

# Course Report. Identifying Slugs in Britain and Ireland; 5th October 2014; National Slate Museum, Llanberis

Fifteen budding slug enthusiasts braved the wet roads to attend our Slug Identification Course at Llanberis National Slate Museum. The course was led by Ben Rowson from the National Museum Cardiff, an author of the recently published FSC guide to slugs. This was to be the first time Ben had run an ID course solely on slugs, so we were very lucky to have such a knowledgeable leader.

Ben started off by giving us a humorous introduction to slugs, running along the lines of a court trial. It was evidenced that not all slugs are guilty of eating our garden plants – many favouring dead plant material, lichens and earthworms. Inevitably this session culminated with sentencing, where Ben described the methods used to control and kill the horticulturally problematic species.

We then examined live samples which people had brought in, using the FSC guide and Ben's help to identify them. Samples were swapped and everybody had the chance to see a good range of species, including the carnivorous Ghost Slug *Selenochlamys ysbryda*. Many attendees purchased a copy of the slug book on the day and took the opportunity to get their copy signed.

We were also shown how to dissect slug specimens in order to distinguish some of the more tricky species, a skill which definitely needs practice to perfect!

The course was a great success and has definitely increased interest in slugs amongst North Wales recorders. Hopefully this will result in more species records for our region for what is a poorly recorded group of invertebrates.

