

JAMES HIGMAN KEYS

Natural history collection

"One of the least celebrated heroes of British entomology."

Darren Mann, Collections Manager, Oxford University Museum of Natural History



JH Keys was born in Plymouth on 18 October 1855. He worked in his father's printing business, on Whimble Street in Plymouth, until he retired in 1933. Below is Whimble Street as it would have looked before it was bombed during the Second World War. Keys' elaborate book plate is also shown, which he placed in the front of his books.



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Keys amassed an enormous collection of British and foreign beetles. He published numerous papers about the beetles of Devon and Plymouth, while also giving popular lectures at the Athenaeum.

Keys became a fellow of the [Royal Entomological Society](#) of London in 1900. It is reported, however, that he rarely went to meetings.

JH Keys passed away on 14 January 1941 after a fall while out collecting. His superb collection of entomology was bequeathed to Plymouth Museum through his executors Woollcombe and Yonge, Plymouth.