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Papua New Guinea

Researchers return

By LUCY KAPI

TWO Papua New Guinean parataxonomist researchers have just returned from an overseas training tour funded by the British Government.

Kenneth Molem and William Boen are from the Parataxonomist Training Centre, which is conducting research into PNG's biodiversity by helping to classify PNG's rich plant and animal life.

The training was sponsored by the Darwin Initiative for the Survival of the Species Program, which is providing support for the Parataxonomy Training Centre to coordinate the collection of biodiversity data with other environmental institutions in PNG.

The pair visited research institutes, national museums and universities in Australia, United States, United Kingdom and the Czech Republic that conducted insect research.

They also visited tropical forests in Australia and United States, as well as various ecosystems in colder areas of North America, UK and Europe.

"I was surprised by the very different types of forests I saw in the UK and Eu-

rope in comparison with forests in PNG. I was also very interested to see large insect collections at the Natural History Museum in London, with insects from all over the world," Mr Boen said.

Mr Molem added that he was also impressed by the powerful electronic microscopes used in world universities.

Both researchers hope to use their new experience and knowledge to conduct biological research of PNG insects.

Acting British High Commissioner Jonathan Drew said he was delighted that their trip had been successful, adding that the Parataxonomy Training Centre had built a solid and well-deserved reputation for important research.

Mr Drew said the Darwin Initiative showed the British government's commitment in working with local communities round the world to study and protect areas of immense scientific importance.

"The biodiversity in PNG is greater than in almost any other country in the world and I wish the Parataxonomist Training Centre every success in its continued future," he said.

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