

Brian probes behind the lens

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AUTHOR-SCIENTIST Mr. Brian J. Ford, of Cardiff, is writing about microscopes — not one book, but two. And they are to be printed by rival publishers later this year.

The Hidden Universe is about the effect microscopes have had on human habits—a simple example being the need to wash one's hands after visits to the toilet.

Methods In Microscopy traces the manner in which individual scien-

tists have employed microscopes, from the time when the instrument was first invented.

“Strangely enough, these topics haven't received much attention before, in spite of their importance,” said Mr. Ford, of Westville Road, Penylan.

“I was in a Cardiff record shop recently and they had an old type of microscope to examine stylus points. The man told me he had several more at home, all about a century old.

“There may be many more owned by people who do not realise they are of considerable historical interest. I'd like the opportunity of photographing specimens through them to show what various types are capable of.

“Microscopes of 100 years ago were more powerful than they are today. This is because more time was spent grinding the lenses. Even now, if you need a really high-quality microscope then it's best to have one made about 1890.”