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# Recorder News

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## From the Chair

At last, *Recorder 2000* is here, and you will soon have a chance to see what it looks like and how it works. In cooperation with eight Local Record Centres, BRISC is organising a series of demonstration events throughout Scotland over the next few months, not just for members but for anyone who might be interested, amateur or professional. A member of BRISC, Richard Weddle, will carry out the demonstrations, and we are extremely grateful to Scottish Natural Heritage and the Esmeé Fairbairn Charitable Trust for agreeing to grant-aid these demonstrations. This is an opportunity not to be missed. Please therefore consult the list of dates and venues on p.9 of this newsletter, so that you can identify the venue most convenient to you and ensure you get an invitation.

The CDs were released around 1<sup>st</sup> September, and JNCC decided that they should be for sale through a system of license holders. At present there are seven licensees, whose names and addresses can be found on the NBN's website, and a list with names

and contacts is enclosed with this mailing. There is of course no monopoly on selling R2K in Scotland, but BRISC was very anxious that this software should be promoted and be easily available up here. It is therefore on our recommendation that Richard Weddle applied for a license. Following the demos, we are also in discussion with Richard about running proper training courses in the Recorder 2000 software, with every participant sitting in front of a computer. Watch this space for more details, or contact Richard Weddle directly (see enclosed sheet for details).

I am delighted to announce that a member, Dr Andy Wakelin, has agreed to develop our website for us. This is tremendously encouraging, and we have consequently co-opted Andy to the Committee. Work has already started on bringing the site up to date, so it should not be long before members can look BRISC up on the Internet.

We welcome Alison Hannah, SWT's Wildlife Site Officer, also co-opted to the Committee.

Those of you who were present at the NBN seminar in Edinburgh on 27<sup>th</sup> July will be aware of the consultation document called 'A vision for LRC coverage in Scotland'. This consultation document has been prepared by Alan Cameron, LRC Support Officer in Scotland, and outlines five different scenarios of how Scotland might be divided up between viable LRCs. The scenarios vary from dividing Scotland into three parts, based on the way that some big organisations already do, such as SWT and SEPA, to Scotland covered by LRCs based on LBAP (25 so far).

It has long been BRISC's vision that viable LRCs should cover all of Scotland, so we very much welcome this consultation as a way of achieving this goal. However, we are not in favour of LRCs having to cover very large areas, because the benefits of local access, local networking, local involvement and support for and by the local recording community would most likely suffer.

Nevertheless, the amalgamation of several existing, but struggling, centres may produce one larger, viable centre. The devil is in the detail, as they say. It will be interesting to see what recommendations the consultation comes up with.

In the April issue (No 37) of this newsletter, I wrote about the CAP proposal to divert some agricultural subsidies away from production through what is termed 'modulation'. I am therefore pleased to report that in August I received a reply from the Scottish Executive to the effect that Modulation has been adopted. Modulation funds for the Agri-Environment in Scotland would be allocated at an estimated £3.5m in 2001/02 (out of £13m), rising to an estimated £21.5m (out of £36m) in 2006/07. This is by far the largest chunk of the money made available. Afforestation would receive an estimated £2m in 2001/02 rising to £3m, while Marketing & Processing and Business Development would share the rest. In the last week, I have even been advised that the sums involved have been increased, though I do not have the details. All good news.

AMS

## **RECORDING BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS**

by Paul Kirkland

### ***Millennium Atlas target shattered!***

The target of one million records for the new Butterfly Atlas of Britain and Ireland has been hugely exceeded with the final total of over 1.6m records – gathered in just five years! This equates to over 8 million individual butterfly sightings, nearly half a million site visits, and more than quarter of a million miles of walking!

At least 10,000 recorders contributed via a network of 70 Local Record Centres and volunteer co-ordinators, covering 99% of the 10km squares and giving an average of 16.4 species per square. Especially pleasing has been the recording in the Republic of Ireland, where the 86% coverage in the 1984 Atlas was improved to 98.5% this time round. This is a tremendous achievement, and a big thank you to all those who helped, particularly to the three Butterfly Conservation volunteer co-ordinators for Scotland, Richard Sutcliffe, David Barbour and Chris Stamp.

Recording, however, has not stopped! Several species are still very under-recorded, for example Green and Purple Hairstreaks, Large Heath, Grayling, and the rather inconspicuous Dingy Skipper. If you would like suggestions of areas or species that still need better coverage, please contact Richard Sutcliffe at the Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow, G3 8AG. Email: richard.sutcliffe@museums.glasgow.gov.uk.

The new Atlas will be published by Oxford University Press in March 2001.

### **Scarce Moth network**

We are keen not to sideline moths, however, and have re-launched the National Scarce Moth network, for all those who collect records of scarce moths. To find out more, contact Dave Green, Moth Officer for Butterfly Conservation on tel. 400209. Email: [dave.green@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:dave.green@butterfly-conservation.org)

### **European Butterflies on the brink**

A report to the Council of Europe by Butterfly Conservation UK and Der Vlinderstichting (Dutch Butterfly Conservation) has revealed that one in eight of Europe's 576 butterflies is under threat. Of 71 species, 19 are only found in Europe and are thus globally threatened.

The species occurring in Britain which were highlighted include the Marsh Fritillary and Large Heath (both found in Scotland), and the Large Blue and Lulworth Skipper. The Marsh Fritillary is now more or less confined to pastures and heaths in Argyll, notably Islay.

The Large Heath is still widespread on the lower level blanket bogs of the north and west, but has declined in the south and east with the loss of lowland raised mires to peat extraction, farming and forestry. Surprisingly, the Scotch Argus, still widespread in Scotland, was also close to qualifying for the 'threatened' list, due to the loss of its upland meadow habitat on the Continent.

For more information on current conservation work on butterflies and moths in Scotland, contact

Butterfly Conservation (Scotland),  
The British Butterfly Conservation Society  
Ltd.  
Balallan House, Allan Park,  
Stirling, FK8 2QG.  
Tel/Fax: 01786 447753  
[pkirkland@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:pkirkland@butterfly-conservation.org)

### **The Edinburgh BAP monitoring system**

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan consists of an ambitious programme, which aims to ensure that Edinburgh's most important species and habitats are conserved. Species Action Plans (SAPs) have been produced for 97 species and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) for the 12 main habitats. For each of the species and habitats, objectives and targets have been decided - to achieve these objectives each SAP/HAP has been broken down into a series of required 'actions' with a total of 400 such actions being necessary to implement the BAP.

In order actually to implement these actions it was realised that clearer prescriptions were needed than is given in the BAP (which is partly a public awareness raising document), and it was therefore decided to write a detailed 'plan of action' for each species/habitat. In these documents, each action is broken down further into the practical 'steps' that are required to carry out the actions. In addition, each action requires a clearly defined statement of the success criteria - it is naturally important to ensure that the successful completion of all of the 'steps' in the 'plan of action' will, in fact, achieve the objectives and targets.

The implementation of all these action 'steps' (c.1500) will involve a great many people, and it is vital to be able to monitor all of their activities. Consequently, it is crucial that everyone reports on progress, and it was decided that the most straightforward way of doing this was by using a standard form - a 'general activity' form, on which is recorded the details of progress, outcome, and problems for each action 'step'. These forms have been designed to be as quick to fill in as possible and cover one side of A4.

Most activities can be entered straight onto a 'general activity' form but there is one type of activity, which needed special consideration, i.e. species surveys. Many of the SAPs involve surveying and monitoring species. Although standard survey methods have been designed for some species groups (e.g. CBC for birds), we were not aware of a surveying system that could equally well be applied to all species and therefore decided to design our own. The system was required to ensure that the data collected was detailed enough to be used for the species monitoring, but, at the same time, would not be off-putting to surveyors, many of whom are volunteers.

The system that was devised evolved rapidly in the light of this year's fieldwork but has now settled down. It involves initial searching for the required habitat of the species - the boundaries of any areas of suitable habitat are marked on a map. We have termed these areas 'search areas', i.e. the places where searching for species takes place. The surveyor then carries out a search for the species and marks any area where the species is found on the map - these areas have been termed 'species locations'. Special forms (on A4 sheets) have been designed to record the survey details and in particular, locality, surveyor, surveyor experience, date, suitability of weather, description of 'search area' and 'species location', and the numbers of the species found in each 'species location'.

In order to be able to monitor the overall progress of the BAP, the data from both the species survey and 'general activity' forms are entered onto a specially designed Access database. Reports are

then generated using the database to facilitate the production of summaries of the work carried out.

The next step is the entry of these summaries onto the database. The subsequent listing of the summaries by the database can finally be used to produce a strategic summary of the year's activities, a report that can be used for a range of purposes, including demonstrating work-achievements to funders and prioritisation of next year's work.

It is still early days but signs are that all the elements of this BAP monitoring system are effectively clicking into place.

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Tel/fax 0131 554 6360  
[swtlothianrc@cix.co.uk](mailto:swtlothianrc@cix.co.uk)

#### **Dates for the diary:**

14 November 2000 - The Scottish Woodland History Group is holding a meeting at Battleby near Perth. The theme is 'Wood pasture'. Contact the Secretary, Institute for Environmental History, University of St Andrews, St Andrews KY16 9QW

2 December 2000 - Meeting at Aberdeen for all local recorders, arranged by North East Scotland BReC. This will be followed by a demonstration of 'Recorder 2000' - please contact Andrew Ferguson tel. 01224 273633 email [nesbrec@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:nesbrec@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

17 March 2001 - BRISC Conference and AGM at Inverness Museum. More details to follow in the January issue of the BRISC Recorder News.

#### **I-Spy 100 - in Lothian**

One of the aims of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) is directly to involve the public with biodiversity work, and a straightforward way of doing this is to encourage the reporting of sightings of the chosen biodiversity species (i.e. SAP species). Some of these species will be recognisable only by specialists, but many LBAPs include 'flagship' species - ones that the public is familiar with. The latest Lothian survey, the I-Spy 100, specifically focuses on these flagship species. The 100 species (the most easily identified of the 300 species on the combined four Lothian LBAPs) are listed in two different ways on either side of an A4 sheet. On the one side they are sorted in

alphabetical order by species group (i.e. the birds are grouped together, etc.); on the other side they are listed by habitat (e.g. all woodland species are grouped together). A transparent plastic A5 envelope can be used for protecting the list in the field, and sightings are noted on a standard recording form. If anyone is interested in seeing a copy of the form, please get in touch.

**Bob Saville**

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**Larger snails**  
by Henry McGhie

(This article was originally published in the Newsletter of Highland Biological Recording Group No 13 (May 2000))

I am interested in the distribution of the Brown-lipped Snail *Cepaea nemoralis*, which is similar to the abundant White-lipped Snail *Cepaea hortensis* but has a brown lip (usually). Both species show great variation in colour, from self-coloured yellow and brown varieties to the more familiar stripy yellow and brown forms; both species also have a pinkish phase which is more common in *C.*

*nemoralis*. I should be very interested to receive any large snails shells by way of 'negative evidence'; the more the better.

The Atlas of the Non-Marine Mollusca of the British Isles (1976) found *C. nemoralis* to occur as far north as Skye, Lochalsh and the Great Glen (almost to Inverness). A number of species at the northern limits of their range (from Barn Owls to Bumble-bees!) have extended their distribution in the Moray Firth area since the 1980s with the spell of relatively mild winters, and I should like to establish whether this is the case with *Cepaea nemoralis*. I should be especially interested to hear of any *C. nemoralis* in the Moray Basin area or extending into Kintail, Torridon or beyond!! I should also be very interested to see snails collected from limestone outcrops such as at Durness. The table below lists the larger snails you are likely to find and pointers to their identification. You may well encounter other species and I would like to see these. I need the grid ref., date, habitat, and any comments with regard to numbers etc. You may well find Thrush anvils in May and late summer: shells from these would be very welcome. Please post the specimens to the Nurses House, West Road, Muir of Ord, Ross-Shire IV6 7TD or pass them, together with the information outlined above, to Stephen Moran and I will collect them from him. Happy hunting!

Species	Identification	Appearance	Habitats
<i>Helix aspersa</i> Garden Snail	Very large, brown and flecked		Calcium rich and/or coastal. Local
<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i> Brown-lipped Snail	Large, plain or stripy with BROWN LIP (usually)		Varied grassland/ woodland. Great Glen and West and ?
<i>Cepaea hortensis</i> White-lipped Snail	As <i>C nemoralis</i> but LIP WHITE (usually)		Varied grassland/ woodland. Widespread
<i>Arianta arbustorum</i>	Similar to <i>Cepaea</i> but brown and flecked		Usually damp habitats. Mainly coastal

## Razor-shells

by Claire Belshaw

(This article was originally published in the Newsletter of Highland Biological Recording Group No 13 (May 2000))

Little is known about the precise distribution of razor-shells around the coast of the Highlands. The sea area maps (NCC1982) below give a general indication of where each species has been found but it would be interesting to have a better picture. All three species appear to be widespread and common.

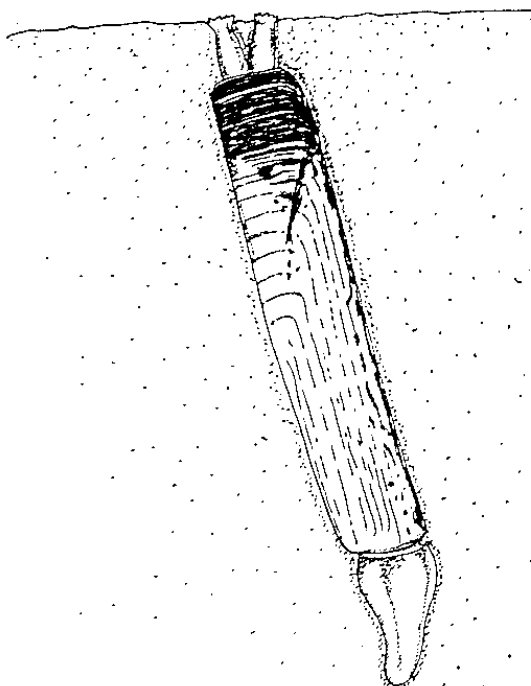


Figure 1: Razor shell in burrow (Trish Matthews).

They are notoriously difficult to creep up on when alive, because they are so sensitive to pressure waves through the sand from approaching feet. At the first hint of danger they put down their muscular foot which swells, forming an anchor in the sand, and then the shell follows, repeating the pattern quickly to make good its escape. You may be lucky to see a small jet of water spurting into the air as it disappears but digging at this stage is futile. There are ways and means of catching "spooties" but that is for another day! Discarded shells will suffice for this survey.

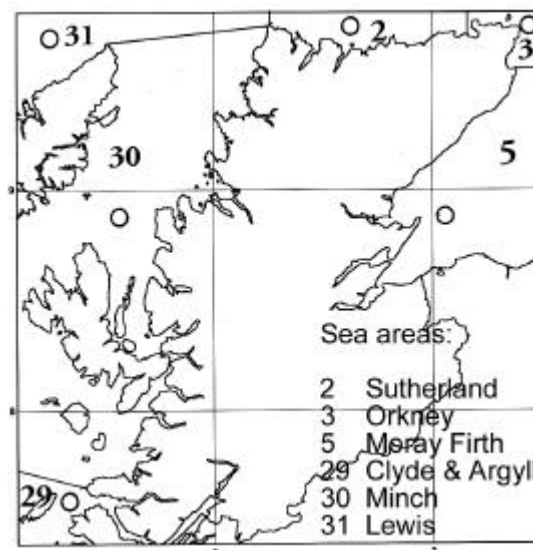
Razor-shells are in the family Solenacea of which there are 5 species in British waters but even better from a recording point of view, only 3 in Highland seas. The

hinge is at the anterior (front) end and it is from this end that the foot protrudes.

Care must be taken when identifying all razor-shells, because of their similarity in shape and in deciding whether or not they are mature.

### *Ensis ensis* (Curved or Sword razor)

This is the smallest of our razor-shells at about 10cm in length and 1.8cm in depth when mature. Both edges tend to be curved. Anterior end rounded, posterior markedly tapering. *E.ensis* burrows into fine sand and occasionally silty sand, from low in the intertidal zone to depths of a few fathoms.



Map 1: Curved or sword razor, *Ensis ensis* (after Seaward, 1982)

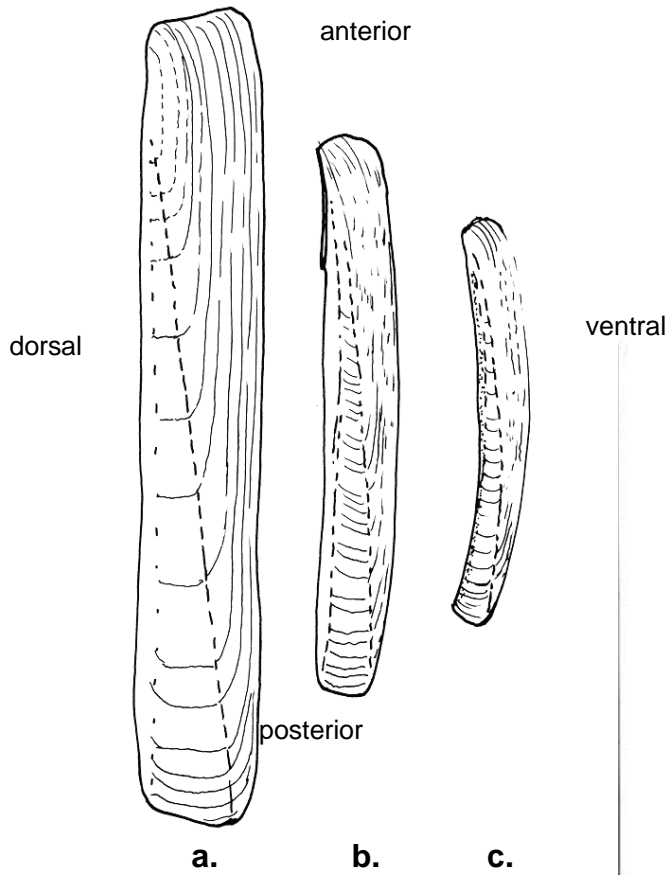
### *Ensis arcuatus*

*Ensis arcuatus* is just larger than *Ensis ensis* when mature at about 15cm long and 1.9 cm in depth. The dorsal margin is almost straight or only slightly curved, and the ventral margin is curved. Anterior end truncated and posterior slightly tapering. *E.arcuatus* burrows into fine or coarse sand, and also into fine or coarse shell-gravel, from low in the intertidal zone to depths of about 20 fathoms (36.6m)

### *Ensis siliqua* - Pod razor-shell

*E.siliqua* is the longest of the three at 20cm in length and 2.5cm in depth. Anterior end truncated, posterior not tapering has straight edges and squared-off end and it prefers to make its burrows in fine sands generally

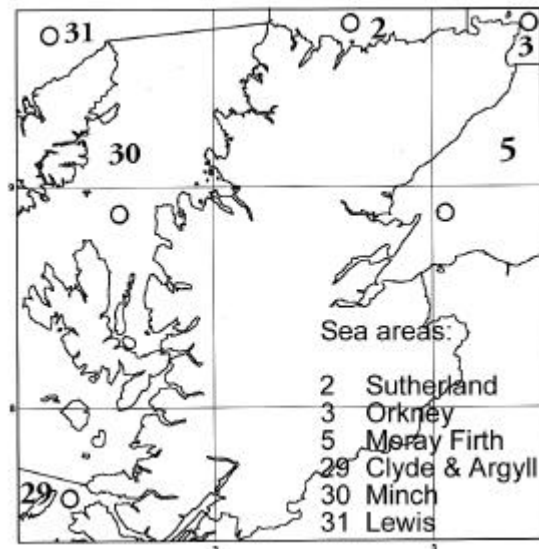
avoiding silty conditions from low in the intertidal zone to depths of about 20 fathoms or less.



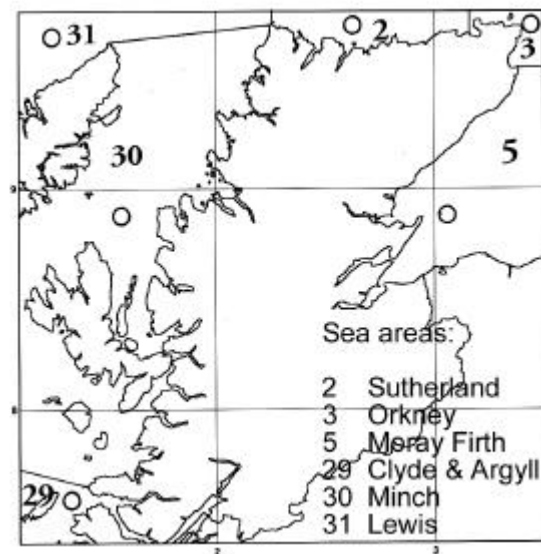
**Figure 2: Right valves of a. *Ensis siliqua*, b. *E. arcuatus* & c. *E. ensis* (after Hayward & Ryland, 1990) (NB: not drawn to relative scales)**

All three species can be tricky to identify because of the confusion over maturity and because they are very similar in appearance.

I would request therefore that you should send your (empty) razor-shells to me with the usual details of date, place (6 fig. grid ref.), species (if known), and any notes such as the type of substrate in the bay or wherever they were found. I would suggest that you pack them carefully in cardboard tubes such as those inside kitchen roll. If you prefer you can hand them in to Stephen Moran at the Museum should you be in Inverness.



**Map 2: *Ensis arcuatus* (after Seaward, 1982)**



**Map 3: Pod razor, *Ensis siliqua* (after Seaward, 1982)**

Note on the maps

Solid circle = recorded live, post 1950

Open circle = recorded as shell only, any date

#### References and further reading

- Tebble, N. (1976). *British Bivalve Seashells, a handbook for identification* (2nd edition). HMSO
- Barrett & Youge (1958). *Collins Pocket Guide to the Sea Shore*. Collins (London)

- Seaward D. (1982). *Sea Area Atlas of the Marine Molluscs of Britain and Ireland*. Nature Conservancy Council
- Reader's Digest (1984). *Field Guide to the Water Life of Britain*
- Hayward, P.J. & Ryland, J.S. (1990). *The Marine Fauna of the British Isles and North-West Europe Vol 2*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.1

## **NBN Conference Report**

A conference on the National Biodiversity Network was held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000 at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. This all day event was organised by the Linking Local Record Centres project and focused on the work of LRCs. It included contributions from the organisers, from Local Authorities, LRC managers, SNH, and JNCC.

### **The NBN**

At the start of the day Sara Hawkswell (Linking LRCs project manager) provided a summary of progress with the NBN and explained that an NBN Trust has now been established and is seeking charitable status. This body will serve to encourage partners and to co-ordinate their work in developing the network. The NBN remains a co-operative venture, involving both organisations that collect and those that use information on biodiversity, and it will continue to develop standards and tools such as 'Recorder 2000', data access terms and accreditation schemes. It will also continue to work with data custodians including LRCs, the BRC and national recording schemes, to promote the linking of their data.

### **LRCs working within the NBN**

Alan Cameron (Linking LRCs Scottish officer) presented an overview of how LRCs working within an integrated national network may operate. Such LRCs will act as the focus for the management of all biological information in their area. Although they may not actually hold all such data, they will be experts on its existence. In general, LRCs will provide easy access to data and generate useful products and services for their users. Services will range from standard outputs such as species lists for sites to assessing planning applications against sets of pre-determined criteria. A complex and wide-ranging picture of the role of LRCs was built up. This picture included providing support and advice to local recorders: support ranging from technical back up and materials for survey work to advice on software and data management. It was stressed that LRCs must play a key role in working with data collectors and providers to build up comprehensive

and up-to-date holdings. As locally based operations, LRCs are in an ideal position to identify data gaps and to work with recorders to evaluate their significance and to seek to fill them. A picture was painted of LRCs based on partnerships involving recorders.

### **Current practice in Fife Nature**

William Penrice (Recorder, Fife Nature Biological Records Centre) explained how Fife Nature operates to "provide a quality biological information service for Fife" through delivering key products to decision-makers derived from the analysis and query of the data it manages. William stressed the central role of recorders in the operation Fife Nature, a role which is reflected in the "official recorders group" acting as an advisory group to management. Recorders provide the backbone of the operation, submitting much data of excellent quality. In practice, due to time constraints and a shortage of volunteers, contract surveyors are employed from time to time

A number of mechanisms are employed by Fife Nature, which ensure that it is seen to work effectively, to provide a responsive and efficient service, that it generates political awareness of its achievements, and that ultimately it is funded securely. These mechanisms include three-year business plans, annual work programmes, performance indicators, and European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) assessments. In future Fife Nature plans to use the new 'Recorder 2000' software to review its data management, to improve its links with recorders, and to expand its range of products in which information is accessed by users directly on their desk tops.

### **Information, LBAPs and Local Authorities**

Malcolm Muir (Countryside Manager, South Lanarkshire Council) delivered an imaginative analysis of nature conservation principles and practice within the context of local authority policy and operations. Second to agriculture, the ground management and planning functions of local authorities probably constitute the most important factors influencing Scotland's biodiversity. There are few, if any, statutory requirements placed on local authorities relating to the natural heritage, and there is a lack of understanding and knowledge and an inertia which all militate against change for the better. In the midst of this there is Biodiversity Action planning. At the local level, this process has the potential to link biodiversity with social and economic objectives, to improve the quality of information used in decision making, and to set targets and devise prescriptions. The implementation of LBAPs will stand or fall on the quality of available information. This information falls into a number of classes:

- Specialist recording, which can uncover changes and priorities that might otherwise go unnoticed
- Recording of indicators of habitat quality drawn from a number of taxa (including easily identified, highly visible and not necessarily rare species)
- Systematic recording and associated data analysis (carried out by the community, specialists and contractors)

The presentation concluded with a call to action: if we cannot harness our remaining expertise and enthusiasm to practical targets and effective action, then there will be precious little left to record and store in our record centres.

### **Lessons from the North East Pilot Record Centre**

Ian Francis (Grampian officer, RSPB) opened his presentation on LRC development on North East Scotland by pointing out that, despite a wealth of research expertise and a long history of biological recording, there has never been a records centre in the region. This is now changing with the establishment of a pilot LRC within the NBN. A number of LBAP partner organisations have been involved with the Linking LRCs project to develop and implement this proposal. The LBAP audit uncovered an unsatisfactory situation in which biological records were found to be scattered and disorganised.

Planning for the LRC started in earnest in February 1998 and has been a long process. Various workshops and interviews, including a Biological Recorders' Open Day, were held during summer 1998, and the first full draft of the development plan was completed in October that year. The establishment of the records centre commenced in February 2000 with the support of SWT, RSPB, SNH, Aberdeenshire Council, the Wildlife Trusts' UK office and the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust. It was decided that the LRC would initially be established as part of Aberdeenshire Council and would seek to become fully independent once operational. There is a reasonable degree of consensus within the partnership, but there remain significant obstacles to increasing the commitment of some organisations. Some key users of biological information data remain content to let others do the work and make the investment, in the expectation of benefiting at a later date, others remain to be convinced of the value of an LRC.

The pilot LRC in North East Scotland has demonstrated that developing an LRC is a complex task with considerable calls on staff time. Consultation and inclusiveness was critical to achieving commitment but resulted in the process being fairly long term. The pilot has demonstrated the need to work in partnership, and it continues to establish that nearly all potential users are "persuadable". The case for LRCs is strong, but in the

final analysis what is required is supportive policies at the highest possible levels.

### **A view from SNH**

Ed Mackey (Head, Environmental Audit Unit, SNH) explained that SNH is involved in LRCs in Scotland at a number of levels, including representation on the management of existing record centres and on partnerships developing proposals for new centres. In the Northern Isles, SNH has been pleased to contribute to the development of LRCs in Orkney and Shetland, where European Structural Funds provided the catalyst. As these LRCs move into their operational phase, SNH sees the establishment of secure funding mechanisms, possibly through Service Level Agreements (SLA), as the top priority. In North East Scotland SNH has been a supporter of the pilot LRC (see above) and is aiming to encourage the documentation of standard practices for adoption elsewhere. Despite the demand for improved information on species, habitats and sites in Tayside and the drawing up of a development plan, it was noted that a firm partnership to take this forward has not yet been formed.

In 1997, SNH signed an SLA with Fife Nature for specified information services. This was reviewed in 1999 and has now been extended. SNH has found Fife Nature to be effective in providing a one-stop-shop for otherwise dispersed data, for keeping information updated and for matching surveys to priority information needs.

Improved LRCs could enable local authorities and developers to utilise facts more fully in planning and to reduce SNH casework loads, thus enabling staff to focus on their primary role of providing advice. SNH is keen to see development of a standard model for LRCs, which would help to raise awareness and understanding amongst potential partners. This model would include agreement on the geographic coverage of LRCs, the introduction of NBN accreditation standards and simple subscription terms. With these developments at the local, Scottish, and UK levels, SNH sees great benefits to all from improved access to biodiversity information through LRCs.

A full report from the conference is available on the Linking LRCs pages of the NBN website at [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)

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### **'Recorder 2000' Demonstrations**

In cooperation with Local Record Centres and with funding from SNH and the Esmeé Fairbairn Charitable Trust, BRISC is staging a series of *FREE Recorder 2000* demonstrations around Scotland.

The events will usually last about 5 hours, starting about 11 o'clock, but please get in touch with the relevant LRC to check times, venues and to book a place. Coffee/tea will usually be provided, but **bring your own lunch** unless otherwise advised.

The following dates and venues have been fixed so far:

- **Dumfries 11/11/00 Crichton University Campus (to be confirmed)–contact Jackie Galley tel. 01387-247-543**
- **Inverness 25/11/00. Inverness Museum – Stephen Moran tel. 01463-237-114**
- **Aberdeen 2/12/00 probably Conoco Centre – Andy Ferguson tel. 01224 273633**
- **Jedburgh 17/12/00 Harestanes Visitor Centre - Dan Watson - tel. 01835-830-306**
- **Kirkwall 20/1/01 Orkney College – Ross Andrew – tel. 01856-875-127**
- **Perth 24/1/01 – Perth Museum – Mark Simmons – tel. 01738-632-488**
- **Edinburgh** date and venue is still to be fixed. For details contact **Bob Saville – tel. 0131-554-6360**
- **Glasgow** – the first demo took place here on 7/10/00, but a second demo can be arranged if there is sufficient demand. **Please contact Richard Sutcliffe, tel. 0141-287-2660 if you are interested**

**Don't miss this chance to see the long-awaited new specialist software for biological recorders**

**Full courses for different levels of Recorder 2000 Users** will be arranged as soon as practicable.  
Contact Richard Weddle for details  
(see separate sheet for address)

### **BOOK REVIEW**

*Identifying British Insects and Arachnids - An annotated bibliography of key works.* Edited by Peter C. Barnard. Cambridge University Press with the Natural History Museum, 1999, Hbk ISBN 0-521-63241-2. Price £50

This is a welcome addition to the field, which has been dominated previously by the various editions of Kerrich, Hawksworth and Sims' Key Works to the Fauna and Flora of the British Isles and Northwestern Europe. Operating over a narrower taxonomic range than its predecessors and with double the paper, the scope for discussion and annotation is dramatically increased.

The book has a pleasing appearance, is well bound and appears to be well proofed against the ravages of a wet workbench. The introduction sets out its purpose: to ease the laborious process of getting to grips with the scattered works which are needed for the identification of any one group of British insects or arachnids. It is 'largely intended for the reader who is moving on from basic texts to more specialised ones'. Entomological journals, societies and general references are listed in this introduction.

There follows a useful chapter on 'Sources of Information' by Julie M.V. Harvey, enumerating the various ways in which references can be sought out and covering the full range from ink on parchment to web site. A section on understanding bibliographic references contains useful notes on sources of confusion and a guide to journal abbreviations. The pages dealing with entomological libraries are useful, although the shortest section deals with local museums thus - "Some local museums with natural history collections have developed small reference libraries, which may be available to the public" (quoted in full). My own local museum library is used extensively by members of the public, and I am sure that similar arrangements are offered by many of my BCG colleagues. Such a brief statement seems almost to dismiss the pivotal role played by local museums, with collections and expertise, in weaning and giving direction to budding entomologists as they begin to specialise. The remainder of the chapters is taken up with creating a personal entomological library.

The meat of the book then appears: 323 pages with chapters on each insect order (23,500+ species) and the major arachnid orders (2420 species). Each chapter introduces an order and ends with a well annotated bibliography highlighting the most pertinent works. The orders are dealt with by individual specialists and, in addition to his own groups, the chief editor seems to have acted as 'sweeper' to deal with any 'orphaned' groups.

The treatment of each order seems to be weighted differently. For instance, the Diptera (6643 species) are allotted just over 20 pages whilst the (admittedly complex) Hymenoptera (7000+ species) have more than 120 pages dedicated to them. It is pleasing to see in the Coleoptera section, mention of clubs, societies, newsletters and recording schemes. For anyone 'moving on from the basic texts', these schemes are as essential as the literature in informing 'part time' entomologists of developments. The section on my own first love, the Heteroptera, contains no mention of the many useful provisional keys turned out in the Heteropterist's Newsletter, a part of the National Recording Scheme, without which I should have floundered at times.

Distribution Atlases are also mentioned in the Coleoptera section and this too is exceptional within the volume. I should imagine that work towards such atlases gives many amateur entomologists added purpose and incentive to become proficient in particular groups. There are some odd omissions in some of the sections. For example, when I showed the book to an Arachnologist friend he was puzzled by the lack of mention of 'Big Roberts' (Harley Books -3 volumes, 1985-87) whereas 'Little Roberts', the condensed version published by Collins in 1995 is listed.

The introduction admits that in a book of this scope with over 2,000 references, there are bound to be errors and omissions, and comments and additions are invited. This is a very useful book as it stands although, given its target audience, rather beyond the means of many individuals who would be better spending their money on the works listed in the bibliography. Perhaps each local museum ought to have a copy in its library, to be made available to emerging or diverging entomologists. Even with references up to 1997 (and a few from 1998), the book may stale fairly rapidly. It would be wonderful to give this invaluable source of information a web site where it can be upgraded on a regular basis. I would happily pay a small annual subscription for such a service.

Stephen Moran

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## TWO RECENT PROFESSORIAL BOOKS

**Nature Contested.** By T.C. Smout. Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 210 pages.  
Hbk ISBN 0-7486-1410-9. Price £45.00  
Pbk ISBN 0-7486-1411-7. Price £14.99.

**Where Next?** By D. Poore. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2000. 338 pages.  
Hbk ISBN 1-84246-006-4. Price £17.99  
Pbk ISBN 1-84246-000-5. Price £9.95.

Smout's **Nature Contested** is based on six lectures given at Oxford University in 1999 under the title 'Use and delight: environmental history in northern Britain since 1600' and the contest he so brilliantly describes is essentially that between the *use* of land for produce versus our *delight* in its appearance and enjoyment of wild things. Justification for the northern Britain geography (as far south as the Peak District) will satisfy BRISC members and why not? The limitation is no more odd than the Scottish border. For those readers who have kept up with publications resulting from meetings of the Centre for Environmental History and Policy (Universities of Stirling and St Andrews), much of the subject matter will be broadly familiar: woods

and forests, water and soil, mountains and moorlands, access and prohibition, private and public ownership, but here Smout has woven numerous earlier and sometimes stodgy texts into a tasty digestible whole. This is a truly enjoyable book. Smout's skill in blending apposite quotes from writers through the centuries (including nuggets of wit and wisdom) is unsurpassed; well chosen photographs enliven the text; the eighteen pages of notes are silent evidence of massive research; there is a helpful bibliography and index. Just a few quibbles: the genus *Sorbus* surely has no *i* in it and friends in WWF might question whether the word *tightly* is quite right (end of first para, page 170). Be you student or old hand in the conservation business, read the Historiographer Royal's latest book and be thankful that Scotland has such a splendid chronicler of our times and interests in the environment.

Compared with Smout, there are essays in Poore's **Where Next?** (subtitled 'Reflections on the human future') which are significantly more challenging to the grey cells. The context here is E. M. Nicholson's *New Renaissance Group*, as a contribution to whose deliberations Poore selected seventeen experts in fields as diverse as population and environment, limits to sustainable development, information technology, cities, world governance, international law, religion and education; the introductory and concluding chapters being by Poore himself. The scope is the world, the subject its future. Especially recommended are Abernethy on population, Arundale on information, and Goode on cities. Other readers may choose differently but surely all will agree that Poore's concluding chapter is outstanding for its uncomplicated writing and warm humanity. The paragraph on education in the penultimate page is particularly fine. Here too there is a comparable set of chapter notes and an index.

Although asked to review only one of these books (no prizes given for which one), I thought they went well together because the authors demonstrate a holistic approach to their surroundings. Both have reached far out from their youthful beginnings: Smout as a historian and Poore as a classicist, yet both have stood high amongst our senior echelons of science-based public decision makers. Each, therefore, in his own way, exemplifies the *universal ecology* of Stewart's essay in **Where Next?** He writes "In going from the organisms of natural ecology to the ideas of mental patterns that enter into a universal ecology, there is no sudden leap. Many ideas belong in a 'biological' habitat, they are part of patterns of human behaviour that interact with [other] patterns..." And here, in these two books, we are shown why there is no sudden leap; that people and the environment in all its complexities are parts of a whole.

Thomas Huxley

