

‘For more years than he may care to remember’ – Tony Barber and centipede recording

Since 1970 Tony Barber has been at the centre of recording of centipedes in Britain and Ireland. This was formalised that year when the British Myriapod Survey (BMS) was launched. The BMS was part of the British Myriapod Group (BMG) whose activities began in the same year resulting from a highly successful gathering of British myriapodologists in North Devon. A couple of years later two national recording schemes (for Centipedes and for Millipedes) were launched by BMG in association with the Biological Records Centre, together with a similar national scheme for woodlice and waterlice organised by the British Isopoda Study Group (BISG). After many years of collaboration BMG and BISG merged in 2000 to form the British Myriapod and Isopod Group (BMIG) under Tony’s chairmanship. See Tony’s account ‘*Early years of the British Myriapod Group*’ earlier in this volume of the *Bulletin* (36: pages 59-71).

Although employed teaching full-time in tertiary education throughout the next 4 decades, and with family and local political commitments, Tony has been the go-to person regarding the occurrence of centipedes in Britain and Ireland. The amount of identifications that he has undertaken in over 50 years, usually for less skilled contributors to the scheme, must be incalculable. Although a summary of the data collected to date was published as a *Provisional Atlas* in 1988 (Barber & Keay, 1988) much of Tony’s communication with recorders was at a personal level, originally by letter and eventually via email. He has been regular and active contributor to relevant BMG and BMIG publications and a co-editor of the BMG/BMIG Bulletin since the former was revived in 1985.

In 2008 the Field Studies Council (FSC) published Tony’s entirely new *Key to the identification of British centipedes* (Barber 2008) in its AIDGAP series. A year later FSC published his *Centipedes* volume (Barber 2009) in the Linnean Society Synopses series. These two publications renewed and refreshed the available literature to help identify British and Irish centipedes. As Tony made clear, with typical modesty, both publications drew on Eason’s *Centipedes of the British Isles*, published in 1964, in particular for illustrative material. These publications must be part of a thinly disguised master plan – to leave a new generation (or two) of myriapodologists with a complete guide to British and Irish centipedes. Tony’s long anticipated *Atlas of the centipedes in Britain and Ireland* (which is reviewed in this volume of the *Bulletin*, page 106) may be the culmination of his master plan! In his retirement from full-time teaching, these progressive steps characterise Tony’s quiet determination.

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