



## WWBIC Bulletin No. 23

Apr 2015

Hello to all and welcome to the 23rd edition of the WWBIC Bulletin, for Spring 2015. This issue follows shortly after our successful Annual Recorders' Forum on 7th March. I hope all who attended found the talks and discussion both enjoyable and informative, there is a write up of the event on page 5. At the end of this issue (pages 9-10) you will find a list of Recording Days and Training Days which have been organised by WWBIC for 2015 and I hope you will join us at some of them.

Robert Shaw  
WWBIC

Autumn lady's-tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*) at Freshwater East

© Vicky Tomlinson



## WWBIC Data Holdings Update

WWBIC currently holds **1,666,215** records in our Recorder 6 Database and there are **1,421,624** records in the GIS reporting species layer. This is up from **1,222,837** and **1,118,739** respectively at our last newsletter.

Since the last Newsletter we have received datasets large and small from the following individuals: Adrian Pugh, Ali Baird, Anna Sutcliffe, Annie Haycock, Ant Rogers, Ava Greenwell, Becca Killa, Becky Hulme, Bob Haycock, Chloe Griffiths, Clare Flynn, Clive Hurford, Dave Grundy, David Bavin, David Harries, Dawn Marshall, Della James, Evan Lynn, Holly Ruthven, Nathan Walton, Nia Stephens, Isabel Macho, Jo Gregory, Lin

## Recording News

### WWBIC Data Holdings Update

Gander, Madeline Tasker, Michelle Laine, Peta Sams, Richard Pond, Richard Pryce, Robert Shaw, Robin Taylor, Ron Elliot, Sally Hall, Sam Bosanquet, Trevor Theobald, Vaughn Matthews and SEWBReC's SEWBReCord online users.

We have received datasets from the following organisations and groups: The British Lichen Society via Janet Simkin, The British Dragonfly Society via Steve Prentice, Bumblebee Conservation Trust via Richard Comont, The Hayscastle Environment Group via Clare Flynn and David Baster, The International Otter Survival Fund via Helen Stephenson and Pembrokeshire Bird Group via Bob Haycock.

We have also received datasets directly from the following Ecological Consultancies: ADAS, Gould Ecology, Just Mammals and Soltys Brewster

### Britain's Smallest Moth - hiding on Pen Dinas, Aberystwyth!

The Sorrel Pygmy moth - (*Enteucha acetosae*) is one of the world's smallest moths, with a wing span of less than 3mm! I found the distinctive marks (known as mines) it makes on sorrel leaves, half way up our local Iron Age Hillfort, called Pen Dinas, in Aberystwyth. This moth hasn't been recorded in our area for over 30 years, and never before in this particular site, so it's good to have it back in Ceredigion.

I became interested in leaf mining moths following a great course by Dave Grundy on micro moths, held at Teifi Marshes last year, he's running more this summer for those who would like to find out more. I have also learned a great deal from the County Moth recorders of Ceredigion (Macro and Micro), who have been suggesting what to look for. Looking for leaf mines is a great way to combine botany and moths, because if you know which plant you have found a mine on, it reduces the possibilities hugely of which moth it could be. I recommend the [British Leafminers](#) website, which you can search, either by the name of the moth or the name of the plant your mine is on, it's very useful!



Sorrel Pygmy moth (*Enteucha acetosae*) mines on sorrel leaves  
©Chloe Griffiths

Kew “Lost and Found” Project

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, recently announced an exciting new project which provides an opportunity for local groups and enthusiasts to get involved in a national programme for recording rare fungi and lichens. The "Lost and Found" project is generously funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and will run for 5 years. The funding will enable Kew to employ two staff to coordinate the project and provide technical support for local fungus groups.

Our well established programme in Pembrokeshire, recording the IUCN "critically endangered worldwide" willow blister (*Cryptomyces maximus*) fungus, was held up as an example of best practice and used by Kew to support the project funding application.

The project organisers have identified a target list of 100 species which are either very rarely recorded and of uncertain distribution, or are more common but poorly understood. They will develop datasheets for each of the species and encourage local recording groups to search for those potentially occurring in their locality. Collections will be sent to Kew for verification and, where appropriate, DNA sequencing.



*Cryptomyces maximus* ©David Harries

scale bar 20 mm

The Pembrokeshire network, and fungus enthusiasts in Carmarthenshire, are reviewing the Lost and Found target list to identify suitable candidates for local recording excursions.

An early success came in February when PFRN members David and Holly Harries, Jane Hodges and Trevor Theobald found a collection of tiny green-blue disc fungi - spotted by Jane's eagle eye - on a rotting log of *Ilex aquifolium* (holly). These were confirmed as *Mollisia subglobosa* - a

rarely recorded species with the only previous UK records from sites in the New Forest, Hampshire.

The Pembrokeshire record came from a broadleaved woodland planted 25 years ago with support from the Woodland Trust. Although a relatively young woodland, the surrounding hedgebank contained a number of mature holly trees.

The records from both UK locations came from holly logs that had been cut and stacked some years previously. In the case of the Pembrokeshire record, the holly has been cut 5 or so years earlier by the electricity supply company to keep overhead lines free of interference. The logs had been left on the ground as habitat piles at the request of the landowners.

Buoyed up by this find, we keenly await the production of datasheets from Kew which we can use to support local recording efforts by our members.



*Mollisia subglobosa* ©David Harries

scale bar 5 mm

**David Harries**  
**Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording**  
**Network**

# Reconnecting our South Wales Water Voles

The water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) is Britain's fastest declining wild mammal and has disappeared from many parts of the country where it was once common. It is threatened by habitat loss, but has suffered particularly from predation by the introduced American mink (*Neovison vison*). Nia Stephens, the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales's water vole Officer spent 2014 working on the "Reconnecting our South Wales water voles" project. The project was funded by the Welsh Government's Resilient Ecosystems Fund and by the Megan Jones legacy.

The aim of the project was to increase our understanding of water voles in South and West Wales by establishing a more complete database of their distribution. Using a combination of maps

showing known water vole populations, old records and aerial photographs showing habitat type, key areas to survey for the species were identified. This increased survey effort will help us understand the distribution and highlight vulnerable populations. Most of the surveys were done on private land and early spring was spent collecting landowner contact details and then gaining access permissions from landowners. We also tried to ensure that we had permissions to make all survey results public record. While surveying land, areas were also identified that could benefit from habitat improvement; either within existing populations or nearby in order to increase habitat connectivity between populations. We then hope to work with landowners to carry out capital works to improve water vole habitat in these areas should funding

become available in future.

Between April and October 2014, targeting areas with potentially the best water vole habitat; 64 sites, covering a total of 2655.5 hectares were surveyed. Of these 64 sites water voles were present at 27 and overall 48 records of water voles were found. The majority of the survey work was concentrated in the uplands of Ceredigion and all of the positive records were found in this area. Of the 48 positive records of water vole found, 45 were on privately owned land while 3 were on land belonging to WTSWW at Cors lan, Llyn Eiddwen and Rhos Fullbrook. The full report is available from the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales' website here:

[WTSWW Water vole report pdf](#)

**Nia Stephens**  
**WTSWW Water Vole Officer**



Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) ©Margaret Holland

## Archiving Pembrokeshire's Bird Records

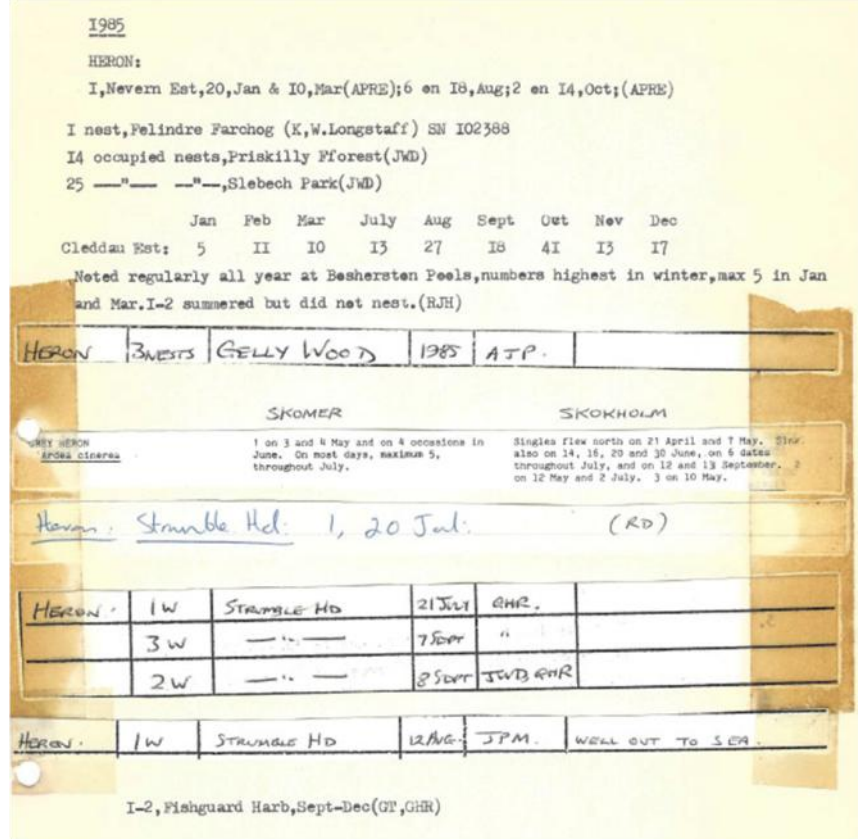
Long-term datasets of biological records are unique and are vital to our understanding of species population changes over time. It is therefore important that such records are archived at places like West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC) and are available for present and future studies in an easily accessible format.

Graham Rees, who was County Recorder for many years (jointly with the late Jack Donovan for part of the time) has amassed such a dataset comprising thousands of bird sighting records from Pembrokeshire (VC45). As well as Graham's own records, they include all reported accounts from numerous observers between the early 1980s and mid-2000s. These paper records are stored in more than 30 Lever Arch Files, currently taking up valuable airing cupboard space at Graham's home!

Within each file are separate year sheets containing summary accounts



An airing cupboard full of bird records!  
© Graham Rees



Part of a scanned page – Grey Heron (1985)

for each species plus, in some cases, relevant descriptive notes etc. Each record has been carefully cut and pasted (scrap-book style). Being paper records, as well as the danger of deteriorating (becoming faded and potentially illegible), in their current state they are not in an easily accessible format for further scrutiny.

Graham approached the Pembrokeshire Bird Group Committee to see how these records might best be archived and made available for future study. This led to discussions with staff at WWBIC to consider possible options. In the long-term it is hoped that it will be possible to enter individual records into a database, such as Recorder or Bird-Track. As a first important

step, it was agreed that the pages should be scanned to create PDFs of the records of each species and that that the WWBIC scanner could be used for this purpose. I agreed to take on the task of scanning the thousands of pages involved. Although it takes approx. 2-3 hours to scan all sheets held in one file, it is hoped to complete the process by late summer.

When complete, a PDF set of these records will be held by WWBIC, with further sets held by Graham and by the Pembrokeshire Bird Group. By archiving the records into a much more manageable format not only should it be easier to view them, but hopefully easier to copy them from that source into a permanent database.

**Bob Haycock**  
Pembrokeshire Bird Group

# WWBIC Annual Recorders' Forum 2015 report

This year's Recorders' Forum at Cilgerran on 7<sup>th</sup> March again pushed the upper limits of the Harlow Room's capacity with an excellent turn out from across the three counties. It was great to see everyone together in one place.

The event was chaired by Jane Hodges, Vice-chair of WWBIC and started with an update on our activities over the past year from manager Colin Russell. This was then followed by a brief talk on free IT tools for recorders by Robert Shaw. We then had a talk by Dr Crona Hodges on the EU wide COBWeB (Citizens Observatory WEB) project. She began by giving an overview of the COB-WeB project across all of Europe and its implications on a global scale and then discussed the current pilot project which is based in the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve.

As usual, an excellent buffet lunch in the Glasshouse Cafe gave attendees the opportunity to meet and talk with their fellow recorders, giving an opportunity to catch up with people from across our three counties and further afield.

We resumed with an introduction to the Kew Lost and Found Project



**Everyone assembled before the first talk with the Harlow Room at full capacity ©Robert Shaw**

given by VC45 Fungi recorder David Harries. David has written an article on page 3 of the newsletter that covers the project.

Next on the programme was a talk by Richard Pryce, VC44 Vascular Plant recorder, on the updates to the flora of Carmarthenshire covering new finds and losses as well as the disparity of recording effort and the special focus on the critical genus *Taraxacum* in the county, where Richard and Kath have spent a lot of time collecting, and sending specimens to the national referee for identification.

This was followed by a talk by David Slade, VC41 Moth recorder, on the collecting of insects in the

modern day. He discussed the reasons for and ethics of collecting invertebrates and discussed the dilemma of needing to kill and dissect specimens in order to make identifications and gave a brief overview of the Code of Conduct for Collecting Insects and other Invertebrates from the Amateur Entomologists' Society.

Our last talk of the day was by Annie Haycock, VC45 Mammal recorder, on the state of current mammal recording in Pembrokeshire including analysis of records received for different taxa over time with some interesting insights into why the number of records submitted for various species varies year on year as well as demonstrating the areas of Pembrokeshire where even common and easily identifiable mammal species are under recorded.

I hope everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day and anyone who didn't have the opportunity to join us this year will join us next year.

**Robert Shaw**  
WWBIC



**David Harries introducing the Kew Lost and Found Project, discussed on page 3 ©Robert Shaw**

# WWBIC Data Holdings Update—Focus on large datasets received

WWBIC has seen a large increase in the number of records held in our database these past six months.

Looking back to our last newsletter we held 1,222,837 records in our main Recorder 6 database, this has now risen to over 1.6 million which represents an increase of over 400,000 in six months.

This rise has been down to the integration of a number of newly received large datasets: The county moth dataset for Carmarthenshire, provided by Sam Bosanquet is the largest single dataset with over 200,000 records

not previously held by WWBIC. These are just the largest datasets contained within it. We also received from the Pembrokeshire Bird Group the Breeding Bird Atlas data 2008-2012 and the Winter Bird Atlas data 2007-2012. These datasets amounted to over 100,000 records.

Other large datasets included the British Lichen Society and the British Dragonfly Society datasets for West Wales. We have also received, but not yet integrated a large update to the Pembrokeshire VC Moth Dataset provided by Robin Taylor which includes moth records for a number of years that we did not previously hold.

These are just the largest datasets received, you can find a full list of all data providers in the Data Holdings update on page 1 and a full list of all datasets receive in the year is included in our annual report.

We are very grateful to these recorders who have provide us with these large county datasets into which they and other volunteers have put hundreds of hours of their own time into both collecting species records of their own and the process of managing and maintaining these accurate and up to date datasets.



The welcome screen from WWBIC's Recorder 6 database showing the number of records in the database at 1,666,215 as of 08/04/2015



## WWBIC Wildlife Recording Database Mapping Wildlife for West Wales

WWBIC has recently launched a newly revamped online recording site. This is a streamlined version of our previous site with improved functionality and ease of use. The main reason for developing this is to make it easier for local wildlife sightings in West Wales to be submitted to WWBIC as well as for recorders to have a single online location where they can submit and store all of their records.

It incorporates a number of features including record mapping, the latest species dictionaries, the ability to upload photographs and to see where and what other people have been recording. Because it's web based you can access your records wherever you can access the internet and from any device. These records are then easily incorporated into WWBIC's main database and become part of our species reporting.

The online recording tool is perfect for people who have a few records they would like to report or people who are looking for an alternative with more functionality to using spreadsheets. If you have a backlog of non digitised records this provides an easier to use alternative to typing them

What Did You See?
Where Was It?

Date:

Recorder Name:

Enter the recorder's name, if different.

Please enter all the species you saw at one site on a single day and any other information about them. Then submitting your records.

Species	Certainty	Quantity	Sex	Stage	Identified By
<i>Milvus milvus</i> - Red Kite bird	Certain	1		Adult	Russell, Colin
Blue Tit - <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> bird	Certain	4		Adult	Russell, Colin
Great Tit - <i>Parus major</i> bird	Certain	2		Adult	Russell, Colin
Goldfinch - <i>Carduelis carduelis</i> bird	Certain	2		Adult	Russell, Colin
Robin - <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> bird	Certain	1		Adult	Russell, Colin
Pheasant - <i>Phasianus colchicus</i> bird	Certain	1	male	Adult	Russell, Colin
	Certain			Adult	Russell, Colin

Sample display of the records entry page showing species to the left (not shown: comments field to right)

into a spreadsheet because of the species look-up dictionaries. Although if you already have a large digital database or are using a different tool this may not be the ideal solution for you.

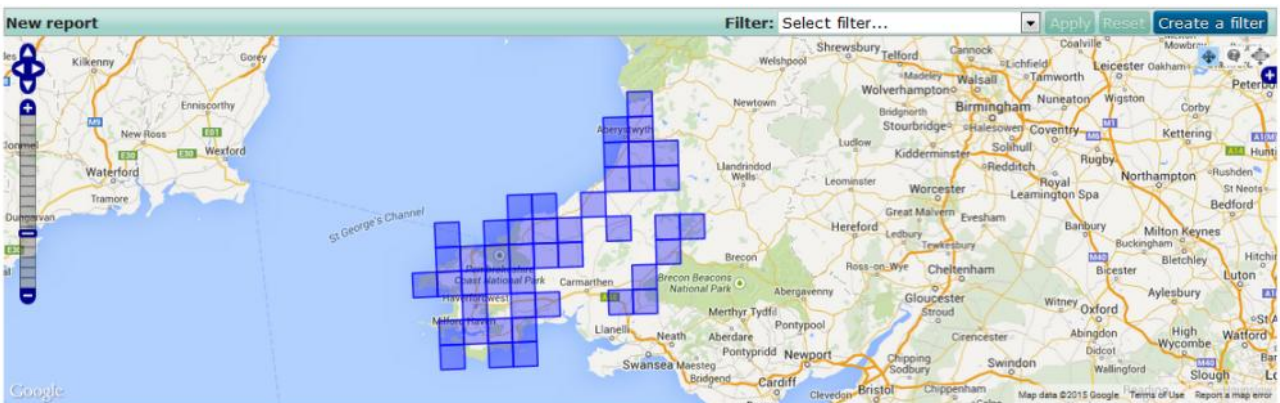
Please consider promoting the online recording tool to any volunteers you are involved with as it is perfect for encouraging people who do not normally submit records to WWBIC to start recording.

If you were a user of our previous online recording site all of your records have been transferred across to the new site and there are instructions on the login page on how to make sure these are assigned to you on the new site.

If you have any queries about the online recording site or if you would like me to talk you through how to use the site please contact me at:

[Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk)

**Robert Shaw**  
WWBIC



Sample map display enabling you to view maps of your records submitted to the site or to view other people's records that have been submitted.

### WWBIC Staff Changes

It is with regret that I have to announce in this newsletter that we will shortly be saying goodbye to Vicky Swann, our Senior Data Enquiries Officer. Vicky has been with WWBIC over seven years, almost since the very beginning, and will be much missed. To many of our customers, Vicky has been the main contact, dealing with hundreds of data enquiries over the years and providing services to SLA partners such as planning list checking, GIS data, and for a number of projects. During

this time she has built up a relationship with the many ecologists both local and from further afield and her knowledge of GIS and ecology have been invaluable.

Vicky is leaving our employment for pastures, not new in a sense, to concentrate on her family, farm, and their business. She would like to express her thanks to everyone at WWBIC, our partners and customers who she has worked with, and is sure she will meet up with many of you again through friendships and work.

With such a small team, Vicky's departure is a significant loss but we are fortunate that Robert Shaw has agreed to remain with WWBIC for a further year which will extend beyond Kate Smith's return from maternity leave in August. He will take on part of Vicky's role and until August, we will be three working in the office, Robert, Madeline Tasker and myself.

**Colin Russell**  
Manager, WWBIC

### WWBIC Recording Days

WWBIC has so far organised five recording days for 2015 and it is the hope that we can bring this to six with two in each county. These days are usually held on private land with the permission of the landowners and so if you are interested in attending we ask if you would contact us in advance about attending and for further details.

**26th May, near St Davids, Pembrokeshire.**

**8th June, near Talybont, Ceredigion.**

**8th July, near Drefach, Carmarthenshire.**

**17th July, near Mynachlog-ddu, Pembrokeshire**

**August (day to be confirmed), near Tanygroes, Ceredigion**

All the sites have been selected because they have a good range of interesting habitat types which

should be of interest to a wide range of recording specialties and are locations for WWBIC holds very few records.

if you would like to attend any of these recording days please get in touch before hand, also if you would like to know anything further about the sites.

We are always looking for new sites to visit either as part of this

years recording days or as potential sites for next year. If you know of an interesting site or a landowner who would be interested in having a recording day take place on their land or are in fact an interested landowner yourself please let me know.

**contact:**

[Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk)



**Previous recording day in Pembrokeshire 2013, everyone delighted at having spotted the rare *Equus ferus caballus* and *Equus africanus asinus* ©Kate Smith**

# Wales Biodiversity Partnership Training Days

Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) is continuing their support for recorder training in Wales into the next financial year. To date, we have arranged two one-day courses, details below. Attendance at these courses is free and spaces are limited so early booking is essential.

### **Solitary Bee Identification**

**Date:** 20th June

**Location:** Stackpole, Pembrokeshire

**Tutor:** Ian Cheeseborough

**Description:** This is a one day course with a morning classroom based session and an afternoon field based session. Ian Cheeseborough has run a number of FSC courses on Bumblebees and Solitary Bees and has kindly agreed to come down to Stackpole from Shropshire to run this course. This course is aimed at people who have some familiarity with Bumblebee identification and recording and would like to broaden their knowledge to other bee taxa in a setting known for its great diversity of bee species.

### **Marsh Fritillary—Surveying and Ecology**

**Date:** 5th September

**Location:** Rhos Llawr Cwrt NNR, Talgarreg, Ceredigion

**Tutor:** Dr Deborah Sazer

**Description:** This is a one day course with a morning classroom based session and an afternoon field based session. Deborah Sazer has many years experience conducting Marsh Fritillary surveys in West Wales and this course will take an in depth look at the Marsh Fritillary, one of the butterfly highlights of West Wales at a site of international importance for the species and at a time when larval webs should be present. The course will take a detailed look at life cycle, survey techniques, habitat and management requirements and current distribution.

Please note that booking is essential for these courses, if you would like to attend a course please email [Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:Robert@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk). More details are available on request.

*We are hoping to run other courses this year and details will be sent out when they are confirmed.*



**Example of a past training day, Specimen Curation—Dr Sarah Beynon, 2014 ©Kate Smith**

## Final Words

A big thank you to all who have contributed, both to the newsletter itself and records to WWBIC as well as attending the forum this year. Looking forward to seeing you at upcoming events.

If you have any comments or feedback regarding this newsletter please email: [colin@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk](mailto:colin@westwalesbiodiversity.org.uk) or phone the WWBIC office on 01994 241468



@wwbic1



West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre