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Hutchinson, Robert Russell (1870 – 1951)

Posted on [May 7, 2012](#) by [Chris](#)

TUNBRIDGE WELLS NATURAL HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.	
Dec. 2.—	"Honeycombing and other forms of Weathering of Stone." <i>Lantern.</i> Geo. Abbott, M.K.C.S.
Jan. 12.—	"The Lances of Heaven." <i>Lantern.</i> Sir Robert Ball, F.R.S., LL.D. 3 p.m.
" 20.—	"Timepieces—Created and Made." Mr. Herrmann.
Feb. 3.—	"The Fallaciousness of the Senses." Miss Cooke.
" 17.—	"Specimen and Microscopical Meeting. "Some Movements of Plants"; R. R. Hutchinson.
Mar. 8.—	"Wonders and Romance of Insect Life." <i>Lantern.</i> F. Enoch, F.L.S., F.E.S., F.R.H.S. 3 p.m.
" 24.—	"The Chaldean Genesis." H. S. Robertson, B.A., B.Sc.
April 7.—	"British Vegetable Gall Formations." E. T. Connold.
" 21.—	"Specimen and Microscopical Meeting. "Insects' Metamorphoses," H. de C. Child.
<i>Hon. Assist. Sec., R. R. Hutchinson, Belmont, Princes Street.</i>	

Robert Russell Hutchinson was born August 28th, 1870. His parents were Robert and Anne Cooper – who married on the Isle of Wight. In 1871, they were living with Anne's parents at Carisbroke Rd, IOW. In 1881, R R Hutchinson was away at school at Speen, Berkshire (parents were resident in Oxford).

By 1891, he and the family (two sisters and two brothers) were in Tunbridge wells (and his father was working as a bank clerk). In 1901, he was living at Princes Street in Tunbridge Wells with his mother and

aunt. In 1911, he was living in Andover and lodging with William and Louisa Higgins.

His working life was spent in the service of Westminster bank – partly at Tunbridge Wells but also at Wallingford. From his earliest times, he was interested in natural history – and particularly botany; he was a member of the BSBI from 1923 until his death.

He was an active member of the ***Tunbridge Wells Natural History and Philosophical Society*** – being secretary of that body from 1899 to 1909. Whilst at Wallingford, he founded a small museum and also acted as its curator. Quote from the [Wallingford Museum website](#) "In the 1920s, R R Hutchinson, manager of the Wallingford Westminster Bank, established a small museum in the Free Library, St Leonard's Square. When he moved away in the 1930s, the museum closed and the contents were given to the Town Council for safe keeping."

Hutchinson was described as "the kindest and most charming of men". He was a keen church goer, and had an extensive knowledge of church history, liturgy and ecclesiology.

When he retired, he moved to Croydon where he established yet another museum (in connexion with a local church); he was curator to the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society. There was a herbarium associated with this, which included his own specimens and also two bound volumes by J Breach. Breach collected (mainly) around Winchester in 1830's.

Also present were sheets from the herbarium from an 'unknown / unidentified' collector **IJB** – contemporaneous with Breach but seemingly not connected with him. IJB collected in and around London, but also received material from Leyland, and possibly Smith (J) and Bennett (E T). IJB sheets / specimens may be seen at H@H – [click here](#). The Breach books and various sheets were incorporated into the CNHSS collection and eventually many passed to [SLBI](#). Details of Breach material at H@H – [click here](#).

BOTANY OF MEDIEVAL MONKS.—I think your correspondent, Mr. A. E. Burr (*ante* p. 188), will find an explanation of the peculiar interrupted pinnate condition of the sepals of *Rosa canina* in their mode of arrangement in the bud. The sepals there overlap one another in such a way that five margins are left free, while five are covered. The free margins are those which become pinnate; the others, owing to compression within the bud, are unable to develop in the same way. On reference to the accompanying diagram, where the figures show the succession from below upwards or from without inwards, it will be seen that owing to their



Diagram showing relative position of sepals of *Rosa* in the bud.

position, two sepals (1 and 2) will be lobed on both margins, two (4 and 5) will have no lobes at all, while one (3) will be lobed on its free margin and not on the one that is covered. The leaf-points to the sepals occur very commonly on several species of the allied genus *Rubus*.—R. R. Hutchinson, Tunbridge Wells.

RRH's letter from Science Gossip was printed in response to the query below :

BOTANY OF MEDIÆVAL MONKS.—The old monks appear to have been more observant than some people at the present day, as is shown by the following quaint lines regarding the peculiar structure of the calyx of the dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), and allied species. No botanist to whom I have mentioned this seems to have noticed it, strange to say. I should be glad if any of your readers can assign any plausible reason for the peculiarity:

There must be a reason, as nature does nothing, I think, without a reason, and a good one. Two of the sepals have four long acute lobes, two on each side, while two are without lobes, and the other has only lobes on one side. Now, why is this peculiar arrangement, which never varies, as far as my observation goes? What purpose can it serve? The lines are: "Quinque sumus fratres Sub eodem tempore nati. Sunt duo barbati, duo Sunt sine barbâ creati: Unus barbatus, sed barba dimidiatus." Or, "We are five brothers, born at the same time. Two have beards; Two were created without beards; One has a beard, but only on one side."—*A. E. Bury, Bath.*

Source material : *various census returns, 'Science Gossip' and archive material from the BSBI website.*

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