minutes I had to stop and throw water on the radiator (not in it). I finally made it to San Luis Obispo with temperatures in the 70's (F)!

From there I drove up the coast to San Francisco, where I was to meet Anne and our daughters (now three of them) who were flying out from Ottawa. Anne



**Photo 9: Hugh Leech at his desk, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California.**

and family were to fly to Toronto where they were to go through U.S. customs and change planes, taking a flight to Chicago. There they would change again to a direct flight to San Francisco. When I got to the SF airport to meet them, I was told that the flight had been cancelled! I asked which flight they would transfer to and was told they didn't know, but I could go home and they would call me! When I explained that home was in Ottawa, they had no solution - so I met every inbound flight coming from Chicago. About an hour later and the third flight arriving for Chicago, Anne and the children appeared sans luggage except for a diaper bag Anne thought she had left in Chicago when changing to a different flight. We spent several hours trying to find out about the luggage with no luck, so went to a motel near the California Academy of Sciences.

We spent four days there with Hugh Leech (Photo 9) and on the second day had to buy the family some

clothes as there was still no word on the lost bags. At that time we did not have a credit card and the cost of clothes put a dent in our plans. After that we drove to Davis where, surprise, our bags caught up with us! It turned out that they had been put on a plane for Vancouver, had to clear customs again and then be sent to San Francisco! On our trip back we camped first near Lake Tahoe, later in the Black Hills, and finally arrived in Ottawa on July 18, 1961. For me, it was a trip of more than 14,000 miles in five months.

Material collected in the past few years indicated that, in order to understand the Canadian - U.S. scarab fauna, one should also have an understanding of the Mexican species. It was not difficult at that time to sell that argument, so in 1962 I was authorized to spend three to four months working at the British Museum (Natural History), London, and a lesser time at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

While it was great to work with Ev Britton (who later went to work at the C.S.I.R.O. in Australia), Bob Pope and Brian Selman, it was not the usual field trip; most of the time was spent looking through a microscope. A few incidents are worth mentioning.

After a few weeks at the British Museum some religious tracts appeared by my microscope. I can't say they interested me; I wondered why someone thought they could convert me. Then, one

day when I took the cover off of my microscope there was a small model of a French street side "pissaire" (urinal) sitting on the stage. Brian Selman told me that it and the religious tracts were the efforts at humor by Mr. Duffy (Cerambycids, particularly larvae).

Shortly after that Brian showed me an Australian chrysomelid and asked me how it differed from a cerambycid; it had slightly emarginate eyes, antennae as long as the body, etc., and, if I remember correctly, the larvae were found in grass stems. There was something that made it a chrysomelid, but I don't remember. We boxed up a specimen and sent it to Mr. Duffy for identification without using our names. The next day we heard Mr. Duffy pulling drawers for several hours and later the box appeared on Brian's desk with a note asking "could this possibly be a chrysomelid?" We had a good laugh and I believe Mr. Duffy heard us; no more tracts or other similar items subsequently appeared on my desk.

Then there were trips to Oxford and the Hope Museum. There I found that many of the scarabs that interested me were stored in the attic. I was amazed to find a drawer or so full of mounted, labeled, unsorted, undetermined chrysomelids collected by Charles Darwin in the East Indies. I almost wished that I worked on chrysomelids! I did tell Brian about them. I also found series of *Biologia* scarabs that were apparently more than Bates wanted and were



“surplus” and given to the Hope collection.

Anne, with a separate grant, was with me for several months. On one of our day trips to Oxford, we were invited for dinner by Eric Classey. After dinner coffee was served; since I don't drink coffee, I asked for tea. I was looked at with disbelief and told that it was not served after dinner, it was impossible to do so. So much for tea drinkers!

Then Eric had to tell his favorite joke - the one about the priest and passenger that, while driving, hit and seemingly killed a rabbit. The passenger was upset, the priest said wait a minute and pulled out a bottle and sprinkled some liquid on the rabbit, which shortly thereafter sat up, then hopped away. The passenger, most impressed, asked the priest if he could have some of the “holy water”. The priest then said “That's not holy water, it is hair restorer”. We have probably heard Eric tell that story three or four times over the years.

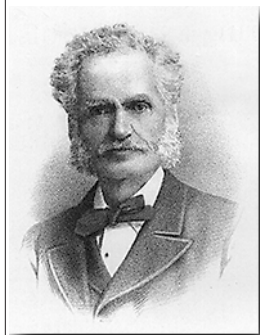
A brief trip to Paris was very productive, since I found that the Bates' collection (in the Oberthür collection) contained duplicates of almost all of the *Biologia* scarab species, plus some uniques that were described in footnotes of the scarab volume. The same was true for cerambycids.

Finally time and money ran out and I returned to Ottawa with a shoe box full of index cards on the *Biologia* scarab species: how

many of each species were in the British Museum, were the specimens figured male or female, in some cases drawings of genitalia, etc. More importantly, if I couldn't match the species and there were three or more specimens of that species, then an exchange was made, with the British Museum getting a set of Carl Lindroth's carabids of Canada for examples of the *Biologia* species. This was done for most species of scarabs except *Phyllophaga* and *Diplotaxis*. There were about a dozen species that were represented by one or two specimens that I couldn't match. The genus *Anomala* (*sensu lato*) was an exception, since Bates did not name a number of the species he had; named ones were mostly matched. So, for those short of funds to get to England that are interested in Central American - Mexican scarabs, start with the CNC collection.

The next year, 1963, was without funds, as the government decided to cut funding in a number of areas. Fortunately Anne was offered some research funds, so we used our private car and set off with our daughters for Monterrey, Nuevo León, México.

We met Ross Arnett and his family at the Mexican border and drove to the Siesta Motel about five miles south of Monterrey; at that time the motel was out of town with nearby collecting. Ross had a large camper fastened to the bed of a truck with a generator attached to the overhang and a house trailer hitched onto the truck. He needed it with his seven or eight children! Mary Arnett told the story that on the way down they stopped for gas and it was later, 50 miles further



Henry Walter Bates, 1825-1892. See *Scarabs* #10 for more information.

on, that they discovered that a child had been left at the filling station. The Arnett children, combined with our three and the four of the motel owners, made quite a mob. During our stay there were several birthday parties, Mexican style. It was fun.

We found good collecting in a canyon (El Diente) behind the motel until one day a local child brought Ross a large click beetle (*Chalcolepidius?*). Ross thanked him and gave him a peso. That was a mistake!! Suddenly children appeared from all directions with grasshoppers, butterflies or anything else and asked for pesos. We told them that we only wanted certain kinds of beetles, but that made no difference, there were a lot of unhappy children that expressed themselves by throwing rocks! We did not go back again.

We met a botanist, Dr. P. Rojas-Mendoza, from the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, who told us that he knew the road up Cerro Potosi, the highest mountain (about 11,000 ft.) in that part of México. We had some old airline maps that showed the safe flying altitude for the section with Cerro Potosi as 7,000 ft.; so much for the accuracy of Mexican maps of the 1960s. Dr. Rojas, Ross, Anne and I headed up the mountain, leaving all the children with Mary, who said three more made little difference! We were lucky that Dr. Rojas knew the way to the microwave tower just below the summit, as there were certainly no markers. We arrived in the late afternoon and set up a large tent on a slightly sloping area; there

was no level space as large as the tent. We fixed an early dinner and as we were about to eat an elderly herder came by. As he showed no inclination to leave, we invited him to eat with us and he accepted. At sunset we set up our black light on the dirt tract. The temperature dropped quickly to about 45 F, and we did not expect much, a few moths perhaps. Oddly enough we did get a few beetles - they walked in, not flew! First was a big *Prionus*, then several specimens of a large *Diplotaxis* slowly crawled in; that was it as far as the light went. I looked around using my headlight and found several of the large *Diplotaxis* crawling up trunks of large pines. They seemed to move about a foot every half hour, I estimated that at that rate it would take a week before they reached the first branch! We did not stay long enough to find out. We went into our sleeping bags in the tent early to wake up the next morning in a tangle at the lower end of the tent. When we got out, there was the herder with a gift for us, a flowering plant in a can. He had walked down the mountain during the night to bring us a gift to say thanks for dinner! Morning collecting yielded very little, so we left shortly before noon and headed back to Monterrey. The rest of our month-long stay yielded some good beetles, but nothing unusual in the way of events. When we all returned to the states, the Howdens stayed briefly in Brownsville while the Arnetts went on.

We decided that a day at the beach would be a great idea, so we drove east from Brownsville to Boca Chica beach, where there was good general collecting in the dunes but no scarabs. Our oldest daughter, 9 years old, swimming a few yards out, saw what she thought was a purple beach ball. She swam over to pick it up and found out that it was a Portugese man-of-war! Anne and I rushed to her aid, found her plastered with sting marks, and used the only thing we had - Calamine lotion. We had visions of people going into shock, etc., and piled into our car to get back to Brownsville as soon as possible. By the time we were back all three of our daughters were asleep, so we went into the motel and kept an eye on our victim. When she woke up she said she was fine, but hungry! She had no reaction at all except that the sting marks took weeks to disappear. We spent the afternoon curating. Black-lighting was poor because of a full moon.

The next day we left for The Welder Wildlife Research Station near Sinton, Texas. There we collected on or near the Station for five days. We had good collecting and I learned why cottonmouths are called that. Near dusk I was sweeping in a weedy patch near the river when I saw a flash of white in the grass several feet in front of me. Something made me look carefully in that area and, surprise, there was a three foot cottonmouth coiled, ready to strike! I was very glad to have seen his white mouth.

We left the Station on August 8th and drove to Nacogdoches, Texas, where we met Bill Gibson. Had some great collecting in his yard and nearby took some very interesting new melolonthids. His collection was also well worth looking at. We left Bill several days later and wandered back through the south-east visiting old friends in Knoxville and Raleigh on our way to Canada, arriving home near the end of August, 1963.



While collecting at the sand dunes near Glamis, California, Henry committed the unpardonable sin of allowing Editor Rich (also known as The Pluckmaster General) to rape and pillage recently-collected specimens of rare scarabs.



Although wife Anne was amused, Henry had very few specimens left in his once-full Schmitt boxes. What was left were broken, under-sized specimens. To learn more about the fine art of Raping and Pillaging, kindly turn the page...

## The Top Ten Reasons You Know That the Junior\* Editors Have Visited Barney's Collection at Scarabs Headquarters

*\*Editor Barney's Note: Certainly not "Junior" in terms of mass, nor in cunning or daring...*

Security camera photo of Rich & Bill leaving Scarabs Headquarters early in the morning when Barney was still asleep.



1. Barney no longer has any majors... of anything.
2. His cabinets have become so light they can be moved with one finger.
3. Barney can take as many collecting trips as he wants without ever worrying about running out of drawer space.
4. Barney generously proclaims that the "junior" editors can each have a specimen of a rare *Phanaeus* that only he has collected, and they both reply: "No thanks, I already have a nice series."
5. Barney never has to buy unit trays at BioQuip again.
6. Once-full unit trays now have the appearance of Swiss cheese, yet there is no sign of dermestids.
7. A U-Haul rental agreement invoice is found where a bug cabinet used to be.
8. Barney's beautiful wife Sandy is now eyeing all the empty space and thinking about what she can do with it.
9. Rich & Bill arrive for a visit with a pickup truck loaded with empty Schmitt boxes, and when Barney asks "What's that?" they answer in unison "Collecting gear."

And finally:

10. Barney has to arrange trips to Rich and Bill's homes to visit his collection.