

developments beyond the Border. Paul Kirkland took over as BRISC's representative on the Scottish Biodiversity Group's Local Biodiversity Action Plan sub-group, and Brian Boag and AMS shared the considerable effort in representing BRISC's interests on Scottish Environment LINK. At a meeting arranged with SNH, AMS tabled a paper on the importance of SNH supporting LRCs in their efforts to build up capacity, and BRISC business was promoted in several other meetings with SNH.

Publications – Four newsletters were published during the year. A new, coloured, leaflet was printed in November with a generous grant from The Russell Trust. A grant from SNH was offered in October to produce a volume of Natural History Societies and allied organisations in Scotland (to be a companion volume to the 'Source Book for Biological Recording in Scotland', published in 1999). With a very tight time-scale, Nicola Penrice agreed to take this on, and about 300 groups or organisations have been contacted. It is hoped to send the material to the printer early 2002. Sales of the 'Source Book' have slowed up, with only 12 copies sold in 2001. A sheet with all changes notified to the editor is available from Anne-Marie Smout.

Mobilisation of Data – BRISC was approached by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to discuss ways of mobilising their enormous data-holdings. A pilot project to computerise their data on the UK BAP 'long list' of species is currently under discussion.

A joint meeting with Butterfly Conservation was held on 29 October in Perth Museum to launch the Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Scotland.

Membership

At the time of writing, the membership total stands at 112, which is 31 down on the previous year. Some of this can be attributed to those who joined just to get the 'Source Book' not renewing their subscription. This is disappointing, because the committee believes that we provide a very good service. It is, of course, the case that BRISC aims to provide benefits to all of Scotland's recording community, regardless of whether they are members of BRISC or not, but the membership subscription is our only fixed income, so we do badly need members if we are to become more efficient in what we try to do. To find out what members think of BRISC, it has been decided to do a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

Finance is dealt with on a separate sheet.

Anne-Marie Smout
Chair of BRISC
Anstruther
12/1/02



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2001

2001 has been another busy year for BRISC. There has been some changes to the committee and it is gratifying to report that majority of tasks set out in our Strategic Plan have received some action, although much remains to be done.

THE COMMITTEE

New Membership Secretary – Lesley Brown offered to take over as membership secretary following the death of Bill Brackenridge. Lesley has performed this exacting task with great attention to detail and we are most grateful to her.

Treasurer – At last year's AGM, Mark Simmons expressed the wish to stand down as soon as a replacement could be found. It has not been possible to find a replacement so far, and MS has valiantly soldiered on, and as usual put a great amount of effort into the running of BRISC. We are extremely grateful for Mark's sensitive and careful handling of our financial affairs. We owe it to Mark to continue our effort to find a new treasurer and appeal to our members to come forward to take on this vital task.

Committee members who left during the year - Alan Cameron left in June to take up a temporary post with the Wildlife Trusts in Newark. Alison Hannah decided not to return after her maternity leave, and subsequently it was decided by the Scottish Wildlife Trust not to reappoint for Alison's post. Corrie Cheyne, who had stood in for Alison and attended BRISC committee meetings during Alison's absence, left the SWT. We wish them all well and thank them for their very significant contribution to BRISC's work during their time on the committee and express the hope that they will remain personal members of BRISC.

New committee members - At last year's AGM in Inverness, Jeanette Hall (Scottish Natural Heritage Environmental Audit Unit) was elected onto the committee, and in April, Brian Boag (Scottish Crop Research Institute) agreed to be co-opted onto the committee. This gives BRISC a committee of nine (6 elected members and 3 co-opted ones). If any member feels he/she could contribute to the work of BRISC and join the committee, please let any of the present committee members know, so that we can put their names forward to the AGM for election.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The committee has worked hard to implement the Strategic Plan, approved by members at last year's AGM in Inverness. The final document is now available on BRISC's website and hard copies will be available to members at the forthcoming AGM in Dundee or on request from the chair. The major points are reported upon below, and committee members will be pleased to answer any questions at the AGM.

A questionnaire was circulated with the April issue of *BRISC Recorder News*, asking members which sub-group(s) they wished to join and further, if members would agree to have their names and addresses/e-mails published in the newsletter. 53 members responded to the questionnaire, 99% of whom agreed to having the names and addresses published in the newsletter, and a list was subsequently published in the July issue (No 42) of *BRISC Recorder News*. Where no reply had been received, only the member's name was listed. The list will not be made available on the website.

Sub groups The proposed three subgroups have been set up as planned and committee members allocated to each group as contacts. Some activity has taken place, although the groups have not been as active as we had hoped, and several action points in table 2 of the Strategic Plan regarding LRCs have regrettably seen no action. The groups were conceived to allow members to share a common interest and encourage new skills, and the activities of the groups therefore largely depend on the enthusiasm of group's members. However, it is hoped that more dedicated assistance will become available over the next few years to galvanise activities for the benefit of all. Membership of the groups is maintained and managed by Andy Wakelin, our website manager.

The LRC group – 14 members elected to join this group, and Mark Simmons agreed to be the committee contact. An email-based forum for this group was set up, and a first meeting was hosted by Fife Nature in Glenrothes on 17 May 2001. In two workshop sessions, we looked at the scope and form of the group, how the group could be consulted and express views on LRC matters in Scotland. On 23 November, a workshop on *Recorder 2000* with GIS was run by Hannah Betts of JNCC at SNH's premises in Hope Terrace, Edinburgh. Both events were well attended.

Recording Group - 22 members elected to join this group and Paul Kirkland & Anne-Marie Smout agreed to be committee contacts. Contact between members of this group is primarily by email. As proposed, the Bumblebee survey was launched through this group. Information on BRISC activities, including the Bumblebee survey material as well as photographs of individual species for identification purposes, were also made available for all on our website.

Computer skills group - 10 members joined this group. Andy Wakelin agreed to be the committee contact and all communication was by email. Details of training sessions on *Recorder 2000*, the GIS day (see above) and the possibility of a DMAP day were circulated during the year.

Although BRISC committee has carried out action on many of the action points in the Strategic Plan, the following action points have not been met:

1. The promised CD to provide an update on the 'Source Book' was not produced during the year as planned, due to lack of time
2. Similarly a new 'Guide to biological recorders and *Recorder 2000* users' was not produced. Preliminary discussion with Richard Weddle took place regarding this, but it was decided to leave this for the time being as *Recorder 2000* is still under development and it seemed prudent to wait till the software is more stable.
3. Work commenced on drafting a business plan for LRCs, but this was not been completed and no formal approach was consequently made to COSLA regarding the need for all local authorities to support LRCs.
4. No marine protection and monitoring policy for BRISC was drafted.

Website – Andy Wakelin put a lot of efforts into making the site attractive and keeping it up-to-date. The site contains a statement of BRISC's objectives, email contacts for committee members, list of Local Records Centres and contacts, links to relevant organisations, forthcoming events, bumblebee survey material as well as photographs, conference programme and booking form, copies of past newsletters and a membership form for down-loading. The website gets about 8 'hits' a day, making 1920 'hits' in the last eight months. We are currently in the process of changing our website provider, which also provides an opportunity to completely overhaul the design of the website.

Development Officer - Doubts were raised at last year's AGM regarding the range of tasks in the plan versus the manpower available to BRISC. Recognising this, the committee has worked hard to obtain funding for a three year Development Officer, and grant applications were submitted to Scottish Natural Heritage and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation in October 2001. If successful, we plan to have someone in the post by April 2002, with an office in the premises of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) in Stirling. Because BRISC has few financial resources to fall back on, BTCV has also agreed to manage the grant.

Representation – A vital role for BRISC is to represent the Scottish recording community's interests at a national level. During the past year, BRISC was represented on the advisory group for The Linking LRCs project, championed for the National Biodiversity Network by the Wildlife Trusts. This came to an

end with 2001, but BRISC has been invited to join a new advisory group with a first meeting in January 2002. AMS was co-opted to the Council for the National Federation Biological Recording (NFBR), and attended two out of four Council meetings in London during the period, thus keeping abreast with