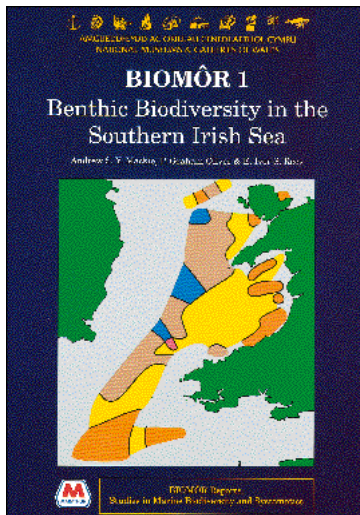
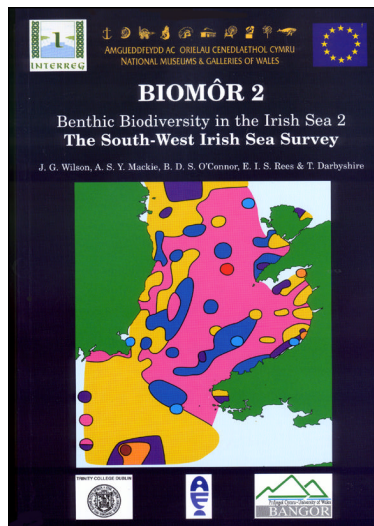


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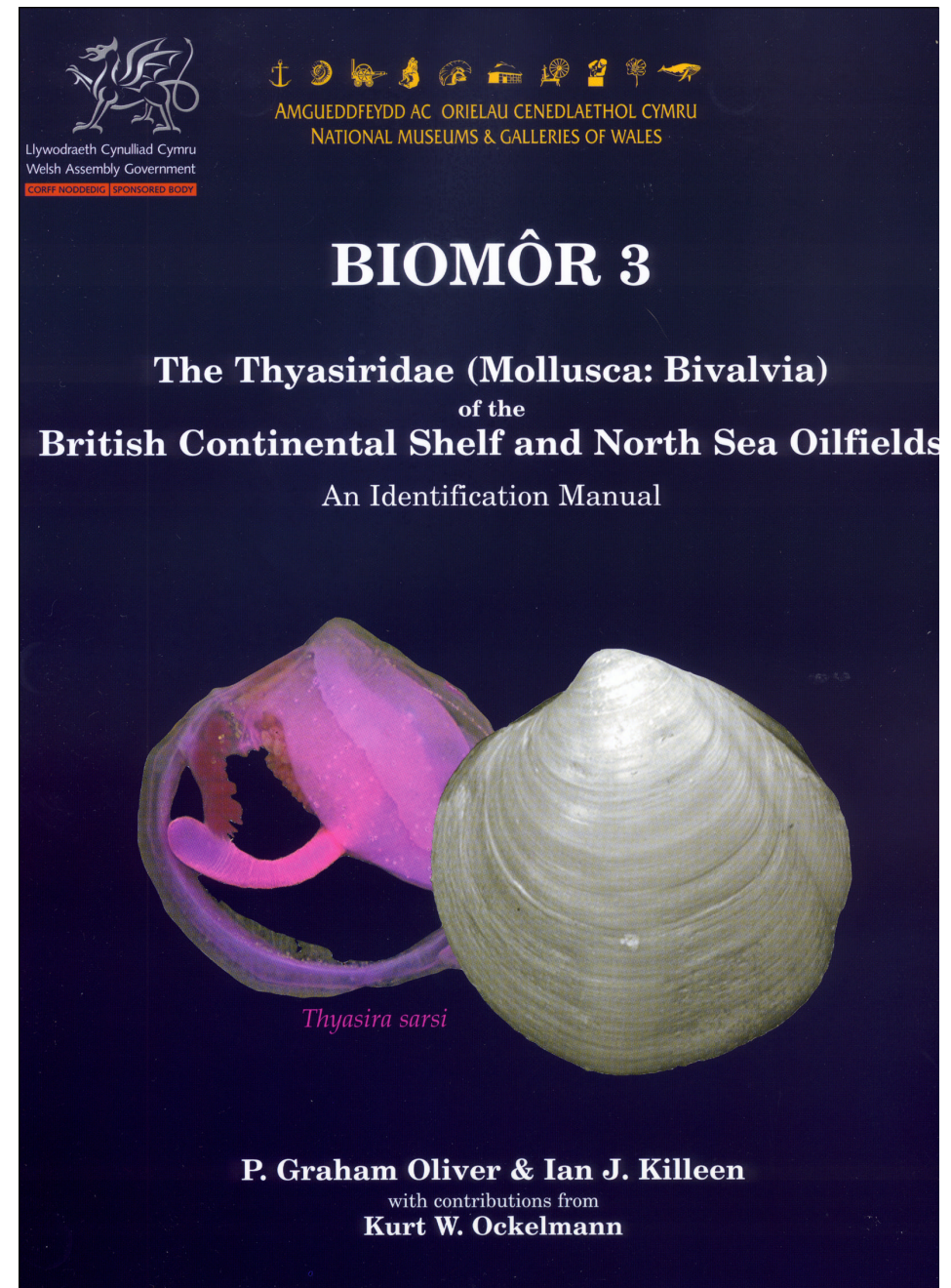
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Benthic biodiversity studies have become a frequent element of the environmental monitoring programmes related to the exploration for and extraction of oil and gas in the seas around the British Isles. This intense interest has highlighted some serious taxonomic deficiencies within the literature covering the bivalve family Thyasiridae. This study attempts to resolve this deficiency for those taxa living on the continental shelf and shelf margins of the North Sea.

Collections from 41 oil/gas fields were examined along with collections from museums and private individuals. From these collections twelve species were recognised: *Thyasira* (*Thyasira*) *flexuosa*, *T. (T.) polygona*, *T. (T.) gouldi*, *T. (T.) sarsi*, *T. (Parathyasira)* *equalis*, *T. (P.) granulosa*, *T. obsoleta*, *T. succisa*, *Axinulus croulinensis*, *Axinulus* (*Genaxinus*) *eumyrius*, *Mendicula ferruginosa*, *M. pygmaea*. A dichotomous key and tabular key are presented. All species are illustrated at all stages of growth. In addition, putative or doubtful taxa associated with the region are reviewed: *T. dunbari*, *T. subovata*, *Axinopsida orbiculata* and *Leptaxinus minutus*. The species and generic nomenclature is reviewed and the subgenus *Genaxinus* is introduced into the British nomenclature for the first time.

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