

Subterranean biology

There is a wealth of information on the biology of caves, and other subterranean habitats, in Great Britain and Ireland. The most valuable information was generated by many cavers and cave scientists between the 1940s and the 1970s, and published (on paper) by the Cave Research Group of Great Britain (CRG) and the British Cave Research Association (BCRA). Although many people were involved in the collection of animals in British and Irish caves (over a hundred over the years) one person acted as coordinator of the whole process. Mary Hazelton, Biological Recorder of the CRG, received the animals from the numerous collectors, sent them to experts for accurate identification (a difficult job for some animal groups), received the identifications from the experts, and then published lists of which animals had been found in which caves. It took 16 publications, from the first in 1955 to the last in 1978, to get all of the biological data into the public domain. Because of the way the animals were collected, and because one person master-minded the whole process from beginning (in 1938) to end (in 1976), the data is effectively a country-wide, 38 year, quasi-random data set. It is of outstanding value and probably unique in the world.

The 16 paper-published parts were digitised into an Excel Table over several years and then edited to correct errors and updated with modern animal names. There are over 5500 individual records in the database. The digital version is called the *Hazelton Database* in honour of Mary Hazelton who was responsible for the original data.

The *Hazelton Database* has been used in the compilation of a book on the subterranean biology of Great Britain and Ireland which is currently being edited by Graham Proudlove, Lee Knight and Andy Lewington.

The *Hazelton Database* is now placed on the BCA archive server for free download. Please note the important point that it cannot be edited and uploaded back to the server. This is a static file, based on the original data. If further data were added the nature of the database would alter and it would lose its semi-random nature. At a later date it is proposed to set up a database that can be added to as new discoveries are made.

Because it is an Excel Table you can use the controls at the top of each column to filter the data in very many different ways. For example, you can choose to see which animals have

been found in a single cave, or which single species has been found in which caves, among much else. For further information please contact:

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Please note the following copyright declarations:

The biological data, which were originally published by the Cave Research Group of Great Britain and the British Cave Research Association, are copyright the British Cave Research Association

The Excel Table implementation of these biological data are copyright Graham S. Proudlove

Graham Proudlove

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