



Zootaxa 2189: 1–218 (2009)
www.mapress.com/zootaxa/

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Monograph

ISSN 1175-5326 (print edition)

ZOOTAXA

ISSN 1175-5334 (online edition)

ZOOTAXA

2189

George Brettingham Sowerby, I, II & III: their conchological publications and Molluscan taxa

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Magnolia Press
Auckland, New Zealand

Accepted by R. Bieler: 30 Jun. 2009; published: 6 Aug 2009

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George Brettingham Sowerby, I, II & III: their conchological publications and Molluscan taxa
(*Zootaxa* 2189)

218 pp.; 30 cm.

6 Aug. 2009

ISBN 978-1-86977-403-5 (paperback)

ISBN 978-1-86977-404-2 (Online edition)

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 2009 BY

Magnolia Press

P.O. Box 41-383

Auckland 1346

New Zealand

e-mail: zootaxa@mapress.com

<http://www.mapress.com/zootaxa/>

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Abstract

Several members of the Sowerby family were artists and authors of natural history works in the 19th Century. Three of them, George Brettingham Sowerby, his son, and his grandson (I, II & III respectively) are especially known for their molluscan publications. The first to bear the name is best known for his *Genera of recent and fossil shells* and for initiating the *Thesaurus Conchyliorum*, the latter work being finished by his son and grandson. He was also primarily

responsible for the *Conchological Illustrations* for which his son produced the plates and several monographs. In addition to the *Illustrations* and much of the *Thesaurus*, G. B. Sowerby II is known for his *Manual of Conchology* and for the final volumes of Reeve's *Conchologia Iconica*. The third generation of this line finished the *Thesaurus* and published an enlarged edition of his father's *Illustrated Index of British Shells*. He published numerous papers in journals and is best known for a series of papers on mollusks of South Africa. Complete molluscan bibliographies for all three G. B. Sowerbys are compiled and collated and a list of their molluscan taxa is here given for the first time.

Key words: G. B. Sowerby, bibliography, compilation, collation, list of taxa, *Genera of Recent and Fossil Shells*, *Tankerville Catalogue*, *Conchological Manual*, *Zoology of Beechey's Voyage*, *Thesaurus Conchyliorum*, *Conchologia Iconica*, dates of publication, Mollusca.

Introduction

Three generations of Sowerby, identically named George Brettingham Sowerby, contributed largely to the molluscan literature. They flourished during a time when previously unknown species of mollusks were pouring into London from voyages. The name "Sowerby" is ubiquitous in the molluscan literature. During the hundred-and-one years beginning in 1821 with the first molluscan work by George Brettingham Sowerby and his grandson's last paper in 1921, they produced the body of work discussed in this paper. Their failure to always properly identify themselves on their work has led to confusion about the correct authorship of some works and the included taxa.

This paper offers a complete bibliography with collations of works issued in parts. Authorship of each is indicated. A list of all Molluscan taxa introduced by them is given, as published. Nomenclature has not been brought up to date and subjective synonymy is not addressed. A total of 4,506 nomina are listed of which 43 genus-group and 3,915 species-group names are considered to be available. An additional 91 genus-group and 457 species-group names fall into other categories.

Conventions and abbreviations

The three Sowerbys named George Brettingham are herein distinguished by use of Roman numerals (I, II, & III), now the common practice although not used by them.

As most of the quotations used were written in Britain, the spelling is British, often antiquated. Such non-standard spellings are not marked with [sic] which is used only for errors or perceived errors. In quotations all spelling, punctuation, capitalization, stress and use or non-use of italics is as in the original unless noted.

Italics were not always used for Latin names in Sowerby works, or indeed in similar works of the time. Herein italics are used for the names of taxa in the titles of papers. Direct quotes are as published.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, often cited for the Code and Opinions, is abbreviated as I.C.Z.N.

Commas separate author and date only in the citation of a taxon (e.g., *Cancellaria gemmulata* G.B. Sowerby I, 1832). Commas are not used between author and date in a reference to literature (e.g., Dall 1887: 303).

Conventions used in the lists of taxa are at the beginning of the lists.

The Sowerbys

George Brettingham Sowerby I

George Brettingham Sowerby (1788–1854) was the son of James Sowerby (1757–1822), an extremely talented artist who was responsible for the *English Botany* and the *Mineral Conchology*. James had two other