



Woolly Thistle and busy bee Matthew Millett

## 1974-2004

This issue of our newsletter marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BRERC; first registered as a records centre in 1974. Articles include some recollections of the early days to stir some memories. To me, with less than three years experience, it seems that much has changed, and yet little has changed. We still try to provide a service to our recorders, and to the public, and we are able to do that thanks to our funding partners and members of our steering group: the councils of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire; English Nature; the Environment Agency and Avon Wildlife Trust.

BRERC is still managed through the City Museum & Art Gallery, and we appreciate their continued support.

One thing that has changed records centre hugely, and has opened up new areas of work, is computers:

Daniel worked out that we now have 55,540 times the storage capacity of BRERC's first computer!

## News

Tim Corner

### Veteran Trees

BRERC are currently producing a new recording form for veteran trees and are planning a new public participation survey to try and map as many as possible. This survey will be a step towards action highlighted in the various local and regional biodiversity action plans. Once we are ready to launch, forms will be available to download from our website.

### Notable Bryophytes

Following on from work by Jenny Dowell, and her consultation with regional and national experts, BRERC has produced a list of Notable Mosses and

Liverworts. Their new local status categories have been added to the BRERC Species Dictionary for our day to day work, as well as the list of Notable Species which can be downloaded from our website.

### **Field Boundaries Project**

BRERC are analysing the hedgerow and stone wall data gathered by the Field Boundaries Project. We are also reformatting the information in order to help the project manage their data in ways compatible with others' systems.

The initial emphasis of the analysis is to look at hedges with species and structures suitable for supporting Common Dormouse, and to provide suggestions of areas to target for 'action on the ground'. Relevant information will also be made available to the Batscapes Project.

The amount of data the volunteers of the Project have gathered is immense and includes: information on the boundary management; ditches; earth banks; plants; hollow trees and the various animals sighted during their surveys.

### **Staff changes**

Since the last newsletter five longstanding members of staff have moved onto pastures new: Martin Evans and Roger Edmondson have been scouring the country to photograph and research Shield Bugs for a new book they are producing; Jen LeBlanc has returned to her native Canada; Vicky Hale has taken a position as ecologist for a consultancy and Jenny Dowell is studying at university.

We wish them well and deserved success. The recent accolades and reputation BRERC currently enjoys has largely been built on the professionalism and expertise of their longstanding service and commitment to wildlife conservation.

Among their many achievements: Martin designed and built the new BRERC main database and BRERC website; Roger developed important new filing systems to improve data flow through our systems; Jen developed and digitised the UK Priority Habitats of the Avon area for the National Inventory and helped to develop the South West Nature Map; Vicky produced the Dragonfly Recording Pack and developed an electronic SNCI register and Jenny has digitised the BLISS codes onto our GIS.

*GIS = Geographical Information Systems  
LRC = Local Records Centre  
NBN = National Biodiversity Network  
SNCI = Site of Nature Conservation Interest*

### **Impending Legislation**

In January the Environmental Information Regulations come into force in England and Wales. This legislation is in response to the European Union's desire to make environmental information more readily available and places certain statutory responsibilities on 'public bodies'. You may have heard various rumours regarding the possible implications the Regulations may have for Local Records Centres.

However, discussions are still taking place at a national level with regard to both the Regulations and their accompanying Code of Practice.

Currently we have been advised that the policies we operate, concerning confidential data, access terms and discretion, are unlikely to be affected. There has been no consequent change to BRERC's policies and we still abide by them.

### **South West LRCs**

The South West LRCs have just appointed a Regional Project Officer, Dr Lucy Rogers, to co-ordinate work that the LRCs are conducting for English Nature and the NBN. The appointment is for six months and Lucy is based at Somerset and employed, on behalf of the seven South West LRCs, by Dorset. It is hoped that jointly we can be in a position to extend the contract for this post beyond the lifetime of this work. This is a first and an historic moment.

Equally historic is the recent resolution at a special national conference for LRCs to set up a national association of Local Records Centres.

Currently BRERC represents the South West LRCs on the NBN LRC Steering Group and, along with Somerset Environmental Records Centre, on the South West Biodiversity Partnership. BRERC is also a member of the Severn Estuary GIS Working Forum and sit on many local Steering Groups and committees of various wildlife bodies and initiatives.

### **Some other current BRERC projects**

- ⊗ Helping to further develop South West Nature Map and Rebuilding Biodiversity Initiative
- ⊗ Further development of North Somerset 'Bat Hedges' mapping
- ⊗ Helping to develop protocols for regional data custodianship
- ⊗ Building a website for Batscapes
- ⊗ Developing specialised recording forms and training for Friends of Wick Local Nature Reserve

- ⊗ Developing recording forms and list of associate species for Living Rivers Project
- ⊗ Providing beginners and advanced training in GIS
- ⊗ Further development of electronic SNCI Register.

## Recording News

### Main database

The main database now has over 866,000 validated and verified records and we're aiming to hit 1 million in late 2005/early 2006 - watch this space!

Martin Evans and Roger Edmondson recorded **Green Tiger Beetle *Cicindela campestris*** in North Somerset this spring. This was only our fourth record on the third site in our region of this attractive beast.

Jenny Dowell and Lindsay Moore, also in North Somerset, recorded the Nationally Notable **Marsh Dock *Rumex palustris*** – only the second record since 1941. Thanks for Mark Kitchen for determining that one.

Phil Williamson recorded **Kidney Saxifrage *Saxifraga hirsuta***, which is a first for Bristol and only the third in Avon.



Green Tiger Beetle Abigail Pedlow

## Thank you for your records!

We are starting to get spreadsheets complete with data returned to us, that have been downloaded from our website (see last newsletter). This is a great help to us, and we are working on getting individual group 'cards' as spreadsheets on the website as well.

Of course if you use the forms that we send out with the newsletter that also helps us enter data efficiently.

If filling in forms doesn't agree with the way that you do things, and you like to build up a set of records on paper, then, for ease of validation and data entry, it is **very** helpful if you subdivide your records by **place**, rather than by **species**.

## Meeting of Committee members of the BRERC Recording Groups

Committee members of the BRERC Recording Groups (Dragonflies, Butterflies, Moths, Hoverflies, Flora, RIGS and those who had expressed an interest in forming a Lower Plants Group) are invited to attend a special meeting to discuss possible ways BRERC could improve its support services to the groups, potential recording and monitoring projects and the possibility of initiating a Recorders forum for all recording groups active in Avon. BRERC is also proposing to discuss the feasibility of arranging an annual Recorders event. We intend to use the get together to agree any dates for the various meetings and possible field events of each BRERC Group.

The Recording Group Committees Meeting will be at 2pm on **Saturday 22nd January** at BRERC.

BRERC will send out invitations to each member. If you would like to join any of the committees or are willing to help in other ways tell us.

## Local Patch Initiative

Daniel Marshall

Back in the mists of time when I was still a volunteer at BRERC, one of the things I took great delight in doing was looking up the records and reports for the fields and woodland visible from my bedroom window.

Although the reports were interesting, I was somewhat disappointed by the lack of information. In my 20-plus years of periodically looking out of my window, I've seen deer, woodpeckers, Foxes and much more, and when I've ventured outside shrews, Weasels, Slow-worms and many plants.

I realised that my knowledge of my 'Local Patch' was detailed, and that I knew more about the character of the place, its history and of course the species present, than BRERC did. This was entirely my fault of course – if I'd submitted these records in the years when I saw them then they'd be on the database by now!

But my experience is a common one – people are naturally interested in their Local Patch. They'll know the kind of things they can expect to see, and they'll know where to look for them. And they'll be motivated to record what they see because of this interest – that's the theory anyway!

And after producing the document for the Local Patch Initiative, which sets out how to best record and provide records to us, it seems the theory is proving to be true. One of the things BRERC can do for the Local Patch recorder is to produce maps showing the six-figure grid references for 100-metre squares. So far we have had requests covering nearly 600 six-figure grid references. And the best bit is, if you just want the grid references that your garden falls within, and you just want to sit in your conservatory noting what you see, then that's just as valuable as trudging round a damp woodland identifying fungi. It's all good data!

If you are interested in recording what you see in your local area, then you can download a copy of the Local Patch Initiative report from the BRERC website [www.brerc.org.uk](http://www.brerc.org.uk). If you do not have access to the internet then please request a paper copy.

## 1974-2004

### BRERC – the early days #1

A personal view by Charles Copp

I joined Bristol Museum as Assistant Curator of Natural History in the very hot summer of 1976. The big project at that time was work on a new natural history gallery. In the course of settling in, I discovered that Bristol Museum had been proposed, by the previous curator, as a biological record centre and it appeared as such in a list of centres published by Flood & Perring in 1978. This was my first introduction to the concept of record centres, although, in those days, there was not much guidance as to what a record centre was, in fact there were very few working examples active at that time. Bristol certainly was not one of them, but I could see the potential that the superb local collections and the close links with the Bristol Naturalists' Society offered.

Cataloguing the collections and work on the new gallery filled much of my time in the first five years at Bristol, although I gradually grew more and more

interested in biological recording and records management. These were exciting times, with many new developments in documentation and recording. At the same time the Biological Curators Group (BCG) was filling more of its newsletter and meetings with Biological Recording related topics. We already had the BSBI Atlas of the British Flora and other 'provisional' atlases were beginning to appear from Monkswood, the national biological records centre. I became deeply involved in all these things and dragged in my first assistant, Jan Ratcliffe, who was funded by the Manpower Service Commission Job Creation Scheme. Following Jan there were to be many more 'Job Creation' staff to swell the ranks who laid the foundations of BRERC and brightened up the grim times of Thatcher's 80s.

I had developed a keen interest in computers during my degree course and subsequent geological research, which predisposed me to take on an extra role in the museum as documentation officer and to experiment with databases. This was an interest that would make BRERC one of the first record centres to use computers and which sustains me in work to the present day.

Back in the mid 70s the concept of a desktop or personal computer was only just emerging. The first floppy disk appeared in 1976 and Bill Gates was only just starting on his road to richest man in the world. My early flirtations with documentation and databases took place on the University of Bristol Honeywell mainframe via a teletype machine. By 1980, however, the market was beginning to fill with a bewildering array of 'personal computers', immortalised as the PC with the appearance of the IBM PC in 1981. These early machines were hopelessly feeble in their abilities and limited to monochrome text-only screens (Windows didn't appear until 1985).

I persuaded the museum to buy what was then a leading edge machine, the Sirius 1, the first true 16-bit microcomputer, which cost £2,300 (I dread to think what that is in today's money), it had twin floppy disks and could say "I am the Sirius 1, the number one choice in business micro-computing" – so I had to have it!

Eventually we had a room full (well 4 of them) and they were well used for many years. There was virtually no software to use in those days; we had Wordstar for writing documents but micro-computer databases were very new and not powerful. We experimented with one called Delta and later settled



on Dbase but these were the days when, more often than not, you had to program things yourself in BASIC. In BRERC we decided that the number of records we would generate was greater than existing databases could manage, so we wrote our own and with the aid of Pete Rooney the Avon Flora Project became computerised.

What a great and exciting time we had in those early years, especially between 1981 and 1988 when there was a constant buzz of activity with people involved in such projects as the Phase I Survey, the Common Butterfly Project, the Avon Flora Project, the Dragonfly Atlas, the Geological RIGS project, organising conferences, writing papers and lots of field work. We had Liz Milner as our photographer, whose excellent work gave us a wonderful resource of images for publicising our work and putting into publications. We had a number of very talented artists including Philippa Burrell (who went on to become the 'mother of BRERC'), Nicola Keeling and Steve Manning. In addition to the paid workers we also had many volunteers and friends such as Brin Edwards, another talented artist, whose work has figured highly in BRERC publications.

On one occasion, Philippa was preparing some beautifully detailed butterfly illustrations for the Common Butterfly Project booklet. Whilst she was at lunch, I replaced the exquisite pen and ink originals with photocopies coloured in with crayons. I was lucky to survive that particular prank!

I remember times when there were at least twenty people beavering away on the various projects and their numbers were swelled by other museum staff such as Sue Swansborough and numerous volunteers, some working on collections, others on biological records. We used to work late on Thursday nights so that people with other day-time jobs could come in and work and there were frequent evening meetings linked to the big projects.

There were some real characters amongst the number. One chap, taken on to survey sites for the register of regionally important geological and geomorphological sites, annotated each record with an account of the nearest pubs and the quality of the beer! We had another, Mike, who was confined to a wheelchair because of brittle bone disease but we contrived to take him out into the field and man-handled him, chair and all, over stiles and through rough fields to look for such delights as the Autumn Crocus in flower.

Fieldwork was always regarded as very important and we tried to ensure that everyone got out on training and recording days. How can you work effectively in a record centre if you don't know the geography of your area or haven't seen some of its wonderful wildlife? Whenever we took on a new batch of aspirants we would get a minibus and take them out. This was an essential form of training and I believe is even more relevant today because so few graduates have had any real experience of fieldwork or have learnt identification skills. On one trip I was just explaining that we were in the habitat of a very rare buttercup when one of the 'flock' held one out in his hand asking what it was? In addition to instilling much needed skills I think that being out in the field together builds an appreciation of why the work is important and makes bonds between the people involved.

BRERC started off very small, just some file cards and a filing cabinet in my office, then as things got busier a space was set up 'behind the tiger case' in the foreign animals gallery. That used to be Anne Hollowell's (the curator of Natural History) office but she moved out to make room! Anne was very forbearing, I was forever thinking up new schemes and more and more people were appearing in the department but she took all this anarchy in good part.

Eventually when it looked like the second half of the new natural history gallery would never be built we took over that space for the record centre - a truly impressive size room to fill. Fill it, we did, with spare furniture raided from the Council House, drawing boards, slide table, map cabinet, filing cabinets and much more - including people.

I could not possibly keep all of this in check personally and through the 80s I was lucky enough to have a succession of good and talented people to manage the record centre and put all these ideas into action. There was Lawrence Way, who came to me, quiet and cerebral, straight from University and who has stayed a constant and trusted friend ever since. Lawrence can be intense, but he also has a fine sense of humour and I have pictures of him in strange yoga positions - just another of the things we got up to in those days. I well remember charging into the BRERC office one day and saying 'I've had an idea' and being greeted by people diving under the desk whilst Lawrence said 'We're still trying to make your last

idea work!' Twenty years later, people, including Lawrence, are still saying that. Lawrence has gone on to play a major role in the NBN and represents the UK internationally on matters relating to biodiversity data sharing.

Other BRERC managers were Julian Scott and Peter Rooney, both skilled botanists who played a major part in launching and sustaining the Avon Flora Project. Both worked for BRERC, went away on other jobs for a while and came back again both as workers and volunteers. Once, on somebody's birthday, Julian and I, dressed only with cardboard boxes around our waists, went into the museum cafe to sing happy birthday to the unsuspecting victim – preparedness to be involved in the bizarre was a prerequisite of BRERC managers!

One person who stands out as particularly special is Philippa Burrell. It is thanks to her that BRERC survived the end of Job Creation Schemes and went on to become a Local Records Centre in what we would see as the modern sense. During the 80s, record centres were really a solution in search of a problem. We started out, convinced that we needed to collate and manage records and produce distribution maps but much of this arose out of our museum ethic of public service. It was really the realisation that job creation schemes would not last forever and that we needed to fund record centres on a proper basis that guided our work towards a service role for planners and statutory conservation agencies. This coincided with a growing need for wildlife data arising from legislation such as the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, a trend that has continued ever since. Philippa was really the person who took BRERC through that critical period of defining its new role and securing new sources of income without losing sight of our original public benefit mission.

I have very fond memories of the BRERC early days. We thought up the name BRERC – Bristol Regional Environmental Record Centre, because we wanted to cover all environmental records not just biological ones – a battle I'm still fighting today! We even had tee-shirts printed in white on blue to give us a corporate look! We had many social events including a memorable cocktail party in my garden where Lawrence Way dressed in an evening suit and his dancing is still



Charlie's caring management style

legend! On another occasion we dressed him up as a punk, in bin liner and safety pins! Other social events were held at the museum where we served wine and nibbles to recorders on the flora and butterfly projects – these were always popular!

When I left Bristol Museum in February 1989, Philippa carried on as manager of BRERC and took it to its new home at Ashton Court Mansion where she established a new way of working, relying much on volunteers and willing workers on temporary call-out contracts and negotiated funding relationships with local authorities and others. Philippa has since gone on to run other record centres and is widely regarded as a leader in the field. BRERC truly has been a real influence in the development of Local Record Centres and biodiversity information management and chiefly through the quality of the people that have and continue to work there.

As I write this account, the names and faces come flooding back to me, Richard Greatrex, Tony Smith, Julian Woodman, Iwona Regini, Cathy Wilson, Stuart Hedley, Tim Twiggs, Shuan Murphy, Dave Whiteside, Tina Bull (the model!), Emma, John de Barham and so many more, let alone the volunteers and recorders. As I think of each of these people, the stories associated with them also come back, like standing on the table dressed as a Viking to sing happy birthday and there were some serious times as well. But most of all I see how in our enthusiasm we were part of an important movement whose momentum continues today, in a time when the information that is marshalled and managed by local record centres is needed more than ever.

During those fateful 80s we were part of the founding of the National Federation for Biological Recording (NFBR) of which today I am chairman and which, in its turn, was a key driver in the establishment of the NBN, which relies on and supports the national network of LRCs, sadly still not complete.

BRERC was a leading light in those early years and many people came to see us when setting up other centres. One thing I am proud of is that when my own path took me away from BRERC, it continued to flourish and has adapted and changed to keep relevant and effective. BRERC was the springboard for many of us into diverse

but related careers and others who first came to BRERC are working still in LRCs, which is very satisfying indeed. Long may it last!

## BRERC – the early days #2

Philippa Burrell

(now director of the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centres)

The post of Records Centre Assistant at the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre was my very first proper job. I started work on Monday Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1981 when BRERC was not much more than an idea (perhaps more accurately a 'Grand Plan') in the head of the then assistant curator of Bristol Museum – Charles Copp.

The team of four fresh young recruits (and Charles) were based in the Museum at the top of Park Street – myself, Lawrence Way and Charles are still 'in the business'. I don't think I had any idea what I was getting myself into when I went to meet Charles – but I did like the building and it seemed that he would be a great boss (he was). My interview was conducted over a half hour coffee break in the Dinosaur Café with Charlie doing most of the talking and me nodding a lot and there I was – employed..... I nod well!

In the early days the Records Centre office was a dark echoing space created by moving the huge stuffed tiger case out from a corner of the natural history gallery. I believe that wall two of our office contained a hippopotamus. Every sound in the gallery bounced over the monstrous mahogany cases containing the luckless animals and was audible to our team of four – including any number of gormless comments about the noble remains of Alfred the Gorilla, late of Bristol Zoo.

Behind the tiger case we chose a name for the Records Centre (be thankful, it could have been the Bristol Environmental Records Centre...), drew the logo (no money for designers – I did it), planned the Common Butterfly Survey (that grew into the Avon Butterfly Project) and quickly realised that we were going to need – gosh – computers! I sat for hours painstakingly drawing our seven common butterflies for the back of the survey form and knew a moment of horror when I returned from my coffee break to find that Charles had coloured in my drawing with felt pen and given me a mark of 7/10 for effort. Thank you Charles. It took me about five minutes to realise that the coloured version was a photocopy.

In that first year Charles organised a Local Records Centre and Recorders Conference in Bristol and the National Federation for Biological Recording was born. Although Bristol Museum had been designated as a Local Records Centre back in 1974, I think it was in this period in the late 70s and early 80s that LRCs really began to take shape. They were exciting days with little in the way of accepted practice so we were pioneers – trying to work out what we should be doing and how we should be doing it. I am proud when I see some of the good practice developed in those early years in the accepted LRC working standards of today.

I stayed at BRERC for the one year of my job creation scheme contract and moved on to further training and a job running a restaurant in Leeds. BRERC went from strength to strength and when I returned to Bristol in the mid 1980s I was once again offered a post in the Records Centre. This time I stayed for 12 years. I remember that at one time during the 80s we had 23 part time staff on job creation scheme contracts – busy days!

Everything changed when Charlie left to set up his own company and Bristol City Council decided not to encourage the 'massaging' of the unemployment figures by taking part in job creation schemes.... But by that time the local authorities were well aware that they were going to need the services of BRERC in order to carry out their statutory duties. I was running BRERC by then – just me part time and the voluntary recorders - no other staff! It took quite some plotting, planning, promotion and persuasion to get to the point where all the Avon local authorities were willing to commit an annual sum in return for the excellent value for money service that BRERC could provide. The new assistant curator at the Museum (Ray Barnett – now Collections Manager) and the County Ecologist (Mike Oxford – now an independent consultant) were instrumental in bringing about this sea change.

With security of core funding and additional money for survey work and projects BRERC was able to expand once more and recruit some permanent staff. We worked hard to continue to support the recording work of the excellent people who ran the RIGS Group, the Avon Flora Project, the Avon Butterfly Project, the Moth Group, Dragonfly Group – and others! – and began to really develop the environmental data and information service that you can see today.

We've still got the table....

I would love to mention by name the people who have contributed to BRERC – but my 1,000 words would be little more than a list of names - maybe as many as 120 temporary and permanent staff and many, many recorders, volunteers and other partners. I have only mentioned a few of the early staff and some of the projects. I think we should all pat ourselves on the back for having a hand in creating one of the best and most respected Records Centres in the country.



Instantly our ambition knew no limits. The acronyms for early database software DMS, Dbase are burnt in my memory as I struggled to find a way of making the computer do the hard work of organising the mass of data the growing records centre had collated for the Avon area.

With a machine that had a total storage capacity of 360K, and an operator (me) with no programming concepts, progress was slow, but the experience must have had some effect, even if no immediate benefit to BRERC. Both Charles and myself still earn our livings from trying to computerise biological data effectively, and the relationship is still much as it was then. I'm still trying to get Charlie's bright ideas to work!

Charlie's models for biological data are now part of international thinking, and I've had the luck to have the opportunity to put some of the concepts to work in practice through helping manage the team that built the National Biodiversity Networks 'gateway' [www.searchnbn.net](http://www.searchnbn.net). This has gigabytes of data and millions of records accessible, and records centres like BRERC now have sophisticated GIS and million-record databases. What a change from the single floppy disk starting point.

After four years, on and off, of working in a variety of roles in BRERC I left to help the then Nature Conservancy Council think about the implications of a proposed barrage across Cardiff Bay. BRERC was just getting a critical mass of data and we had had our first presentations in planning cases. It was up to others to realise this potential....

## **Back to 2004!**

### **The best in his field**

Sally Pattison: Field Boundaries Project

Hundreds of volunteers have been busy throughout B&NES and South Glos surveying hedgerows and dry stone walls. They have all been helping the Field Boundaries Project, which aims to find out more about the fascinating wildlife and history of our local hedgerows and dry stone walls. The volunteers have been counting the number of tree species in the hedgerows, looking for interesting features in walls or hedges, spotting signs of wildlife and noting the

## **BRERC – the early days #3**

Lawrence Way

Philippa has related the birth of BRERC behind a stuffed tiger in a dusty corner of Bristol Museum, which was, at least, close to the café. I started work as one of four with Philippa, Nicola Keeling and David Whiteside. Records centre work was evolving out of museum work, and I think we all had a mix of collections, public enquiry and information tasks.

Designing recording cards, getting to know who was who amongst the established naturalists in the area, and processing the flood of butterfly records mingled with feeding a mantis shrimp, early attempts to database the collections, and dealing with a steady stream of questions from visitors. If you have never seen one before, a resting Elephant Hawk moth is an amazing sight. Described over the phone by a suspicious householder, it is a dangerous looking pink triangle bug with a hairy head (its abdomen) sticking out of the longest side. Careful thoughts on whether there really was a better way of organising paper records so you could relate them geographically, were interrupted by the need to help the BBC borrow a hippo skull and other aspects of a Museum's daily routine.

Then there was the struggle of managing increasing volumes of records before the PC computing revolution. Some of us became expert map laminators so they could be marked up as a key to the cabinets full of paper. If only GIS had been available. But Charles Copp was determined to make the most of the first signs of the information revolution and soon had a single floppy disk machine for our use.

boundaries' condition. It is hoped that by knowing more about these landscape features, which are often 100's - or in places 1,000's of years old, then we will be better able to manage, protect and enhance them.

A big thanks goes to all the volunteers but a special thank you must be reserved for Bryan Eccleston who has helped digitise the data for the past two years. All the surveying generates lots of data (more than 8,000 records to date) and that all goes onto a Council GIS layer. As I am sure many of you know, this is tricky and very time consuming! Bryan's help and cheerful personality is really valued by the project officer and the Trimbridge House 'Projects & Partnership Team' as a whole. **Thanks Bryan!**



Bat tracking with Batscapes

Nature Reserve. On European Bat night they went out with Wildspaces Partnership Officer John Morris, Batscapes Project Officer Dan Merrett, Youth Worker Ruth Cornish and a local DJ from Kayto Sounds to identify and record the bats flying around the Three Brooks reserve. They then sampled the recorded calls with the DJ and got out their guitars and drums to create a fantastic bat beat dance track. The dance track,

together with an audio documentary of the night out, has now been made into a CD and is poised to become the latest 'must have' stocking filler for fans of local wildlife.

The group found that the pond and ditches at the south end of the reserve was a hotspot for bats with Pipistrelles and Daubentons foraging there. The records have now been passed to BRERC to add to its database of local bat activity, which in turn will help to inform the council's future management of the reserve and give the Batscapes Project an understanding of local bat activity.

The Bat Beat CD is available for a price of £3 from John Morris, Wildspaces Partnership Officer at South Gloucestershire Council tel: 01454 863581 or email: [wildspaces@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:wildspaces@southglos.gov.uk) An order form and audio clip can be download at the project website - [www.wildspaces.info](http://www.wildspaces.info).

## Events

### HEDGEROW FORTNIGHT

12<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February 2005  
[www.avon-biodiversity.org.uk](http://www.avon-biodiversity.org.uk)

Come along to a series of fun events with a hedgerow theme across the Avon area. Many of the events are free and suitable for kids and families. Events range from practical tasks such as hedge-laying to walks, talks and workshops.

For more information call: **Jenny Hayward**  
Avon Biodiversity Partnership Officer  
32 Jacob's Wells Road, Bristol BS8 1DR  
T: 0117 9177270  
E: [jennyhayward@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:jennyhayward@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk)  
or **Sally Pattison** – Field Boundaries Project  
Trimbridge House, Trim Street, Bath BA1 2DP  
T: 01225 477505  
E: [sally.pattison@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:sally.pattison@southglos.gov.uk) or  
[sally\\_pattison@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:sally_pattison@bathnes.gov.uk)

## BAT BEAT Stocking Filler

Dan Merrett: Batscapes Project Officer

Youth Club members in Bradley Stoke found a novel way to collect bat records earlier this year at a newly designated South Gloucestershire Council Local

## Penguins in Avon!

Come and see the best and most creative images of the **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** Competition at Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery this December.

People in the South West can be among the first to see these stunning images, as the exhibition will come to Bristol direct from its London debut.

The exhibition complements the museum's outstanding natural history collection and is a must-see for all lovers of art, nature, photography and adventure.

King Penguin on the move by Theo Allofs, Germany

The Bristol exhibition will be on display from Saturday 11th December to Sunday 9th January. Admission is **FREE**.

The Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the world's biggest and most prestigious exhibition of its kind. It is organised by *BBC Wildlife Magazine*, and The Natural History Museum, London.



**Hazel** volunteered, and she's doing such a great job that we will be running out of cabinet space soon so **Bristol Magpies** (Friends of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery) have generously agreed to buy a card filer cabinet for us. This will get us 36,000 extra records closer to being properly filed.

## One Day One Record

Lack of space, so a quick note to say thank you for those who contributed records. Hedgehogs in July was very popular, as might be anticipated, but imitating a snuffling Hedgehog live on Radio Bristol proved beyond me, so I went for the squeaky grunt they make when you pick them up! Encouragingly, most of the records sent in were live Hedgehogs (a large proportion of Hedgehogs on our database are dead – valuable records but its always nicer to record live things!).

In 2005 we will be concentrating our efforts on one One Day One Record event in late summer.

## Publications

*Butterflies of the Bristol Region* is available from BRERC and the Museum shop at Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery. *Flora of the Bristol Region* is available from the Museum shop at Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery.

*Dragonflies of the Bristol Region*, *Dragonfly recording pack* and *Heritage in Stone* are all available from BRERC for £2.50.

## Magpies help with Filing!

No, not the black and white ones that fly, although these do share a liking for acquiring objects! In the last issue I asked for help with filing – a floor-loading problem highlighted a need to store large numbers of paper records within appropriate cabinets.

The Magpies also contributed towards the cost of our lovely snail paintings by Andrew Daw. These have already proved useful, even though we haven't finished compiling the snail key yet!

## Volunteers and staff

At BRERC we really do rely on our volunteers and we are thrilled to have some new ones recently. **Hazel** is filing the bird records, **Margaret H** and **Margaret W** are helping with important admin tasks including typing and filing, our two recent graduates **Emily** and **Louisa** are helping with data, trying out exciting new GIS things with bat data and writing things for the website. **Philippa** is busy scanning in photographs of RIGS sites. **Nick** is helping rationalise veteran tree and pond information, **Caroline** one is entering data, and **Caroline** two is carrying out aerial photograph interpretation using GIS, **Andrew**, **Ralph**, **Daisy**, **Sue**, **Jon**, **Nancy** and **Alison** have helped with the essential job of data validation, entry and checking while **Jenny** has taken to BLISSing like a duck to water. Also **Richard** and **Dougie** helped digitise geological sites.

If you'd like to help us out, let us know. Also, if you have GIS skills and have some spare time, we have lots of GIS based work that needs doing.

### Current staff

Tim Corner, Manager: Abigail Pedlow, Assistant Manager: Daniel Marshall, Biodiversity Records Officer. Call-out staff currently working at BRERC: Lindsay Moore, Ellen McDouall, Bee Peters and Duncan Parker.

Please note that this newsletter will be downloadable in full colour on our website

Records provided to BRERC are deemed to be made available for BRERC to use in accordance with its role as a Local Records Centre. As such records may be distributed by BRERC to third parties, in a variety of formats and media, such as through the National Biodiversity Network Gateway and other websites.

Personal information is not supplied by BRERC to data enquirers and names are blanked out on copies of records and reports sent to them. Names and addresses may also be used by BRERC when mailing newsletters, recording forms, invitations to meetings and other information or publicity material. More details of BRERC policies can be found on [www.brerc.org.uk](http://www.brerc.org.uk)

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