

Gwent Recorders' Forum Meeting

Saturday 7th February 2009

The Boardroom, Caerleon Campus, University of Wales College Newport

The Chairman, Martin Anthony welcomed everybody to the ninth annual Gwent Recorders' Forum Meeting. Thanks were given to Rebecca Davies for arranging the event.

Brownfield Wildlife – Biodiversity's Forgotten Dimension

Julian Branscombe (GWT)

Julian began by introducing 'The Greenfield vs. Brownfield Debate' as a critical conservation issue when examining areas for development. Greenfield sites can include valuable habitat, such as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), and the monoculture fields can be good sites for flocks of birds such as skylarks. However, in some cases, urban developments on greenfield sites could result in an increase in biodiversity. In contrast to some greenfield areas, brownfield sites can be very diverse. Julian noted that in Nottinghamshire, the majority of the areas of importance to wildlife are post-industrial, indeed most of the SSSIs are such sites. Some significant locations mentioned included Annesley Pit, a former colliery site which was never formally 'restored', and as a result, the opencast mine filled with water, vegetation regeneration took place and the site has become a haven for wildlife; and Bentinck Void (a result of opencast mining), which features common sandpiper (the county's only breeding pair), greenshank, lapwing, water vole (one of the county's last populations), great crested newts, adders, and a diverse flora including bitter vetch, devil's bit scabious and fairy flax. Despite their value for wildlife, brownfield sites are prime candidates for waste designation, with the latter of these sites being such an example.

Gwent has a fantastic array of natural habitats, such as semi-improved grassland, moorland and meadows, but many former industrial sites are also important for the region's wildlife. Biodiversity hotspots include the water bodies which previously formed part of feeding system to the former Ebbw Vale Steelworks. Llanishen Reservoir, although artificial, has huge wildlife importance; vegetation diversity is large, and features species such as flowering wood anemone. It has been designated a SSSI for the bird interest, and is now also a site of national importance for waxcap grassland interest. The Monmouthshire Brecon Canal and railway lines are important wildlife corridors.

Former coalfields have become complexes of ancient woodland and grassland, bell pits have filled with water; they are teeming with wildlife such as emerald tiger beetles, and feature drought tolerant plants, such as silver and early hair grass. In the Valleys, wildlife site quality is the norm rather than the exception. Former ironworks tend to be criss-crossed with roads, have usually lain un-restored and have not been used for agriculture. As a result, these 'untidy' sites can be good for species such as dingy skippers, orchid species, and hares. Rough ground can be havens for 'arable weeds', such as scarlet pimpernel, which can be important for invertebrates. The food plants for knotgrass moth, whose numbers crashed, tend to now be squeezed into such 'rough corners'. These areas are also important for seed feeders like yellowhammers.

The loss of brownfield sites in Gwent could have a dramatic impact on orchid populations; there are many even just in the 'worthless wasteland' around the steelworks at Usk, and bee orchids are found only on brownfield sites, such as roadside verges. Deptford pink may have been lost to Gwent due to the regeneration of brownfield areas. Round-

headed club rush, present at few sites around the UK, can be found around Newport in areas earmarked for development. Although there are 2 native sites around the dune slacks on the south side of the Bristol Channel, the Newport populations are not regarded as native, so are not given due recognition and are therefore under threat.

Julian ended by commenting that whilst he would not like to see all greenfield sites developed, he wouldn't like all brownfield sites to be lost either. Diversity is key; the ideal is farmland diversified with biodiversity areas alongside those habitats which have developed on brownfield sites. Whilst it must be accepted that some brownfield sites will be lost to reclamation and redevelopment, compromise is needed to preserve those that have developed into important wildlife sites. Some untidy looking urban areas need to be left as they are; wasteland should not be viewed as intrinsically 'worthless'. Wildlife is no less valuable just because it's on a brownfield site.

Mammals in Urban Environments

Richard Dodd

We commonly meet mammals as garden pests such as moles, foxes, rats, rabbits; or as house pests, such as bats, wood mouse, house mouse, rats. These species can cause damage and problems for people, and the cost of control is huge. It is quite likely that pest control companies will have lots of mammal data that conservationists can access. Road casualty (often fox, polecat, badger, hedgehog and grey squirrel) records are useful in that they show the species are present in an area and they may be the only mammals most people encounter in an urban environment.

The South Wales Mammals Atlas Project (2009-2013) will span 3 large cities, and will include efforts to increase awareness of mammals. Unfortunately PTES funding failed as it was deemed to be too small an area (despite encompassing 3 major cities).

Current urban mammal surveys include:

- Bats & Roadside Mammals Survey – The Bat Conservation Trust (www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_roadside_mammals_survey.html)
- Garden Birdwatch – RSPB (www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/results/) (now also includes incidental mammal records)
- Mammals in your Garden – Mammal Society/Wildlife Trusts
- Living with Mammals – PTES/ Mammal Trust UK (www.ptes.org/index.php?cat=63)

Records from adhoc surveys are also important. In Cardiff Bay, a low sounding call on the bat detector turned out to be Nathusius' pipistrelle. This species is possibly under recorded, and there is little known about it. Also, good numbers of soprano and common pipistrelle and noctule bats have been noted.

There are some issues for mammals in the urban environment, for example, lighting. Daubenton's bat is a light shy bat but pipistrelles and noctules tolerate the high light levels. There are currently around 20+ noctules in Cardiff Bay Wetland Reserve!

At Ebbw Vale Steelworks (Blaenau Gwent) there are lots of bats. There are now plans to create summer and winter hibernacula. An environmental education centre is also being created.

'Urban Bio-planning' is a new buzzword which describes incorporating biodiversity issues within an urban setting.

Fungi in Gwent

Sheila Spence (Gwent Fungus Group (GFG))

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GFG had 1,080 records in 2008 which is not bad for a small recording group of 8-9 people. The records come mainly from GFG forays, private individuals, and site surveys. Recent interesting sites include: St Woolos Cemetery, Newport (a large burial ground with lots of disturbance and is exceptional for fungi); Aberbargoed Grasslands; and two commercial sites in Cwmbran.

Recent interesting fungi records at St Woolos Cemetery include:

- *Microglossum olivaceum* (olive earthtongue) which has been found at two 2 separate areas within St Woolos Cemetery. It has also been found on the Bloreng, and at County Hall, Cwmbran (by Sam Bosanquet).
- *Clavaria fumosa* (smoky spindles). There are several spots in St Woolos where this is located.
- *Clavulinopsis umbrinella* (beige coral) which is rare.
- *Agaricus augustus* (the prince) is delicious edible mushroom smelling and tasting of almonds. Large specimens have been found in a number of places within the cemetery.

The group try to survey forestry sites and GWT sites, e.g. Silent Valley (June 2007) which is great for both rare and common fungi. The group was initially drawn there by the presence of tiered tooth (*Hericum cirrhatum*), a toothed fungi growing on a fallen beech log. Oak polypore (*Piptoporus quercinus*), a bracket fungi able to live in oak heartwood, has been recorded on one particular tree at Wentwood. GFG have also surveyed a community woodland called Blaenbran, Upper Cwmbran (www.blaenbran.org.uk/), which is now managed for wildlife by an association that look after it.

The Gwent Fungus Group tries to do seven forays a year, plus identification courses. They also attend the Abergavenny Food Festival, Go Wild, British Mycological Society Roadshow at the Chelsea Flower Show, and Monmouth Show to educate and raise awareness about fungi.

Other finds include *Pulcherricium caeruleum* (cobalt crust fungus) in Llangattock, Lingoed; and a truffle by Roger Evans.

There are a number of important details required for fungi records such date, location, substrate/medium, spore print, specimen, photograph etc. All GFG records will be sent to SEWBReC. Sheila requested suggestions for other sites suitable for fungi surveys.

Links: www.britmycolsoc.org.uk

www.gwentwildlife.org/fungusgroup.htm

Email: George & Sheila Spence, Gwent Fungus Group gwentfungusgroup@btinternet.com

A Naturalist in a Post Industrial Landscape Steve Williams (Torfaen County Borough Council)

150-200 years ago naturalists were recording species, but post industrial habitats have historically been viewed negatively. Edwin Lees, a botanist and founder of Worcestershire Naturalists Society (1838) said there was nothing of interest in Pontypool ("it was dark, dirty and there was nothing to attract a naturalist"). However, a red backed shrike (now quite rare in the UK) was recorded in VC 35 in 1868. It was also seen in June 2008 and is likely to be breeding in the County.

Around Blaenavon Heritage Site there is a diverse mosaic of habitats despite being a post industrial landscape, and includes colliery spoil, quarries, wet grassland, built structures, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs. Some important wildlife sites include:

- Coity pond (built in 1839 to supply water for the steam engines at Forgeside) now has breeding little grebe, and red eyed damselfly (1st VC record in 2007).

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- Canada Tips was an open cast mine mined by the Canadian Army during the war. The area is now mainly colliery spoil and there are a range of ephemeral ponds as well as heathland. Off road 4x4s keep the ponds open.
- Beaufort Pond now has wintering wildfowl, and Bewicks' swans, and stoneworts; and is part of a network of ponds in the area.
- Trefil Reservoir
- Male golden plover can now be seen on Cefn Garn yr Erw, Blaenavon (a historic landscape area).

Colliery spoil is a good resource for the development of dwarf heather (and subsequently red grouse which feeds on heather). Lapwing were formerly a widespread breeding bird, but this is no longer the case. Post-industrial habitats are very important for this species in this County. In post-industrial areas, unexpected species can be found such as grayling, mottled grasshopper, and wall brown on bare ground on colliery spoil. These species like dry habitats in the valleys.

Lichen heath communities.

Moonwort can be found in these habitats. It is has also been spotted on Coity Tip.

Semi-improved grassland

There are large areas in the County, supporting a diverse vegetation and associated invertebrates, e.g. chimney sweeper moth (*Odezia atrata*) which is unusual in Gwent, yellow meadow ants; and grassland fungi (pink waxcap and earth tongue species).

Purple moorgrass

There are large areas found in the valleys but they are becoming increasingly fragmented. Skylark, snipe, meadow pipit are all recorded on these habitats.

Bog, mires, fens

These habitats are the interfaces between wet and dry environments. They attract grasshopper warblers (10+ in the Greater Blaenafon area), black darter dragonflies (especially around peat), and cottongrass. They are often former colliery ponds, and are striking landscape features. Unusual invertebrates can be found such as reed beetles; there have been at least four different species seen in the last four years.

Quarries

There are many quarries in the County, e.g. Tirpentwys Quarry. There is currently a planning application to remove stone but is an excellent area for wildlife especially birds, and the colourful click beetle *Ampedus sanguineus*.

In Torfaen, two thirds of Local Nature Reserves are post industrial sites, but post-industrial land is not always recognised as ecologically important. Garn Lakes LNR is reclaimed land planted with non-native species. However it is still good for wildlife such as the water ladybird (*Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*). The only other records for this species in the VC are from the Gwent Levels. The top lake is specifically a conservation lake and supports willow warbler, reed bunting and wigeon. Tirpentwys LNR is a former landfill site that has been grassed over. Native species have now taken over including the long-winged conehead, and dung beetles.

Hills Pit Chimney is an industrial artefact, indeed there are lots of them dotted throughout the valleys. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), and also has breeding wheatear, roosting barn owl, bats, and black spleenwort.

150 years after the Cardiff Naturalists, people are now looking at post industrial landscape in a different way. A site which was once previously viewed as worthless and one that needs to be reshaped and avoided by naturalists, can now attract hundreds of visitors. Many people visit Blaenavon and Heads of the Valleys to see the various water bodies; Waunafon Bog has short eared owls wintering and attracts many visitors hoping to catch a glimpse. A few

years ago the area was seen as useless; it shows the need to keep the pressure on to conserve these important sites.

Q. How much protection does an LNR get? LNR is a statutory designation and is generally safe, but as it is usually a council led process, it is therefore often difficult to designate sites wanted for development or other uses.

Newport Wetland Reserve Kevin Dupé (CCW)

The NNR is 2,000 acres including the foreshore, and is located just to the east of River Usk, Newport stretching three miles across the Gwent Levels. The land was purchased by Uskmouth Power Station for thirteen fly ash lagoons, and four farms were destroyed to create the lagoons in the 1950s-60s.

How did the site go from a 5m thick layer of flyash to one of the most important reedbed habitats in South Wales?

- Firstly, the site was restored back to agricultural use by rough grazing. Once the power station had shut in the 1980s, the land was sold to the Cardiff Bay Development Company. The NNR was created to compensate for the loss of the mudflats of Cardiff Bay. The topsoil was stripped off and some flyash removed to create the reedbeds. Otters were seen on the site at this time during building/construction!
- Six lagoons were excavated and during the winter of 1999/2000 reeds were planted to create a tertiary reedbed (which is able to treat 1 million litres of sewage). By June 2001, the reeds had grown and had already become established (very quick!). The numbers of dragonflies soon increased rapidly at the reserve (including hairy, ruddy darter, migrant hawkers). Numbers then declined as more fish and birds become established. The great silver diving beetle also colonised. Otters use the site frequently, and many spraints have been collected.
- Reeds have to be cut and collected. In hindsight, it would have been better to have engineered more edge in the reedbeds as they are currently only rectangles with a deep channel. They have now cut more pools and edge within the beds to encourage breeding bittern. Breeding bearded tits have been recorded, and is the only place in Wales (5 pairs). Bittern have been seen/heard every winter but no breeding confirmed to date. There are large numbers of Cetti's warbler (90 singing males, which equates to about 10% of the UK population).
- The scrubby areas (e.g. willow, birch) cover around 20 hectares, but they are not greatly managed and do not form part of the features of the NNR. Volunteers are used to manage the scrub, and there are plans to incorporate coppicing on rotation into the management for Cetti's warblers.
- 300 bee orchids were spotted one year, but only 3-4 were recorded last year. There are six species of orchid on the NNR in total: marsh helleborine, pyramidal, common-spotted, southern-marsh orchid, common twayblade and bee. Reserve staff are managing an experimental area for orchids alongside the verges. Dittander grows on the flyash in profusion, and narrow-leaved bird's foot trefoil is also prolific. Narrow-leaved everlasting pea and yellow-wort is also common. These species like the newly exposed flyash, and tend to decline as scrub encroaches. The management of brownfield sites is very important to prevent unwanted successional changes.
- The green tiger beetle enjoys the sandy soils of the dry flyash. The larvae live in burrows and the flyash is perfect. Newport Wetlands is an important site for the shrill carder bee, and the scarlet tiger moth (day flying) can be found in large numbers. The large starling roost is a wildlife spectacle and many people come to view it.

Q. Concerns were raised about reeds and scrub taking over particularly for the orchid species.

The management and/or clearance of reeds and scrub are to be prioritised by the management plan.

Link: www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/n/newportwetlands/index.asp

Dragonflies in Gwent: A Comparison of Brownfield & Natural Sites **Ian Smith (VC35 Odonata Recorder)**

News: Common winter damselfly (newly recorded in the UK, previously recorded in Channel Islands) has now been recorded in South Wales.

Ian began by exploring what makes a site brownfield. Is there a particular species or assemblage of species which defines it? This is a difficult question and there are various definitions. If they are described as sites that have been altered by man's activities, does that mean brownfield sites are everywhere in Gwent?

Brownfield and natural sites differ in their Odonata: more species occur/breed in brownfield assemblages; fewer species are restricted to more natural sites. The list of Odonata in Gwent that are restricted to natural sites are all spring and riverine species inhabiting warmer environments, such as golden-ringed and common club-tail dragonflies. Streams can be recreated in brownfield sites, and can be improved by adding stones to concrete channels. Peat bogs are also good sites for Odonata.

We lack many species that require habitats we do not have due to man's activities, e.g. agricultural. Rich greenfield sites are poor for species diversity in comparison to brownfield, just early colonists, e.g. broad-bodied chaser, blue-tailed skimmer, and the hardy few, e.g. southern hawkler, azure damselfly, large red damselfly. Brownfield sites offer more diversity, low nutrient content, no pesticides/insecticides. Reclaimed sites, however, are usually no good for Odonata.

The National Dragonfly Atlas (2008 to 2013)

The aim of this project is to update the known distribution of British dragonfly and damselfly species over the next 5 years and increase proven breeding records, culminating in the publication of a new national atlas in 2013. Ian recommends 'Field Guide to the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland', edited by Steve Brooks.

81.8% of Odonata records are of adults only. However, adult Odonata move around, so records of adults are often the least useful. We should record: first flight emergent, exuviae, larvae, details of activity, copulating pairs and ovipositing behaviour. Exuviae and larvae leave cast skins and provide good evidence of breeding; proven breeding records will allow species distribution to be mapped. New electronic recording software is now available: Aditsite (www.aditsite.co.uk/) and Darter software. Online recording facilities are due May/June 2009, and will hopefully be launched during British Dragonfly Week (23rd-31st May 2009). Species seem to be moving further north and west, some have now reached Scotland.

Link: www.dragonflysoc.org.uk/home.html

Section 42 Species

Rebecca Davies (Senior Data & Enquiries Officer, SEWBReC)

When the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (2000) was passed, and the list of Section 74 (S74) species created; training and identification sheets were produced (by WBP and the National Museum Wales) to help ecologists identify the S74 species. At the time, the training and species identification sheets were aimed at consultants rather than recorders.

Now that the NERC Act (2006) has been passed and the Section 42 list produced (replacing the former S74 list), WBP and the National Museum Wales are very keen to repeat the process but this time recorders will be much more involved. However, there are now over 500 species! We therefore need to prioritise those species for which identification sheets should be produced immediately.

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Recorders were requested to:

- prioritise species from the S42 list that should have identification sheets written for them. Species such as herring gull and hedgehog can probably wait! Recorders were asked to rate them by using the following colours: green (yes, immediately), yellow (yes, maybe), and red (probably not).
- give feedback about their training needs as hopefully there will be scope to arrange some training in the field (rather than only in a classroom situation). The training will also have a wider scope than previously, e.g. a course on liverworts will cover the common species as well as the rarer (S42) species.

The final identification sheet kits will be available via a website or on CD, and a few hard copies of the kits will be produced for Local Record Centres and Local Authorities.

Contact: Laura Palmer (L.Palmer@cardiff.gov.uk) 02920 873268

Monmouthshire Orchards

Martyn Evans (Fruit Officer, Welsh Perry and Cider Society)

- Monmouthshire was the cider capital of Wales.
- Pomology is the study of fruit.
- Martyn talked about a variety of apple and pear varieties in Monmouthshire and discussed their identification. The Welsh Pomona detailing all Monmouthshire apple and pear varieties can be seen on the Welsh Perry and Cider Society website (www.welshcider.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=147&Itemid=21).

Monmouthshire Orchard Project

The project aim is to map all orchards in Monmouthshire, and to also study the biodiversity of orchards. They will be mapping orchards using tithe maps and other information, and will also be mapping the fruit varieties. A field officer will be appointed to look for all varieties of fruit (all types including damsons and plums) and to look out for other important species (e.g. birds, insects, etc). Erica Sheppard (Adventa) is coordinating the project.

Martyn requested suggestions of species to record during the project. They included red admiral, comma, speckled wood, tree sparrow, little owl, mistle thrush, noble chafer (currently recorded in Gloucestershire/Herefordshire), mistletoe, lesser spotted woodpecker, and any other hole nesting birds. Other specialised species to look out for included a rare fungi species which grows on fallen mistletoe (leaves) currently not found in Wales, and a micromoth (*Celypha woodiana*) that feeds on mistletoe (there is an old record in Tintern).

Ian Rabjohns has perry pear trees, and in Redwick there are lots of orchards and an old cider press outside the church. There was a suggestion from the audience that the study is extended to the VC of Monmouthshire rather than just the unitary authority.

Links: www.welshcider.co.uk/

Birds of Gwent

Richard Clarke (Gwent Ornithological Society)

Currently around 400+ members contribute records. The book ('Birds of Gwent') was published in 2008 and launched on the 19th April 2008, but it was first suggested in 1997 by Alan Williams! It was a longer project than anticipated due to foot & mouth disease. The idea was to be able to compare breeding bird data with data from a

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previous atlas. The book also contains geology, habitats, top places to look at birds, systematic list of comparisons, breeding birds, etc.

Main findings:

There are more breeding birds in Gwent in the period 1998-2003 (136) compared to 1981-1985 (120). The top 2 birds in the previous study (i.e. found in more squares than any others) were: 1. magpie and 2. blackbird, whereas in the latest study they were: 1. blackbird and 2. carrion crow. Magpie had disappeared to 12th! Swallow and buzzard (previously 30th) are now 9th and 10th respectively. Willow warbler has dropped to 21 from 8, starling has increased from 23 to 12. Blackcap, goldfinch, greenfinch have also all increased.

Abundance changes:

- *Lapwing* -43% (277 to 158 squares). Dropped in numbers, especially across Gwent levels.
- *Tree sparrow* -84% (203 to 34 squares)
- *Reed bunting* -11% (111 to 99 squares)
- *Raven* +40% (199 to 279 squares). From quarries, farms, and also nests on pylons in valleys
- *Siskin* +173% (40 to 112 squares). Formerly very much a winter visitor, but has benefitted from forestry plantations that have now matured. We now get redpoll amongst flocks of siskins.
- *Cetti's warbler* (0 to 11 squares). 50-60 pairs, last year 90 singing males just on Gwent levels.

Major declines:

Turtle dove (-90%)
Ring ouzel (-80%)
Grey partridge (-83%)
Redshank (-59%)

Major increases:

Canada goose (+6100%!)
Lesser black-backed gull (+540%)
Stonechat (+142%)
Hobby (+295%)

53 extra species in Gwent since 1976 (mostly vagrants), e.g. little egret, Cetti's warbler (now breeding) There are potentially more to come, e.g. cattle egret bred in UK last year; and we see increasingly more and more red kites.

Link: <http://www.gwentbirds.org.uk/>

South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre update David Slade (Senior IT & Records Officer, SEWBReC)

News:

- Cardiff and Torfaen now have agreements with SEWBReC (Cardiff will have species alert layers, and Torfaen have agreed a 3 year SLA). RCT have also shown interest in planning screening or an alert layer.
- EA will be receiving species alert layers from SEWBReC (plus the three other Welsh LRCs), and FCW are extending the service to include their estate.
- Records are continually increasing, and a major new dataset included 90,000 records from Cardiff Council. There are still more records for the Glamorgan area but large numbers of records from GOS should help change that. Most data is recent with a peak in 2000-2004, and a lot of records are of priority & protected species (>10%), which is important for funders when assessing planning applications.
- Commercial enquiries are currently doing very well; we will have to wait to see if credit crunch affects us.
- Staff Update: Four full time permanent staff (Adam Rowe – Manager, David Slade – Senior IT & Biological Records Officer, Rebecca Davies – Senior Data & Enquiries Officer, Lindsay Bamforth – Data & Enquiries Officer); and two full time temporary staff (Elaine Wright – Biodiversity Information Assistant (CCW), Alice Britt - Biodiversity Information Assistant); plus increasing numbers of volunteers!
- ALERC (Association of Local Environmental Record Centres) is now established (www.alerc.org.uk).

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- Bioblitz Days were very successful in 2008. Four are planned for 2009 (2 in Glamorgan and 2 in Gwent). See website for details (www.sewbrec.org.uk).
- The events pages on the SEWBReC website are available for all to advertise their recording events and training days so please let us know if you would like anything advertised.
- Recorders Contact Details. Recorders were asked to complete the form provided to ensure that we have the correct information and permission to pass details on (where appropriate).

Wales Environmental Information Steering Group (WEISG) & Data Flow Discussion

David Slade (Senior IT & Records Officer, SEWBReC)

WEIF & WEISG

- The Wales Environmental Information Forum (WEIF) was a brand new gathering in March 2008 in the National Library in Aberystwyth. The aim is to have everyone who has a stake in environmental data in Wales to be represented, and there were 40 participants. The main issues discussed were dataflow, consultant data, and National Biodiversity Network (NBN).
- Wales Environmental Information Steering Group (WEIS) was then established. LRCs will be particularly involved in data flow, quality-checking, skills of training and technology. One of the actions coming out of the WEIS meeting was to discuss data flow at the next Recorders' Forum meetings, and map the data flows for all organisations, individuals, etc. We have produced a questionnaire which will help us do this, please complete one if you haven't already done so. It is available from our website (www.sewbrec.org.uk/biological-recording-folder/biological-recording.page), or contact us if you would prefer a paper copy.
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) (www.nbn.org.uk/Home.aspx). The NBN is a way of accessing available biodiversity information from LRCs, local and national societies, museums, NGOs, governmental organisations and individuals. The easiest way of accessing this information is through its website, the NBN Gateway (<http://data.nbn.org.uk/>). CCW are very keen for LRCs to upload their data onto the NBN. To date, we have only uploaded the unverified CCW vascular plant dataset. We will be putting further CCW datasets onto the NBN, but we will not be uploading other datasets without permission. LRCs currently have much more data at a better resolution; however, the more data on the NBN, the more accurate the national view of a species distribution will be. The NBN also feeds into the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) so the information can also affect a European and Worldwide picture (www.gbif.org/). Unfortunately, GBIF currently only reflects which countries submit records, rather than actual species distribution.

Q. How is verification done?

It is up to the VC Recorder; for some species it will be a case of judging whether the recorder is likely to have been able to ID the species competently. For larger taxonomic groups, we may focus on rare/more notable species.

Q. What do you mean by resolution?

When uploading data to the NBN or providing data to an LRC or VC Recorder, you can set the level of detail at which locations (address details and grid references) are displayed to users. For example an 8 figure grid reference (10m²) with a full address of a bat roost can be viewed as a 4 figure grid (1km²) reference with no address details.

Q. What happens if there is no VC recorder?

If there is no VC Recorder, you can send records to SEWBReC as we can feed them to the National Schemes. Hopefully there should be some useful information that we get back from the questionnaire regarding what species are currently being recorded that do not have VC recorders.

Contact: info@sewbrec.org.uk

www.sewbrec.org.uk

Any Other Business

- CCW tend not to look at post industrial sites (e.g. Alpha Steel) and good sites have been lost as a result.
- CCW are now actively looking at new SSSI designations, and trying to get rights of access on sites where previously been refused permission. There may be changing moods at CCW!
- Blitz Days suggestions: more brownfield sites, Clydach (outside VC), Trefil area at the very north of County.

The Chairman closed the event by thanking the SEWBReC team for organising the Forum. He congratulated the speakers on interesting and stimulating presentations, and finished by giving thanks to the attendees for coming.