



NBRC Newsletter 03

April 2010

NBRC Update

Recorder 6

I am pleased to inform you that, thanks to some funding from DEFRA, we have finally updated our database to Recorder 6.

This means that we are now up to date with all the dictionaries from the Natural History Museum. It is also a lot easier to complete large import of records. Importing MapMate data into our system will be a lot quicker now.

Association for Local Environmental Records Centres (ALERC)

We are now a member of ALERC, the Association for Local Environmental Records Centres.

The Association arose within ranks of the membership of the National Federation for Biological Recording. Local Records Centres (LRC) have been key members of the NFBR for some time and through a series of meetings and conferences organised by NFBR the desire to have in place a formal Association representing the interests of these Local Records Centres and their staff gradually came to fruition.



After a harsh winter, the Snow Drops were still covered by snow at Lings on 19/02/2010.

The formation of the Association came about during 2006 via the efforts of a number of Local Records Centre representatives and allied trades who formed the Steering Group. The formal constitution was written in March 2007, following an extensive survey of Local Records Centres conducted during 2006 and the Association formally launched in 2008. The Association is therefore no longer just an aspiration, it is a fact.

The association will help provide a voice to represent the LRC sector and to defend our interests, as we develop alongside other local, regional and national players in the environmental information field. Another important role for ALERC will be the development and implementation of a simple and workable system of LRC accreditation, which will strengthen the profile and reputation of the whole LRC network.

The website for the association is still under construction but it already has a wide range of information. To learn more about the association please visit www.alerc.org.uk.

NBRC Projects

The main focus for this year will be to finish processing the large amount of data related to the Wildlife Sites surveys. This year and thanks to the work of volunteers, the NBRC will carry on the projects started last year:

- Finish the validation of the Bird Club records from the year 2000 onwards and import them into our Recorder Database, followed by an export to the NBN Gateway
 - Carry on the digitisation of the Macro Moth records.
 - Exchange all plants records with the Northamptonshire Flora Group for the preparation of the updated flora for the county.
 - Align our database with the one used by the Northamptonshire Diptera Group.
 - Export Amphibian and Reptile records to the NBN Gateway and further Wildlife Sites survey data.
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Wider LRC News

Introduction to the NBN Gateway

Natural England is encouraging all the record centres nationally to share all the records they hold on the NBN Gateway. The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre (NBRC) now has an account on the NBN Gateway and has already provided a dataset.

The NBN Gateway has been developed to store all the records in one place on the internet so that they can be used to better inform decision-making, education, research and other public benefit purposes. NBN stands for National Biodiversity Network. It is an informal partnership of groups and organisations working to share wildlife records. Currently there are 133 data providers on the NBN Gateway. Those include most of the National Schemes and Record Centres across the UK. In short, the NBN partnership includes all of us.

The NBN Partnership is co-ordinated by the NBN Trust, a charity with 6.4 full time staff working to develop and share best standards, tools and advice. A small number of typically larger NBN partners are funding members of the NBN Trust.

To date there are 50,430,889 species records on the NBN Gateway. Anyone can use the Gateway to find out what records are being shared across the whole NBN. It is free to register a user account which will allow you to request enhanced access to restricted datasets.

Only groups and organisations can contribute records on the NBN Gateway. Both Local Record Centres and Recording Schemes provide a useful route through which individuals can submit new records.



First Daffodil to flower at lings on 24/03/2010. I've counted 12 bumblebees desperately trying to get some food, *Bombus hypnorum* being one of them. They usually feed on the Cherry Plum at this time of year!

Dataset providers can set how available their own dataset appears to the general public (the minimum resolution is 10km x 10km). If public access is restricted, data providers are able to set enhanced levels of access for specific individuals or organisations that have registered an account on the NBN Gateway website. The NBN Trust do not own or control access to any datasets or records that groups or organisations share through the NBN Gateway.

If you would like further information about the NBN Gateway please visit www.nbn.org.uk. You are welcome to contact us as well if you have any questions about it.

Survey Focus

BioBlitz

This year we will be holding a public Bioblitz at Bradlaugh Fields (SP765636) in Northampton:

**from Saturday 5th June – 6pm
until Sunday 6th June – 6pm**

A BioBlitz is a 24-hour inventory of all living organisms in a given area. This public event will be promoted by BBC Breathing Places on their Springwatch program. Similar events will be run across the region on that weekend. The Wildlife Trust has agreed to take the lead with the organisation of the event but won't be the only partner involved.

On Saturday, Juliette Butler and Matt Johnson will be running a Bat walk from 9.30pm. This will be followed by a moth trap organised by Derek Larkin and James Skinner from 10.30pm. Both of those activities will have a limited number of places and members of the public will have to book in advance.

Sunday will be a public open day from 10am to 4pm. We are planning to run safari walks around the reserve. A projecting microscope will be on display at the Barn so that invertebrates can be looked at more closely. There will also be some pond dipping and sweep netting activities for adults and children.

To make this event interesting, it is important for us to try and gather good quality records for as many taxonomic groups as possible. I think it is an excellent opportunity to have a further look at this rich and diverse reserve. Last year's Bioblitz at

Abington Meadows was very successful and we found quite a lot of interesting species.

Please come along and enjoy this very nice reserve. We would be grateful if you could help gather records. We would also be really grateful if some of you would like to help us guide and assist members of the public to gather good quality records on the day.

Please let me know whether or not you would like to come along either to help with the activities or to have a walk around. If you are unable to come on those days then we will welcome your records up to a week beforehand.

High Wood

As suggested by some of the recorders, we would like to focus recording effort on one site per year. As a trial for this year we have suggested High Wood. We would like to collate those records and show them on the website.

There are no set dates for you to come and visit the site so you can just turn up whenever you want. Please contact us if you would like a species list for the site, a map of the site or a document showing the directions to the site.

Please be aware that you will be responsible for your own first-aid when you go and visit the site. Please contact us to get a site assessment for the site and an activity risk assessment. Please read them carefully before your first visit and let us know if there is any inconsistency.

I look forward to receiving your records.

Butterflies transects

Julian Bull is organising the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) transects for Northants and Bedfordshire. Butterfly transects have been walked for many years but they have been in a fairly limited number of locations. To address this, the WCBS was set up and run very successfully last year. The design of the project is based on the BTO's bird surveys, using 1km grid squares chosen at random. The commitment is limited to walking transects a minimum of twice during the summer. A reconnaissance visit during May is also necessary.

By popular request the survey is being run again this year. It is hoped that last year's volunteers will continue with the same squares and any new volunteers with a reasonable knowledge of butterfly

identification are very welcome. For further details see the website at www.ukbms.org/wcbs.htm, or e-mail survey@butterfly-conservation.org. If you would like to get involved please email Julian Bull, the 'champion' for Northamptonshire: lepcjb@yahoo.co.uk



High Wood with Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*). 15/05/2005

Computer tip

MAGIC Grid Reference

Some of you have asked me if there was an easy way of getting accurate grid references from the internet.

I like to use the MAGIC website for this purpose. MAGIC stands for Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside. Please follow the link: www.magic.gov.uk

When you get to the home page, click on the Interactive Mapping icon. Step 1: you must first select a topic. I usually select administrative areas. Step 2: you must indicate where you want to go. Tick one of the attributes and enter what you want to search for in the box below. You have a choice between 5 attributes. You can either search by Postcode, Place Name, Full Grid Reference, Grid Reference or Latitude and Longitude.

Then you need to agree the terms of use and click on the Open Map button. Once the map is open, you can zoom in to a more detailed OS map by changing the scale to 8,000 for example. You can click on the hand at the bottom left of the screen and then drag the map to wherever you want to go.

Once you find the area where you want to get a grid reference, simply click on the question mark at the top left of the screen and then click wherever you want on the map. A pop up window will open giving a full grid reference and also a 6 figures grid reference for the area that you click on the map.

I find it very useful and easy to use. I hope you will find it useful to. Please let me know if the instructions above don't make any sense.

Meet your fellow recorders

Rachel Carter, Recorder for Bryophytes

Mosses and liverworts first came to my attention when I was still at school, I was captivated by their diminutive delicacy and soon progressed from admiring their prettiness to identifying the different species and taking an interest in how and where they grow – contrary to some popular opinion, and their classification as “lower plants”, they are actually highly developed and far from simple.

However, study of bryophytes can be very time-consuming, and I only became more active after my family had grown up and left home. Then I developed my skills further by attending courses run by the Field Studies Council and meetings of the British Bryological Society. After helping to organise a BBS meeting in Northamptonshire in 2007, I took over the role of BBS Regional Recorder for vice-county 32 (ie Northamptonshire and the former Soke of Peterborough). I also contribute to the BBS Bryophyte Ecology project:—we record abundance of bryophyte species in various habitats together with basic environmental parameters, thus building up a database which will provide the detailed knowledge of ecology that is fundamental to effective conservation in the future.



Mnium hornum found at High Wood on 14/04/2007 during the BBS meeting.

Recently I have become more involved in the British Bryological Society, serving on the Council, and now taking on an administrative role as (Honorary) General Secretary.

Few people give mosses and liverworts more than a passing glance. This is partly because they are small and you have to take the trouble to look closely, but the lack of a suitable identification book has also been a limitation. Although finer points of bryophytes will always need a microscope, you can get quite a long way with just a 10x hand lens. We hope that the field guide published by the British Bryological Society earlier this year – Mosses and Liverworts of Britain and Ireland—a Field Guide – will make mosses and liverworts more accessible to non-specialists.

Rachel Carter

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**I wish you all a good survey
season!**

Nathalie Hueber