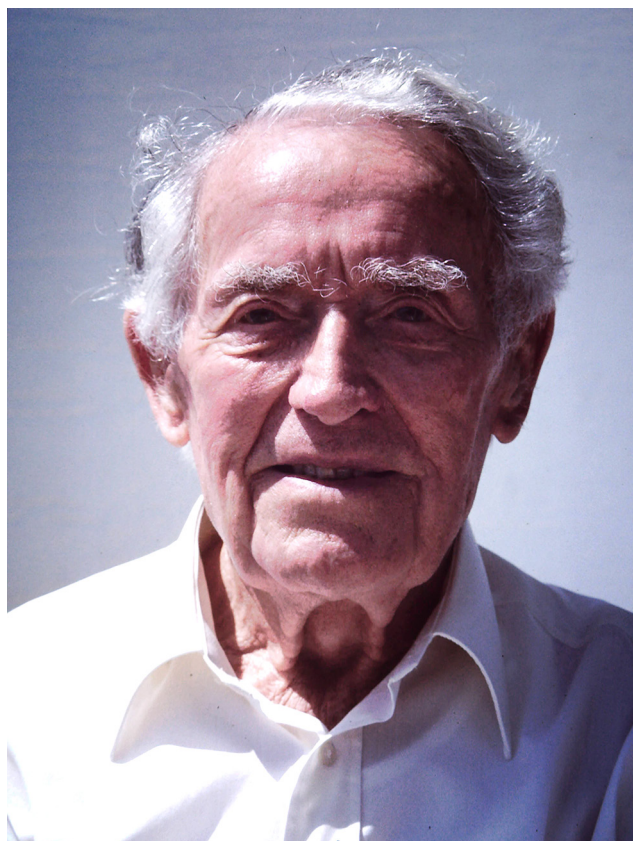


ALFRED FRANK MILLIDGE, 1914–2012

Alfred Frank Millidge (always known as “Frank”), the last of the great pioneering British arachnologists of the twentieth century, died on 16 April 2012, at the age of 98. Most widely known internationally as half of “Lockett & Millidge”, he also published a number of important papers on European erigonines and a major series of papers on American erigonines, as well as descriptions of linyphiids from south-east Asia, New Zealand, and Australia. He also played an important role in the development of the British Arachnological Society throughout the 1970s.

He was born at Newport on the Isle of Wight on 7 January 1914, in the house over his father’s chemist’s shop. This shop was established by Frank’s great-grandfather in 1832, and remained in the family as a chemist’s shop until the 1960s (see the photograph reproduced in *BAS Newsletter* **100** (2004)). Frank told me once how, when he was a young boy, he fell out of the bedroom window at the back of the house while playing with a paper dart, and crashed through the glass roof of the conservatory onto the floor below. Fortunately, this was witnessed by his mother through the kitchen window, and he was patched up by his father. Although covered in blood, he suffered no serious injuries, so the future of British arachnology was not affected! During his childhood on the Isle of Wight, Frank developed a general interest in natural history, including sometimes watching spiders.

After school on the Isle of Wight, he studied for his first degree in chemistry at the University of Southampton, and obtained his doctorate in organic chemistry at Imperial College London. It was only after this, in 1937, that he became seriously interested in spiders as a result of buying a copy of Savory’s *Spiders and Allied Orders* from a book-stall at the Chelsea Flower Show. This aroused his curiosity in how to identify spiders and, after writing to Savory via the publishers, he was put in touch with W. S. Bristowe and A. R. Jackson. Jackson, in particular, became his mentor during his early years, which was helped by the fact that Frank moved to Liverpool early in World War II to work in the petrochemical industry, close to where Jackson lived and collected. I have in my possession a letter written by Frank to Jackson in August 1941, when sending some specimens for identification, in which he writes a final paragraph: “I find your notes on the identification very instructive, and if you have time to include some with this lot I shall be very pleased. I am seeing my way a bit more than I used to, but I still have a long way to go.” This was only three years before the historic meeting between Frank, Lockett, Bristowe and Savory in 1944 which initiated the writing of *British Spiders*! From these early days, Frank became interested mainly in linyphiids, and especially erigonines, largely because they presented more of a challenge than other families. (In later years, when out collecting, he would often refer to non-linyphiids as “rubbish”!) He acquired copies of Blackwall’s *Spiders of Great Britain and Ireland* and volume 6 of Simon’s *Arachnides de France*, but these were out of date and poorly illustrated by modern standards. Aided and encouraged at first by Jackson, he was inspired to work on describing and revising the British linyphiids,



Frank Millidge at 90. Photo by Peter Merrett (July 2004).

which reached its fruition with the publication of volume 2 of *British Spiders* in 1953.

Frank and Ted Lockett remained close friends from the time of their first meeting in 1944 until Ted’s death in 1990. Apart from their major work together on *British Spiders*, they collaborated in fifteen papers, eight of which (between 1947 and 1967) were concerned with descriptions of species new to Britain. Most of the information in these papers was later included in volume 3 of *British Spiders*, published in 1974.

Frank’s first arachnological publication on his own was a key to the erigonine genera, which appeared in 1951 along with a description of the new genus *Jacksonella*. This was the first time that leg spines and positions of trichobothria had been used as key characters for both sexes of linyphiids, although Denis had published a key to the females of French erigonines based on similar characters in 1949.

Pressure of work from Frank’s main occupation as a research scientist in the petrochemical industry resulted in him being unable to spend much time on spiders during the 1960s and early 1970s, but he made up for that in a big way after his retirement in 1974. Between 1974 and 1979 he published six papers on European erigonines, mainly from southern Europe, as well as being the principal organiser of the Seventh International Congress of Arachnology, held at Exeter in 1977, and playing an important part in the initial negotiations with Brignoli which led to the publication of his catalogue of spiders (and which subsequently led on to Platnick’s catalogues). He then embarked on a major series of papers on American erigonines, after realising that there were many more new species of erigonines

awaiting description in American collections. Between 1980 and 1987 he published eight important papers on North American erigonines, and two even larger papers on South American erigonines in 1985 and 1991, the last of which ran to nearly 200 pages and contained descriptions of 42 new genera and 247 new species, and included 837 figures! During the period between 1988 and 1995 he also published a major paper on the linyphiids of New Zealand and three other papers on linyphiids from south-east Asia and Australia.

Between 1977 and 1993 he also published five major papers on general classification and phylogeny issues in linyphiids, initially based on conformation of male palps, then moving on to tracheal structure and finally epigynal duct systems. Most of the ideas for these papers arose from his work on European and American erigonines and perhaps especially from the unusual problems posed by the linyphiids of New Zealand. Many of his conclusions have proved controversial but, nonetheless, his ideas were presented in considerable detail and much of the information in these papers will be of lasting value even if some of his conclusions are not generally accepted. His last paper, published in November 1995, was a light-hearted apologia on the perils of apomorphy, which attempted to confront some of the controversy and convey some thoughts about problems associated with the methodology of cladistics.

In 1986 he followed Bristowe and Locket by being awarded the Stamford Raffles Award of the Zoological Society of London for distinguished contributions to arachnology by an amateur, his award being a bronze sculpture of a pygmy hippopotamus. He was also awarded the Bloomer Award of the Linnean Society with Locket in 1974, and he was an honorary member of both the British and American Arachnological Societies. He played a major role in the development of the British Arachnological Society in the 1970s as President from 1973–76, as Vice-President from 1976–79, and as an ordinary member of Council until 1986. His contributions to discussions were always sensible and constructive, and helped to keep us on the right path.

Frank remained in good health throughout most of his long life, until he began to lose his sight to macular degeneration in the mid 1990s. He always seemed remarkably fit for his age, and climbed the Matterhorn at the age of 50! He is survived by his wife Josie, who is 96 and to whom he was married for 72 years, and their two daughters.

Peter Merrett

List of arachnological publications

- 1947: (with G. H. Locket): On new and rare British spiders. *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London* **158**: 110–118.
- 1951: Key to the British genera of subfamily Erigoninae (family Linyphiidae: Araneae): including the description of a new genus (*Jacksonella*). *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 12* **4**: 545–562.
- 1951: (with G. H. Locket): *British spiders* Vol. I. London, Ray Society.
- 1952: (with G. H. Locket): New and rare British spiders. *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London* **163**: 59–78.
- 1953: (with G. H. Locket): *British spiders* Vol. II. London, Ray Society.
- 1954: (with E. Duffey): *Centromerus incilium* (L. Koch), a linyphiid spider taken near Oxford, with notes on related species. *Journal of the Society for British Entomology* **4**: 218–223.
- 1954: On a new species and genus of spider. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 12* **7**: 253–256.
- 1954: (with E. Duffey & G. H. Locket): On some spiders collected in East Suffolk and Essex. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 12* **7**: 474–478.
- 1955: A new species of spider. *Commentationes Biologicae* **15**(7): 1–5.
- 1955: (with G. H. Locket): New and rare British spiders. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 12* **8**: 161–173.
- 1957: (with G. H. Locket): On new and rare British spiders. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 12* **10**: 481–492.
- 1958: (with E. Duffey & G. H. Locket): The spider fauna of the heaths and fens in West Suffolk. *Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society* **10**: 199–209.
- 1958: (with G. H. Locket & A. A. D. La Touche): On new and rare British spiders. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 13* **1**: 137–146.
- 1959: Spiders (including a list of those species recorded from the Isle of Wight). *Proceedings of the Isle of Wight Natural History Society* **5**: 102–108.
- 1961: (with G. H. Locket): Notes on spiders collected in Invernessshire and Morayshire. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* **97**: 22–24.
- 1962: (with G. H. Locket): The identity of *Entelecara erythropus* (Westring) and *E. media* Kulcz. (Araneae). *Annals and Magazine of Natural History, Series 13* **5**: 433–434.
- 1966: Spiders new to Britain. *Bulletin of the British Spider Study Group* **29**: 1.
- 1967: (with G. H. Locket): New and rare British spiders. *Journal of Natural History* **1**: 177–184.
- 1968: (with G. H. Locket): A note on *Cornicularia karpinskii* (O. P.-C.). *Bulletin of the British Spider Study Group* **37**: 6.
- 1970: (with G. H. Locket & P. J. van Helsdingen): An observation on the type material of *Lepthyphantes tenebricola* (Wider) (*Linyphia tenebricola* Wider 1834). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **1**: 90–91.
- 1970: (with D. W. Mackie): Spiders and harvestmen from the west of Ireland. *Irish Naturalists' Journal* **16**: 334–338.
- 1974: A new species of linyphiid spider, *Lepthyphantes merretti*, from the Dolomites. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **3**: 63–65.
- 1974: (with G. H. Locket & P. Merrett): *British spiders* Vol. III. London, Ray Society.
- 1975: A taxonomic revision of the genus *Erigonoplus* Simon 1884 (Araneae: Linyphiidae: Erigoninae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **3**: 95–100.
- 1975: Some new or little-known erigonid spiders from southern Europe. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **3**: 120–125.
- 1976: Re-examination of the erigonine spiders "*Micrargus herbigradus*" and "*Pocadicnemis pumila*" (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **3**: 145–155.
- 1977: The conformation of the male palpal organs of linyphiid spiders, and its application to the taxonomic and phylogenetic analysis of the family (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **4**: 1–60.
- 1978: The genera *Mecopisthes* Simon and *Hypocephalus* n. gen. and their phylogenetic relationships (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **4**: 113–123.
- 1978: The genera *Saaristoa* n. gen. and *Metapanamomops* Millidge (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **4**: 123.
- 1978: (with G. H. Locket & P. J. van Helsdingen): Proposed use of the plenary powers to preserve the specific name *tenebricola*, as published in *Linyphia* by Wider, 1834, but in the sense of Kulczynski, 1887 (Arachnida). *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* **35**: 44–46.
- 1979: Some erigonine spiders from southern Europe. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **4**: 316–328.
- 1979: (with G. H. Locket): William Syer Bristowe, 1901–1979. Obituary. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **4**: 361–365.
- 1980: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 1. Introduction and taxonomic background (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **8**: 97–107.
- 1980: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 2. The genus *Spirembolus* Chamberlin (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **8**: 109–158.

- 1980: Mr G. H. Locket – A tribute on his 80th birthday. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **5**: 53.
- 1981: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 3. The genus *Scotinotylus* Simon (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **9**: 167–213.
- 1981: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 4. The genus *Disembolus* Chamberlin and Ivie (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **9**: 259–284.
- 1981: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 5. The genus *Satilatlas* (Araneae, Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* **170**: 242–253.
- 1981: A revision of the genus *Gonatium* (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **5**: 253–279.
- 1983: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 6. The genus *Walckenaeria* Blackwall (Araneae, Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **11**: 105–200.
- 1984: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 7. Miscellaneous genera (Araneae, Linyphiidae). *Journal of Arachnology* **12**: 121–169.
- 1984: The taxonomy of the Linyphiidae, based chiefly on the epigynal and tracheal characters (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **6**: 229–267.
- 1985: *Erigone* Audouin, 1826 (Arthropoda, Araneae): proposed designation of type species. *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* **42**: 91–92.
- 1985: (with P. Merrett & G. H. Locket): A check list of British spiders. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **6**: 381–403.
- 1985: Some linyphiid spiders from South America (Araneae, Linyphiidae). *American Museum Novitates* **2836**: 1–78.
- 1986: A revision of the tracheal structures of the Linyphiidae (Araneae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **7**: 57–61.
- 1986: (with G. H. Locket): The type material of *Microneta beata* O. P.-Cambridge, 1906. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **7**: 68.
- 1987: The erigonine spiders of North America. Part 8. The genus *Eperigone* Crosby and Bishop (Araneae, Linyphiidae). *American Museum Novitates* **2885**: 1–75.
- 1988: Family Linyphiidae. In R. R. Forster, A. F. Millidge & D. J. Court, The spiders of New Zealand, Part VI. *Otago Museum Bulletin* **6**: 35–67.
- 1988: Genus *Prinerigone*, gen. nov. (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **7**: 216.
- 1988: The relatives of the Linyphiidae: phylogenetic problems at the family level (Araneae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **7**: 253–268.
- 1991: Further linyphiid spiders (Araneae) from South America. *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* **205**: 1–199.
- 1992: George Hazelwood Locket, 1900–1991. Obituary. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 1–3.
- 1992: (with P. Merrett): Amendments to the check list of British spiders. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 4–9.
- 1992: (with A. Russell-Smith): Linyphiidae from rain forests of Southeast Asia. *Journal of Natural History* **26**: 1367–1404.
- 1993: *Blestia*, a new genus of erigonine spider with clypeal sulci (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 126–128.
- 1993: Three new species of the family Linyphiidae from Australia (Araneae). *Record of the Western Australian Museum* **16**: 211–219.
- 1993: Further remarks on the taxonomy and relationships of the Linyphiidae, based on the epigynal duct conformation and other characters (Araneae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 145–156.
- 1993: A North American species of the genus *Sphecozone* O. P.-Cambridge, 1870 (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 168.
- 1994: (with N. P. Ashmole): A new genus and species of cave spider from Ascension Island (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **9**: 221–223.
- 1995: Some linyphiid spiders from south-east Asia. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **10**: 41–56.
- 1995: The perils of apomorphy: an apologia. *Newsletter of the British Arachnological Society* **74**: 5–6.

