

Books reviewed 3: Life in UK Freshwaters

Tony Pattinson – *Life in UK freshwaters*. Macro and microscopic imaging from a watery world. Blurb (publishers) 2013. Hbk and Sbk, 71 pp. No ISBN. Price £27.23 (Hbk), £20.23 (Sbk).

Given the ongoing popularity of freshwater life amongst recreational microscopists, it is perhaps surprising that few if any generalist books have been published on the subject since Garnett's *Freshwater Microscopy* was published. Whilst *Life in UK freshwaters* does not set out to update or replace Garnett's book, it does go some-way to rekindle the enthusiasm that will have started many amateurs in freshwater microscopy.

This is a self-published book by a Quekett Club member, available on a print-on-demand basis from the publisher Blurb. The book commences with an overview of the microscopes the author has used to take the photomicrographs which form the basis of the book; the equipment used is typical of that used by many amateurs. The first few pages of photomicrographs are of cladocera and ostracods and provide the reader with an initial sense of scale. The next 18 pages are of the algae followed by 4 pages of the rotifera. Protozoa, sponges and gastrotrichs are all represented in subsequent pages. The next section of the book is devoted to polarised light microscopy – not often applied to freshwater life but the author's images show some of the potential of this technique. The final section of the book focuses on macrophotography of aquatic communities maintained for several weeks in small purpose-built tanks. This is illustrated with a photographic study of a



community that developed on a floating acorn, including Hydra, the water-louse *Asellus* and the stalked protozoan *Vorticella*.

Whilst this book is centred around the author's images, sufficient text is provided to explain both the equipment used at each stage together with brief descriptions of the organisms photographed. The images are not 'scientific' in quality and are not intended to be used for identifying groups of organism. Instead almost all are photographed from life and have not been 'photoshopped' to remove debris; they appear exactly as they would under the microscope. My only two criticisms are that no bibliography or further reading is provided (although it is difficult to think of suitable general texts still in print) and the lack of an ISBN number, or listing on Amazon, will prevent this lovely book from reaching a wider audience.

Phil Greaves