



**B R I S C**

**BIOLOGICAL RECORDING IN SCOTLAND**



**Annual Report for 2005**

**Scottish Charity No SC024418**

In my first year as Chair I have been on somewhat of a learning curve as to BRISC's activities and how it operates. When I came in, BRISC still had in post a Development officer, Alan Cameron, and he, along with Anne-Marie Smout, had undertaken all the administrative aspect of BRISC's work and they had been extremely active!

The end of Alan's contract put all administrative and liaison work back to the Committee and I fear that we have not been able to continue at the same pace. We have to think very carefully about where our priorities lie and the activities we should take on. However, I found that when I sat down to write on the year's activities we have done a great deal.

Firstly back to April 2005. We had a highly successful AGM and Conference in St Andrews. The Conference theme was Recording and Monitoring the Marine and Coastal Environment and in the morning we had six presentations followed by outside visits in the afternoon. The AGM took place and the Minutes have been distributed to all Members.

**Committee.** Without the commitment of the Committee BRISC would cease to function. They all have jobs and it is not easy for them always to make meetings, albeit that there are only four to five each year. To allow for this and to ensure that we do have adequate representation at our meetings we are wanting to increase the number of committee members, and I hope that existing Members will put themselves forward for election or indicate their willingness to be co-opted.

There have been changes during the year. Allan Brown stepped down as Treasurer, due to a change of job, and his role has been taken on by Duncan Davidson, who is also undertaking the role of Membership Secretary. Jennifer Davidson has moved jobs within SNH and is no longer our prime link into SNH; we hope that her replacement will continue to sit on the Committee as SNH's representative. Jennifer also undertook the role of Secretary for part of last year and we need a replacement. The present members of the Committee already have various roles and I am not keen to twist their arms still further to take on additional work; it comes back to having a larger Committee that can spread the work amongst a number of people.

**Business Plan.** The Committee met four times during the year and the major topic throughout that time was the Business Plan. Without it I am in no position to take forward BRISC, as I do not have a clear picture on what our aims or objectives are in the years ahead.

The draft plan has now been issued to all Members and it is essential that you read it and either approve or feed back comments. We have tried to make it readable and from Members point of view you may not need to follow through all the appendices, which will reduce the reading somewhat. It is an ambitious plan and the costs are intimidating. However, the Committee felt strongly that unless BRISC set out to achieve these aims then Recording was unlikely to progress very far in the next ten years.

Amongst our Current Objectives is the promoting of Local Record Centres and representing their interests. Whilst we will continue to promote the establishment of more LRCs we are delighted that an Association of Local Record Centres is now firmly on the cards, which will more accurately reflect their interests, and our role will be less concerned with representation and more with their promotion and the training of recorders.

**The Scottish Recording Communities Interests** at the National/UK level has been maintained. We have been able to do this through our co-opted position on the National Federation for Biological Recording (NFBR). I have attended their meetings on behalf of BRISC. They also represent the interests of BRISC **and** LRCs at the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Trust Meetings.

BRISC is a member of the NBN LRC Steering Group but so far I have only been able to attend one meeting.

Both these committees are operating at important and influential levels within the UK and due to my lack of detailed knowledge of recording I am not sure that I am really able to represent our interests adequately. It could be an excellent opportunity for someone to become involved at the national level, in a fairly painless way, if they were interested in becoming our representative there. Expenses are met. As it would be important to take BRISC views to such meetings it would also require them being on the Committee!

We are now **Associate Members of Scottish Environment LINK**, rather than an active partner, and we have a place on their Agricultural Task Force. LINK is extremely active on a whole range of fronts and it is useful having the ability of ensuring that recording is not forgotten as an essential tool for managing the Environment. As well as providing useful contacts into the Scottish Administration they also run seminars and can provide advice on a range of topics that we might otherwise have to pay for. For instance I have recently been able to attend a seminar on the running of Trusts, which was highly enlightening and useful to my role in BRISC. However, our subscription level to LINK is increasing to £271 for the 2006/07 year and I do need to be certain that members feel that this is a worthwhile use of £2.55 of their annual subscription. I think it is.

BRISC is involved with two current **Recorders Projects**. Firstly our own **Wildlife Counts Project**, which is now running under the direction of Dr Claire McSorely. This two year project aims to introduce people to formal recording with the longer term objective of expanding the number of people regularly involved with recording. It is being financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, SNH, North Lanarkshire Council, Falkirk Council, Stirling Council with in kind donations from BTCV and BRISC. Claire has made a fantastic start and the first courses are now organized and leaflets are available.

The second project is the **Natural Talent HLF Bursary Scheme**. This is co-ordinated by BTCV, with BRISC a contributing member, and aims to take Recorders onto the higher levels of expertise in their chosen fields.

On behalf of BRISC, Jonathan Willet organized two **training days, one at Glen Gyle in May and one at Glen Nant in August**. Whilst not fully subscribed they provided two most enjoyable and useful days for members.

**The Website** has been maintained by Andy Wakelin and there has been a fairly steady visitation to it over the year. We try and ensure that we put useful and relevant information onto it and I hope that members do use it as a source of information over BRISC matters and also as a means of finding out about matters of mutual interest elsewhere.

In this context we have recently put the Recording Guidance handbook on the site. The links to other organizations need to be expanded on and it would be much appreciated if you would look at this and make recommendations to Andy.

**BRISC Recorder News** has been issued four times over the year and our very sincere thanks to Anne-Marie Smout for continuing to edit it. She is always most happy to receive articles and information for inclusion. If Members would be prepared to receive it by e-mail it would be of considerable assistance and save us money. In fact if more members were prepared to let us have their email address for general communication it would be of assistance.

**Membership and Subscriptions.** Our Membership in February 2006 stood at 92 individuals and 27 Corporate, plus 6 & 2 respectively who have still to pay. There are 9 Reciprocal Members. In 2005 we increased our subscriptions to £15 for individuals and £30 for Corporate Membership; we intend to keep it at that level for a further year. We are proposing to change the Membership Year to run from June 2007, as this will enable us to put any proposals to the members at the AGM in April and implement changes before subscription Notices are issued.

**Finances.** As will be seen from the accounts we are in a relatively healthy position. The accounts are somewhat distorted by the receipt of funds for the Wildlife Counts Project. We have received the full figure from the HLF and also claim the appropriate contributions from our other funders. We are able to pull down on these over the length of the project so it will be somewhat less healthy at the end of next year.

At the beginning of this report I alluded to Alan Cameron's work as Development Officer but I would like to make a particular point of thanking him because it seems to me that he did much to raise the profile of BRISC in both Scotland and the UK. In particular he had been instrumental in the production of the joint BRISC/SNH statement, **A Joint Vision for Biological Recording in Scotland**, and the production of a **National Plan for the establishment of Local Record Centres** throughout Scotland.

I feel that with the new Business Plan BRISC has the ability to continue playing the important role of representing the interests of Scotland's Biological Recorders and taking forward the delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and I look forward to assisting with all of this work.

Patrick Milne Home, Chair of BRISC

March 2006

<b>BRISC Treasurer's Report for the Year 2005 (Jan-Dec)</b>			
<b>Balance at 1st January 2005</b>		<b>£3,036.90</b>	
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership subscriptions	2137.00	Conference	449.44
Conference Bookings	710.00	Subscriptions - LINK & buglife	127.00
Donations	156.50	Newsletter	628.41
Sales	81.25	Members Expenses	523.01
Interest	221.29	Data Protection	35.00
		Miscellaneous	202.45
		Tax deducted	44.21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3306.04</b>		<b>2009.52</b>
<b>Balance at 31st December 2005</b>		<b>£4,333.42</b>	
<b>Projects</b>			
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
SNH Grant - Development Officer	11436.34	Development Officer (BTCV)	11038.86
Heritage Lottery Fund - Wildlife Counts	25000.00	Wildlife Counts (BTCV)	11831.64
<b>Project Totals</b>	<b>36436.34</b>		<b>22870.50</b>
<b>Overall Balance at 31st December 2005, inc Projects</b>		<b>£17,899.26</b>	

Duncan WW Davidson  
BRISC Treasurer

5 March 2006

Notes :

Membership income is inflated by the inclusion of some late payments for 2004.

Conference bookings were unusually high in 2005, against £475 in 2004.

Interest is higher than in 2004 due to Project funds being held on account longer.

Miscellaneous expenditure includes bumblebee packs and Anne-Marie's presentation.

Expenses are lower than previous years due to claims being deferred or expenses being met by individuals.

## Committee Members as of January 2006

- Patrick Milne Home, Chair** *elected 2005*  
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- Duncan Davidson, Treasurer and Membership Secretary** *co-opted 2005*  
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- Allan W Brown** *Standing down from Committee April 2006*
- Jennifer Davidson** *SNH representative.*  
*Standing down from Committee April 2006*
- Brian Boag** *elected 2002*  
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- Gill Calder** *SWT rep - co-opted 2003*  
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- Paul Kirkland** *elected 2002*  
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- Craig Macadam** *elected 2003*  
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- Jon Mercer** *elected 2002*  
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