

## Bulletin 4 Newsletter

Recent News .....	1
Three Fungi new to Pembrokeshire.....	2
Fungus Recording in Pembrokeshire (Vice-county 45) .....	4
Back to our roots: The importance of Native Breeds as conservation tools .....	7
The Red Kite Story.....	13
WEST WALES BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION CENTRE.....	15
Ron Elliott.....	17

## Recent News

For the most recent stories make sure you sign up to receive our newsletter by contacting the Newsletter Editor, [sarah@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:sarah@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk)

### **Pechora Pipit, *Anthus gustavi* in Pembrokeshire FIRST RECORD FOR WALES**



The Pechora Pipit (*Anthus gustavi*), native to northern Asia and Russia was spotted over Goodwick Moor during the last week of November by Adrian Rogers. More than 200 twitchers flocked in from all over the UK as well as Ireland to see the rare bird. There are only 90 records from Britain, almost all from the Shetland Islands. This is only the eighth mainland sighting and the first for Wales.

## Three Fungi new to Pembrokeshire

The Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network (PFRN) and British Mycological Society (BMS) have had a good season so far, finding three new species to Pembrokeshire in the past three months, the second record of another species in the county, as well as the possibility of several new records to Wales awaiting confirmation!

The attached [distribution maps](#) show selected records for each tetrad (2kmx2km) and provide an indication of recording progress. In particular, the maps for the Snowy Waxcap, *Hygrocybe virginea* and the Parrot Waxcap, *H. psittacina* show just how widespread these species are.

A specimen of *Entoloma caeruleum* was collected from Somerton Farm, and subsequently identified from photographs and dried material by Dr Eef Arnolds. The fruiting body of this fungus has a dark blue, fibrous cap that turns brown with age.



*Entoloma caeruleum*



*Entoloma caeruleum*

The second record for Pembrokeshire of *Hygrocybe vitellina*, a bright yellow waxcap was recorded from the entrance to Pengelli forest, and subsequently from Tycanol and Holyland woods, proving its liking for mossy woodlands. This follows on from Sam Bosanquet's first record for the species in 2006 at Crymych cemetery.



*Hygrocybe vitellina*

The British Mycological Society foray in October, saw 32 members descending on Pembrokeshire for one week, and although the dry conditions meant fairly few fruiting bodies around, they still recorded *Entoloma cruentatum* and *Camarophyllopis schulzeri* new to Pembrokeshire. *E. cruentatum*, recorded by Shelley Evans, at Wyndrush Pastures is a blue fungus with a conspicuous orange spot at the base of the stem, and *C. schulzeri*, recorded from Gilead (Maidenwells) cemetery by Penny David (id. By Shelley Evans) is a rather rare and interesting find.



*Entoloma cruentatum*



*Entoloma cruentatum*

This foray has assured several new records to Wales amongst its rarities, which are due to be confirmed in 2008, and a number of samples of sufficient interest to be collected, dried and retained for the Kew herbarium. We look forward to reporting more on the finds in the New Year.

For more information, visit the Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network website at [www.pembsfungi.org.uk](http://www.pembsfungi.org.uk)

## Fungus Recording in Pembrokeshire (Vice-county 45)

Compared with many parts of the United Kingdom there has been relatively little sustained mycological recording in Pembrokeshire. This article summarises the historic recording efforts known to us, and describes the current arrangements administered by the Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network (PFRN).



British Mycological Society Foray, Pembrokeshire. 2007.

### The early days: 1940s to 1980s

The British County Foray Lists (1), a catalogue of foray dates and corresponding authors compiled by the British Mycological Society (BMS), contains just one Pembrokeshire reference: a species list for Skokholm island published by A. F. Parker-Rhodes in 1954 (2). Parker-Rhodes was in fact a prolific author who published a series of papers detailing his fungus observations on Skokholm from 1949 to 1957 (3).

The next series of records dates from the late-1970s when, as the Pembrokeshire fungus recorder, Dr. Alan Jones collected records from a number of sites throughout the County. In more recent times, these records were held in safe keeping by Stephen Evans who passed them to the PFRN in 2007. Some additional records, also from the 1970s and 80s, were held by the Wildlife Trust and passed to the PFRN by Ron Elliott in 2006. Details held on some of these early card-index records are unattributed, or lack references to the texts used for species identification. Although this may reduce their value as a source of definitive records, they still provide valuable information about sites which should be revisited for future forays. Records of particular interest from this period include several specific foray lists compiled by Dr. Philip Jones, the current Carmarthenshire fungus recorder, and a series of records provided by Peter James (Natural History Museum) which were collected during his regular lichen-recording visits to the County.

### **BMS recording: 1980s to 1990s**

The British Mycological Society (BMS) carried out its first Pembrokeshire foray in May 1987 (4). The foray was based in Fishguard, with the resulting records entered into the BMS Foray Records Database (5). The event lasted for a week with efforts concentrated in the north of the County at 18 sites including Dowrog Common, Tycanol Wood and Pengelli Forest.

Some records for Pembrokeshire's sand-dune fungi are contained in a report published by Maurice Rotheroe (BMS Conservation Officer) in 1993 (6). The report drew together information from field surveys by the author and other records to provide an annotated list with distribution maps for some species. Freshwater West and Stackpole feature in the list of documented sites.

### **Recent recording: 2000 to date**

During 2004 and 2005, Pembrokeshire's grassland fungi were recorded at several locations by Shelley Evans (BMS Conservation Adviser) and Dr. Peter Roberts (Senior Scientific Officer, Kew). Their records were incorporated into a report on Welsh grassland fungi compiled by Gareth Griffiths and published by CCW in 2006 (7).

The BMS returned to the County in October 2007 for an autumn foray based at Stackpole. The event attracted over thirty of the UK's most experienced amateur and professional mycologists and made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the County's fungal diversity (report due in 2008).

### **Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network**

Coincident with the start of the CCW survey in 2004, a serious local interest developed in grassland fungus recording. By 2005 a group of enthusiasts had established a local network: Sam Bosanquet (CCW) adopted the role of recorder with Jane Hodges (PCNPA) providing a

link to the Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Partnership and David Harries co-coordinating network activities.

From its inception the network concentrated its efforts largely on grassland fungi with recent studies including an interim report on the distribution and status of UK BAP grassland fungus priority species in Pembrokeshire. This document, which was part-funded by CCW through the Pembrokeshire Community Plan, Environment Sub-group, is freely available on the network's website (8) along with regular newsletters and a fungus photo gallery.

A significant recording aid was published in 2007 with the production of two fully illustrated waterproof cards to assist with the field identification of waxcap-grassland fungi. Local naturalists who are keen to contribute Pembrokeshire records are encouraged to join the network. The PFRN website provides contact details and additional information.

Following a house-move to the neighbouring County, and after setting up the recording system and spearheading three years of serious recording effort, Sam Bosanquet handed over the recording responsibility to David Harries at the start of 2008.

## References

1. Ainsworth & Waterhouse (1989) British County Foray Lists (to 1986). British Mycological Society.
  2. Parker-Rhodes, A.F. (1954). The basidiomycetes of Skokholm Island. I. Annotated species list. *Transactions of the British Mycological Society* **37**(4): 324-342.
  3. Parker-Rhodes, A.F. (1949 to 1957). The basidiomycetes of Skokholm Island. Papers II to XIV. Published in *New Phytologist* except for papers VI and XIII which were published in *Transactions of the British Mycological Society*.
- Note that historic articles published in the *New Phytologist* journal may be downloaded free of charge from the Blackwell Synergy website ([www.blackwell-synergy.com](http://www.blackwell-synergy.com))
4. Anon. (1988). Spring Foray 1987 Fishguard, Dyfed. *The Mycologist* **2**(1) pp 44-47.
  5. The BMS Foray Records Database developed into what is now known as the Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland (FRDBI). Maintained by the BMS, with distribution data to 10 km square resolution accessible via the NBN gateway ([www.searchnbn.net](http://www.searchnbn.net)).
  6. Rotheroe M. (2003). The Larger Fungi of Welsh Sand Dunes. Cambrian Institute of Mycology.
  7. Griffith G. W. *et al.* (2006). Mycological Survey of Selected Semi-natural Grasslands in Wales. CCW Report No. 743.
  8. Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network website ([www.pembsfungi.org.uk](http://www.pembsfungi.org.uk)).

David Harries  
Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

## **Back to our roots: The importance of Native Breeds as conservation tools**

After the last war, the government issued farmers with a statement ordering them to produce more food from their land. This was the beginning of agricultural intensification and the subsequent decline of many species associated with the extensive farming practices of the past. Fast-growing continental breeds of livestock became popular, and we saw the decline of our native breeds, with many now placed on the Rare Breeds Register. However, with their loss, their role as conservation grazers in protecting important wildlife habitats was acknowledged. But just why are they so important to our wildlife?

The landscape that we live in and enjoy today has been created by large, browsing herbivores and subsequently generations of farmers containing these herbivores. It is due to this land use practice that we now have those SSSIs and areas of special conservation that support the species that we are so keen to protect.



With the increased pressure after the last war to produce higher yields and the accompanying government financial incentives, the trend shifted towards intensive farming which began to threaten the very environments that the farmers had created. Not only did stocking and cropping densities increase, but also chemical input and the type of animal farmed. The trend moved towards the large, fast-growing continentals that consequently needed higher proportions of concentrate feeds to enable them to mature at an increased rate. These animals can also not do well on the poor, herb-rich pasture that our native breeds thrive on.

However, in recent years, the breed societies of the Native Breeds have pushed their breeds not only as the producers of superior quality beef, but also in their importance as conservation grazers.



*Longhorn Cow*

### Which type of animal to choose?

Whilst all types of grazers are important conservation tools, the stock to utilise depends on conservation objectives, and it is often beneficial to utilise cattle, horses, sheep and even goats at different stages during a conservation grazing scheme to create a suitable habitat for wildlife.



*Welsh Mountain Sheep*

Cattle, unlike other large herbivores tear at vegetation with their tongue rather than biting vegetation with their teeth. This tearing motion creates an open, uneven structure, rather than the even lawns that tend to be created by grazing with horses. Sheep on the other hand selectively remove some rank grass species from a sward. The vegetation structure as a result of grazing by cattle promotes the emergence from the seed bank of rare plant species of conservation importance as well as creating both open ground and important micro-habitats for invertebrates. Overgrazing by sheep can eliminate tussocks that provide shelter for many invertebrates.



*Lleyn Rams*

Many organisations, such as the National Trust use ponies to open up areas of wetland that have become overgrown, and then cattle are moved in, and their tongue-grazing method provides a long-term sustainable diverse vegetation structure.

The trampling action of both cattle and ponies is hugely beneficial in a number of ways. Both are important tools at reducing the spread of plants that tend to swamp an area, such as bracken and bramble. In study plots in the Carmarthenshire uplands, it has been shown that spraying to control bracken is not enough on its own. It must be followed up with correct grazing. Plots that were sprayed and had no follow-up grazing became infested with bracken, whilst those given a follow-up grazing treatment were shown to contain significantly less bracken.



*Highland Cattle*

In wetland areas, this trampling action extends to poaching, and as long as the area is not being overgrazed, this poaching is beneficial. The action creates small temporary pools that are quickly colonised by small invertebrates, often those of conservation significance.

Cattle and ponies also provide dung, and plenty of it! Their dung acts as a larder for a whole variety of insect life. Studies suggest that cattle dung is utilised by more dung beetles than is horse dung or sheep dung. Cattle dung retains its moisture, due to the formation of a surface crust, and therefore supports a whole host of dung insects. These dung insects provide a food source for birds and small mammals, and the dung beetles are key recyclers of nutrients back into the soil. These beetles have been shown to be very good indicators of habitat health, so are well worth considering when looking at the success of conservation grazing schemes.



*Welsh Mountain Ponies grazing Carn Llidi, St Davids*

### **Why Native as opposed to Continental breeds?**

Modern breeds of commercial grazing stock will, almost without exception, fail to perform as well on poor quality pasture of high conservation importance. Native, traditional breeds, unlike their continental counterparts can thrive on low quality pasture that is of a high conservation priority. This is true of horses, sheep, goats and cattle. These breeds will graze on the wide variety of herbs and poor grasses, and yet still produce a saleable product as an end result. Cattle breeds such as Welsh Blacks, Herefords, Longhorns, Highlands, British Whites and Beef Shorthorns are all superb conservation grazers, and with the recent increased consumer interest in natural, sustainable food, their beef is also marketed as a niche product and sought-after commodity, which affords a premium price for the farmer. This is supplemented by the fact that they need less concentrate feed, and thus cost less to raise than continental breeds.



*Welsh Black Cow*

These native breeds are also much hardier than their continental counterparts, and can be out-wintered with very little supplementary feeding, thus providing the grazing service at the correct time of year in order to keep weed species at bay. Similarly, Welsh Mountain ponies are hardy and able to survive outdoors over the winter as long as they have sufficient shelter: something that could not be said for a thoroughbred or arab! Many primitive sheep breeds will utilise woody weeds and purple moor grass, and all native sheep are fantastic at controlling ragwort, as they will eat the fresh growth, that at later stages may poison other livestock. Native goat breeds are well known as being the best grazers for controlling scrub, but they do have a tendency to escape, and are thus rather difficult to keep in the desired area! This can also be true with sheep (particularly Black Welsh Mountains), and thus fencing for sheep and goats is an altogether more costly matter than for ponies or cattle.



*Welsh Mountain Pony*

So, if you have an area of land that could benefit grazing, what is the next step? The Grazing Animals Project (GAP) and the Welsh version, PONT has been set up to aid the development of conservation grazing. It provides information regarding grazing schemes, and has set up the Local Grazing Scheme which puts livestock owners who need grazing for their animals in touch with landowners who need their land grazing. Most conservation organisations can advise on grazing, and the National Trust often looks for winter grazing for its animals.

If we as conservationists and farmers can thus work together to provide for our common objective of preserving the wonderful countryside that we live in, and species that we share it with, then we will be well on our way to reducing the decline of what we cherish. Government incentives such as Tir Gofal and Tir Cynnal are providing the financial incentives to enable farmer to turn back the clock on the intensification that was pushed upon them by the government in the first place. However, we must remember to support our commercial farmers and allow them to make a decent income from their land, as their fathers and grandfathers have before them. We must strike a balance between a perfect example of conservation grazing, and pure common sense, and work not at odds, but in support of each other. And if by doing this, we can promote our native breeds and the benefits to us all that go with them, then all the better.

*Sarah Beynon.*

## The Red Kite Story

Once a common sight in towns and cities all over the UK, the Red Kite, *Milvus milvus* has been brought back from the verge of extinction by the world's longest running conservation programme. But what was the cause of the decline of this magnificent species, and what are the implications of bringing it back?



*Red Kite, Derek Moore*

In the Middle Ages, the Red Kite was a valued scavenger which helped keep streets clean and was protected by a royal decree. Killing a kite attracted capital punishment! However, in the 16th Century a series of Government Acts declared the kite, along with a number of other birds of prey as vermin. As a result, it was persecuted throughout the UK and by the 18th Century, there were no longer any red kites in England and Scotland, and only a handful of pairs in the undisturbed oak woodlands in remote parts of the Tywi and Cothi valleys in Wales.

In order to address the problem, the first Kite Committee was set up in 1903 and the RSPB has been involved continuously since 1905. A bottleneck was reached in the 1930s when only two breeding pairs were discovered, and DNA analysis has recently shown that the entire Welsh population is derived from a single female.

The RSPB, along with local landowners, rural communities and the Welsh Kite Trust have now seen their efforts to maintain these fragile breeding populations paying off. Today there are between 400 and 600 breeding pairs in Wales, with sightings in every county. The Red Kite was named the 'Bird of the Century' by the British Trust for Ornithology at the end of 1999, because of its determined fight back from the brink of extinction, and only this year was named as the National Bird of Wales in a RSPB Cymru and BBC Wales poll.

### The clash of opinion: To protect or not to protect

However, there are those that believe by protecting the Red Kite as a species, the RSPB have upset the predator-prey balance and directly contributed to the decline of British songbirds. [SongBird Survival](#) is one charity that shares this opinion, and they have provided the following statement:

‘Whilst accepting there are many reasons for losses, up to a level of over 80% in some cases, the charity is convinced that uncontrolled predation from both avian and mammalian predators is largely to blame. For instance, Sparrowhawk numbers (now over 100,000) are consuming over 107million small birds each year. Red Kite numbers are being artificially increased by the RSPB to the point where they, together with the 414% increase in Buzzards, are impacting on ground-nesting birds; Lapwing, Curlew, Dunlin, game birds, all suffer seriously within Wales. SongBird Survival is funding two research projects, one with the BTO; the other with the University of Reading, aimed at demonstrating the scientific realities of what current levels of predation are doing to our much-loved songbirds. Past research includes the Review of mammalian predators, published in 2006.’

In reply, [RSPB Cymru](#) argue that: ‘Red kites have a diverse dietary niche, where almost any accessible food may be taken throughout the year. Their diet changes through the seasons depending on food availability, from small mammals (including rabbits) and invertebrates (mainly earthworms and beetles) in late spring and autumn to carrion (mainly sheep) in the winter. Medium sized birds feature in the diet during the breeding season but do not form a significant part of the diet. There is no evidence to suggest that the increase in the number of red kites in Wales are limiting breeding songbird numbers. However, there is growing evidence that changes in farming practices have led to the declines of many farmland songbirds, and emerging evidence that numbers of some woodland songbirds have declined due to long-term changes in woodland structure.’

Whichever side of the fence you wish to sit on, we are lucky in West Wales, to have a choice of where we can go to view these magnificent birds at close quarters. The feeding stations have been set up in order to support the Red Kite populations, but also to act as education facilities for the public, so we are better informed to make our own minds up about how we view the future of the Story of the Red Kite.

### Red Kite Feeding Stations in West Wales

The [Red Kite feeding station in Llandeusant, Carmarthenshire](#) sees up to 70 kites per day coming to feed at this time of year. From January to March 2008, any school or college groups that pre-book will be given free entry as part of an education programme being provided by the centre. The other Red Kite feeding station in West Wales is based in [Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian](#), Ceredigion. The centre is open daily in the summer, and every Saturday, Sunday and Monday in the winter. The kites are fed at 2pm GMT and 3pm BST daily. Here, visitors can watch 70 or more Red Kites by the lakeside, and RSPB Cymru staff and volunteers are on hand to explain more about the red kite, as well as showing wonderful footage of Red Kites, filmed by the [Welsh Kite Trust](#). For more information, visit [www.rspb.org.uk/brilliant](http://www.rspb.org.uk/brilliant)

*Sarah Beynon.*

## WEST WALES BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION CENTRE

This is one of four Local Records Centres which together serve as a biodiversity data storage and clearing facility for the whole of Wales. Each LRC acts as a regional node in the National Biodiversity Network and is defined as: a not-for profit service run in partnership for the public benefit, which collects, collates, manages and disseminates information of known quality relating to the wildlife, wildlife sites and habitats for a defined geographic area.

WWBIC covers biological recording activity in an area of some 5600km<sup>2</sup>. This includes the Vice Counties of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and all of Carmarthenshire except the small Eastern sector of the county that falls within the Brecon Beacons National Park – this area is handled by another LRC (for Brecon Beacons and Powys) but biological records are relayed between the LRCs as needs be.

WWBIC currently houses some 480,000 records of species many of which emanate from studies by the Countryside Council for Wales and most of the remainder from voluntary biological recorders. The establishment of the Records Centre has been supported by CCW and other major users of the database including Welsh Assembly Sponsored Bodies and Local Planning Authorities. These funding partners need the biological data in order to fulfil their statutory requirements – they must ‘have regard’ for biodiversity conservation while carrying out their planning and land management activities.

WWBIC does not ‘own’ its data holdings but has the authority to use them wisely and to make appropriate charges for time spent servicing data requests.

Each Vice County serves as an operating ground for biological recorders, one of whom is appointed as ‘County Recorder’ for a particular taxon group. The role of the County Recorder is to vet incoming records. WWBIC works closely with these County Recorders in order to maintain standards of data quality. WWBIC plays an active role in supporting the biological recording community with forums, technical help, data analysis and mapping.

The essentials of a species record include:

- what it is (species)
- who recorded it (recorder)
- when (date)
- where (grid reference)

Many recorders also include a fifth field called ‘comments’ into which all the detail of the observation is entered. So it really is quite a simple exercise to submit records in a spreadsheet to the Centre or to the County Recorder if you know them.

In addition to species records which are held as point data in geographic information systems, WWBIC holds extensive data on protected sites such as SSSIs and European designations and on habitats – all of which are stored as polygon data in the GIS. WWBIC has an extensive suite of GIS software and computer hardware with lots of data back-up systems for

security. The biodiversity data are thus handled in a very specialised facility, and a huge amount of information is made readily searchable and available.

The core service of the LRC is to provide reports of protected species, habitats and sites for a given location. Much of the working hours of the LRC are spent reporting on planning applications, on future large scale developments, and on engineering maintenance sites to ensure that allowed activities do not impact illegally or unnecessarily on vulnerable wildlife.

With their extensive GIS capabilities, LRCs can also offer enhanced services including data management for third parties and analyses. WWBIC for instance has: helped provide summary information on wildlife attractions for sustainable tourism; managed recreational data for the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum; and mapped suitable habitat for Kestrels and Water Voles.

If you have records to submit please send them to our Species Data Officer, Kate Jones, by email: [kate@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:kate@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk) or by post: WWBIC, Landsker Business Centre, Llwynybrain, Whitland, Carmarthenshire SA34 0NG or phone: 01994 241468

### **All-Wales LRC network is launched**

Representatives from the major conservation groups across Wales gathered at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff on Wednesday 28th November 2007 to celebrate the completion of a Wales-wide network of Local Records Centres.

Various speakers were introduced by chair Paul Lovelock (President of the Board of Trustees of the Museum) to present the views of the major stakeholders in this exercise: Dr David Parker (Director of Science, CCW) explained how LRCs can deliver many information objectives on behalf of the Countryside Council For Wales and its significance for the National Biodiversity Network; Jane Davidson (Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, Welsh Assembly Government) gave glowing praise for the achievement of the LRC network and highlighted its importance within the national strategy; Paul Sinnudurai (Senior Ecologist and Policy Officer, Brecon Beacons National Park) gave a case history for the close workings of a National Park and a LRC (BIS); David Clements (Managing director of David Clements Ecology) clearly showed the benefits of a private consultant making full use of SEWBReC; Barry Stewart (West Glamorganshire County Moth Recorder) gave an honest account from the Recorders' perspective, explaining what the costs were in relinquishing data and how this had been outweighed by the overall benefits of help with the recording process; Derek Moore (OBE, WWBIC Director) gave a brilliant overview which looked at the long and celebrated history of biological recording in Britain with great anecdotes of 'what makes recorders tick'.

Derek called on the Welsh Assembly Government not to underestimate this enormous army of voluntary recorders and to keep the LRCs fully supported. Topics for discussion included who should handle marine data and it was suggested that LRCs played a greater role in informing the agricultural community. Paul Lovelock summed up the occasion admirably and made his personal plea that the Pembrokeshire Islands achieve World Heritage status.

As the UKBAP 2010 deadline for reversing the loss of biodiversity draws near, governing bodies are under increasing legal pressure to have regard for biodiversity in all forms of land use planning and environmental management, and conservation agencies are having to work harder and more strategically to deliver positive results. In the past it has been extremely difficult for both to do this because the exponential growth in biodiversity information has been locked up on paper, in filing cabinets, and in the personal knowledge banks of a multitude of disparate individuals.

For the whole of Wales these information silos have now been freed up by LRCs, computerised and made readily reportable from four regional spatial databases so that decisions which affect land use and conservation across the whole of Wales, whether by individual landowners or great government agencies, may now be made in light of the best available information on species, habitats and protected areas.

We also held the first meeting of the Chairs and Managers of all four Wales LRCs in Cardiff the day before the launch. All four LRCs have clearly benefitted for the spirit of cooperation that exists within this group.

*Dr. Rob Davies*

## **Ron Elliott**

It is a special time for Ron this winter, as he and his wife Joan celebrated their **Golden Wedding Anniversary** on December 21st, so it seems more than fitting to profile him this month

Ron is an integral part of the team at WWBIC. Not only has he acted as the Pembrokeshire County Lepidoptera Recorder since 1980, he was also a member of Steering Group that set up WWBIC and is now Chair of the Board of Directors. Ron also maintains a database of all Lepidoptera records for the County using MapMate software, and aims to provide an annual report that is available from his web site, Pembrokeshire Lepidoptera. In addition to this, Ron provides records for WWBIC and also works in the office one day per week on a voluntary basis.

Ron was born in 1938, in Poole Dorset, and educated at the local Secondary Modern School. He followed this with 2 Degrees, one with Honours, studying part time with Open University between 1980 and 1994, working as an installation fitter for a milking machine company during the bulk tank installation boom, then later as a security guard while studying. Ron has always been interested in wildlife in general, but became fascinated by moths and butterflies as a child when his father showed him a Privet Hawk-moth larva in their privet hedge in the early 1950's. Other matters took over for a while (military service, marriage, baby, earning a living) but his interest was rekindled in the early 1970s, just before moving to Pembrokeshire with his wife Joan in 1973, and settling in Lamphey in 1978.



Privet Hawk-moth, *Sphinx ligustri* caterpillar

Living in the county, Ron has become actively involved with many organisations. He is a member of the Wildlife Trust, was a Trustee for the Wildlife Trust and for a short time held the position of Chairman before its amalgamation. Ron worked for Field Studies Council in their Oil Pollution Research Centre for 9 years at Fort Popton, Angle from 1990, taking part in different surveys in various parts of the UK including Sullom Voe, Shetland. These included benthic and environmental assessment surveys as well as aerial photography. As a member of Butterfly Conservation, it is Ron's task to edit both the newsletter and web site for the South Wales Branch. Ron provides support for the North Pembrokeshire Moth Group, and is the co-ordinator for Wales for 'European Moth Nights' – the fourth which took place earlier this year.



Clouded Yellow, *Colias croceus*

Other interests of Ron's include using computers for databases, general office work and graphics, reading a wide variety of books, listening to classical music, gardening particularly raising plants from seed and cooking. Ron also actively researches the genealogy of his family and his wife's family. As a member of Scout movement, Ron has taken the role as Troop Leader and Group Scout Leader in Bournemouth, as well as Scout Leader and Group Scout Leader at Lamphey. He has also worked as District Commissioner (Camping) for Pembrokeshire for several years.

**Related websites:**

[Butterfly Conservation, South Wales branch](#)

[Pembrokeshire Lepidoptera](#)

Lepidoptera pages of WWBIC

- [Moths](#)
- [Butterflies](#)