**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Interviewer(s): INT

Respondent(s): P32

**INT: So the first question is, how long have you been recording? And how did you start?**

P32: So, I guess, two bits really. So the casual side, using something like iRecord, or paper copies, originally, I guess, I started in about 2015, which is probably when I really started re-engaging – well engaging really, for the first time, in [wildlife charity]. So it’s something that, I guess, as a kid was a big part of me and then, just, work got in the way. We started to travel a lot. We started to see butterflies abroad and, I guess, it made me appreciate, like a lot of things, what’s at home. And so I got more involved when I had more time. And that’s how I ended up on the Committee. And that’s how I ended up being Chair as well. So that was more the casual side.

And, obviously, the iRecord, I think, made a big difference, having that on your phone, and stuff, has been a godsend really. Because even if I wasn’t necessarily using it all the time, it allowed me to record exactly where I was, physically, in the field at the time, which is nice not having to go and look it all up on maps, check grid references, all that sort of stuff.

And when I retired a year last Christmas, I had more time again, so I thought, well let’s find out a bit more about transect recording. And I look after – where I used to work, we have 70 acres of brownfield land, and it’s got 25 recorded species of butterfly on it at the moment, which I think, doing all the checking we’ve done, has got the most species anywhere this far north in the UK. And it’s actually on a brownfield site in the middle of, what was industrial [build-up area].

And so, I used to record on that heavily. I used to go out two or three times a week on that at lunchtimes with people, taking them around, telling them about it. Got very enthused, obviously, and actually when I walked away I thought, well let’s make it a bit more formal. So I started a transect on it. Did it for the first time last year, which actually has meant I’ve done it less because, obviously, I live 20 minutes away, so I had to drive up to it. Whereas, when I was at work, I could go out every lunchtime, it was five minutes walk away.

And then I got involved with an organisation before that, who helped us with that biodiversity site. A company called – or an organisation called [WILDLIFE ORGANISATION], [wildlife organisation], I think. It’s run by [Name], you know, he’s the moth recorder for [VICE COUNTY].

**INT: Right.**

P32: So [Name] and three other ecologists, basically, support all the big chemical organisations on how to manage – they’ve got massive amounts of brownfield site here that they’ll probably never build on. But it’s got enormous numbers – not just butterflies, all sorts of [s/l invert 00:02:44] and very rare in a lot of cases. We’ve had the first sightings of all sorts of things in this far north in the country. So they create – there’s four of them, basically, advising people what to do with all this brownfield land to attract all sorts of flora and fauna.

And they had a transect that they’d had to let lapse due to lack of personnel. I think about eight to ten years ago now. And it’s actually on the back of another chemical plant, same company I started work with actually, and it backs on to the estuary of the [RIVER]. And it’s the most amazing site for Grayling, which of course in [COUNTY] are incredibly scarce. And so I was seeing 50 or 60 at a time doing this transect. But on the same piece of the transect I was seeing 250 Common Blues, because the whole sea wall is just covered in bird’s-foot trefoil, so you just walk through these things and they’re just everywhere. So I -

**INT: [Over speaking] Wow. [Unclear 00:03:46].**

P32: Well yes, exactly. It just blew me away because normally you’d see one or two these days, if you’re lucky.

**INT: If you’re lucky, yeah.**

P32: So I started last – obviously, having the time I, basically, started doing both of those every week, when the weather was decent enough. And, obviously, when you’re doing that – I’m into all sorts of wildlife, it’s not just butterflies, so – and I’m a keen photographer, so – not while I’m doing the transect, but at other times I go in and take photographs of everything else I see as well. So you always find some new things. So, I mean, on that transect up by the sea wall there’s always lots of Hummingbird Hawk moths, and they actually land. And there’s of valerian on the coast, so they’re literally sitting there nectaring. And actually, the Graylings nectar on it as well, so it’s -

**INT: Very nice.**

P32: - a beautiful spot. Seals there. Loads of sea birds. Some quite rare wading birds come in because there’s a big marsh area behind the sea wall. They’ve had some very rare birds there over the years, because it’s one of the closest places to landing on the [COAST], a bit like [NATURE RESERVE], and stuff like that, and [Town]. So that’s really -

**INT: [Over speaking] Is that [unclear 00:04:54]?**

P32: Sorry?

**INT: Is it all private land or can – is it publicly owned?**

P32: Well, the first one I do on my old work site is private land. So I have a pass to get in. But I’m allowed – I wrote an agreement that allowed me to take people on during the week. But I had to go with somebody from work. So I actually have a cohort of old colleagues who still work there who are keen to come out. Last year we took a large group of – I’m going to get this wrong – large group of ecologists from the organisation, E – is it EIMM, or something like that?

**INT: Oh, yes, I know what you mean, yeah.**

P32: So through [WILDLIFE ORGANISATION], they organised and put [unclear 00:05:33] and we had 25 people turned up. And [Name] came. [Name], the [VICE COUNTY] recorder came. Because we’re on the border with – well they’re – that’s in [VICE COUNTY] rather than in [COUNTY], so we got some of the northeast branch guys that I know, they all came down as well. It was good. The weather wasn’t great, it was a bit cool, so we didn’t see a huge amount but we missed out, because we have White-letter Hairstreak on the site, which is just unbelievable, because we’ve got no Witch Elms on there at all, and we’ve seen them for four or five years. And it’s a big conundrum at the moment, we always see them in grey alder, so [Name]’s puzzled. [Name]’s puzzled. It’s – the guys in [WILDLIFE ORGANISATION] are puzzled. Can’t find any literature to suggest that they would use it, because they don’t have the bugs on the trees. So, we have yet to solve that one. We’ve been out egg hunting but we can’t find any eggs on the trees.

**INT: Interesting.**

P32: And that’s how, you know, I know we’ve conversed about the Brown Argus, that’s how I got into the Brown Argus, because the story was, a few years back now, I asked somebody on the Branch Committee where I should go to see Brown Argus and they pointed me all the way down to [nature reserve], which is quite a drive for me, it’s about an hour and a bit. I went on a Sunday and I didn’t see any. Came back on Monday, walked on this brownfield site, and I thought, that’s a bit strange, what on earth’s that? I’ve never seen that before. Turns out it was a Brown Argus, and it turns out we’ve got an incredible bit population on [unclear 00:07:03].

**INT: [Over speaking] It sounds perfect. If it’s a warm microclimate, which it sounds like it is -**

P32: [Over speaking] Oh it is. And it’s got lots of old rubble on it, so not much grows. But the interesting thing is, we didn’t find the foodplant for the first year. Couldn’t find it anywhere. And then we found little parts of it on the way out of the site. You go there now and it’s just swimming in Doves-foot Cranesbill, it’s absolutely everywhere. It’s an incredible transformation in the space of, probably, three years. With no help from -

**INT: [Over speaking] And that’s just happened naturally?**

P32: All happened naturally.

**INT: And there’s no rock-rose it’s just all on the -**

P32: No rock-rose at all. There’s none. The nearest, of course, we’re butting – as you’ll know, we’re butting up into the Northern Brown Argus, when you get up into there it’s only 15 kilometres or something up to [nature reserve], and stuff. But no, I’ve been lucky enough to witness some laying as well, which – so I’ve got a few photographs of that happening. But we were getting numbers of 25, and it is bivoltine up there as well, very clearly. So recording in [VICE COUNTY], all their Brown Argus recordings were very much they only ever saw a later brood. Whereas we got a very clear May brood and a very clear August brood.

**INT: I think because that first brood can be a lot smaller, can’t it, as well? It’s -**

P32: [Over speaking] Anywhere in the country, even further south, so I was down looking for Brown Hairstreak in – well my parents live in the [region]– and I happened to bump against the Branch Chair of [region] who knows my dad very well, and we were talking and he said, “We hardly get any early emergence, they’re all later in the year.” And that’s further south, so it’s really bizarre that we get a very strong emergence in the beginning of the year when we’re 220 miles north. So that’s what led me to start doing more digging and looking at the papers that you’ve done, and all the stuff that [Name] had done. And -

**INT: Yeah. Have you spoken to [Name]?**

P32: I’ve touched base with him a few times, because one of the things that I would be keen to do, if we could, is actually do some genetic analysis on the stuff we’ve got on our site. Because I wonder whether we’ve got a different population, or a different type that’s, literally, moving that much faster again. Because a lot of the stuff – the analysis, if I remember rightly, was done on probably the more sedentary ones, because the ones that we’ve got just didn’t exist, or nobody knew about them when [Name] was doing all his work back in early 2010s and stuff. And obviously, now I know the guys up in [VICE COUNTY] there are people recording Brown Argus at a time when you wouldn’t expect to see Northern Browns, but they’re actually on the same sites. So we’re running into that overlap happening again -

**INT: [Over speaking] And now is the time -**

P32: - that in our time – yeah.

**INT: Have you spoken to him about getting a Masters student or anything to -**

P32: [Over speaking] No, I would be quite keen to consider doing that I think. Obviously, with lockdown and stuff it’s parked everything. But I’d be quite keen to consider doing something like that. Because it helps [unclear 00:09:56].

00:10:00

**INT: Yeah. Do you – well, and actually, I think the people that have done a bit more on this sort of stuff, more recently, you’ve probably seen the papers of the people down in [CITY], is it [Name] [00:10:10]?**

P32: Yeah, but he’s in touch with [Name] anyway, isn’t he? Because I know when I asked [Name] about doing the genetic analysis I think he got in touch with [Name] anyway so – with [Name] down at [CITY], because I asked him how much it was going to cost.

**INT: And then there was some - I’m sure there was somebody that got in touch with me from – I think it was, even, [CITY], a couple of years ago, who was doing their PhD – that was it, yeah.**

P32: I know somebody at [CITY], because I know there’s a guy who’s doing the research into the Glanville Fritillary, he’s using infrared cameras on drones, which is quite impressive, to look for the heat sources of the nests of – because it gets so hot in the middle you can see them with an infrared camera from the sky.

**INT: That’s cool [laughs]. So this guy got in touch with me 2016. Gosh, that’s a long time ago now. Saying, ‘I’m doing a PhD with [Name], studying Brown Argus in the UK. My work is broadly looking at effects of climate change and habitat on phrenology and population dynamics’. And he asked me to send him some data. And I sent it to him and then I never heard anything back [laughs].**

P32: Never heard anything. No. Well he should have finished by now, as well, if -

**INT: Yeah.**

P32: But no, I mean, I haven’t approached [Name], but I think in my mind that’s what I’d like to consider doing because I think we really are reaching the point of, do we know what we’re recording anymore? Are we seeing a second chance of hybridisation, having the fact they’re already hybridised to a certain extent, possibly? And we don’t know that yet either with the ones that are near me.

**INT: I spoke to [Name], and he’s in [City]? I always get the two confused. Somewhere. And he said he gets Southern Brown Argus in his garden, which also seems very close to [unclear 00:12:20] -**

P32: [Over speaking] Well [unclear 00:12:22] I think from our records this year, looking on the maps that I’ve – because I’ve got all the data, I think they’re getting to within 10/15 kilometres of each other now. But actually, when you get into the [City] area, on places like [village] and stuff, they’re recording, potentially, both. Because one of the questions [unclear 00:12:41] but for later, I was going to ask you, do you know whether any of [Name]’ group at any time have done any looking at – I know they did the foodplant experiments with the Brown Argus, but did they ever see where the Northern Brown Argus would go to the Cranesbill Geranium family? Do the reverse experiment.

**INT: Not as far as I know. No.**

P32: No, because that’s quite an interesting switch as well because, obviously, if that could switch foodplant like the Brown Argus has, then -

**INT: Yeah, because that’s what I was thinking about when you were saying you’ve got that big population of Doves-foot Cranesbill, because that – those experiments showed that, as far as I can remember, the caterpillars did better on Doves-foot Cranesbill than they did on rock-rose.**

P32: Yes, and they always, even with rock-rose present, they always had a preference for Doves-foot Cranesbill.

**INT: But that might be why you get a slightly – you get that bigger first brood, if they’re doing better on – if they’re over wintering on Cranesbill.**

P32: [Over speaking] Yes, you’d get a very good second – well, yeah, you’d get – yes, you would get -

**INT: But you could get a better first brood if they’re doing better after that. Because I think the problem often with the Cranesbill is that it’s in low densities, the host plants are low densities, which is why you get these ephemeral populations, and then – or smaller populations and then tend to be more in the wider countryside than the big -**

P32: That’s what I struggled with reading the papers, they said it’s low density. I think, God, if I show you the pictures of what it’s like where we are, you can’t walk anywhere without standing on it because it’s, literally – but because it was a flattened chemical works it’s got all the old concrete base still. And they broke it up but it means no grass can grow on it, and [unclear 00:14:30] -

**INT: [Over speaking] And it’s not getting out competed.**

P32: It’s not getting out competed at all. The interesting thing is, whether over time, being an annual plant, whether it will disappear again. But of course, it’s super hot as well because, obviously, there’s all that reflected heat. I mean, the plants are tiny. I’ll send you, if you want, the pictures of the plants. The leaves are about – they’re much smaller than you’d typically see, I think, on the plants. But – and the females I saw laying, you know, obviously, very particular, like most butterflies are. But, you know, going around tasting all the different plants. But she had so much to choose from it was ridiculous. But no, I’d be very keen if -

**INT: Yeah, I think the timing is the challenge now, potentially, because the Masters students have selected their projects for this summer. It would be getting a bit late now anyway to think about [unclear 00:15:20] -**

P32: [Over speaking] Yeah, I mean, it would be for another year but -

**INT: Yeah, but if we – so what they tend to do is advertise projects – I’m not in the same department as [Name] anymore, I’m in environment now. But in environment anyway, they advertise the projects in the autumn term for students to select - oh no, spring term – early spring term - for students to then select projects, to then work on over the summer. So it’s certainly, in environment, the students that are now doing their Masters projects, that’s all they’re doing now. From now until the end of the summer, so September, that’s all they’re working on. So you would, potentially, get somebody who could work intensively on that topic for – yeah, from April through to September, which would be quite good timing. But I -**

P32: [Over speaking] What should I do, should I contact [Name], or do you want to – would you mind having a word with him, or -

**INT: I can drop him an email and copy you in, and just say that we’ve had a chat and that we’d be interested in doing something. Because it’s – it would be, potentially, something that I could, like, [Name] and I could co-supervise, or something like that. Even though it’s – well – so [Name] has now got his big [research centre], so I get – I don’t really know – I get the impression he’s slightly moved away, perhaps, from the nitty gritty butterfly stuff, and he’s moving on to the bigger question, and stuff, about what the future of biodiversity [unclear 00:17:01] the planet will look like. But it might be something that if I say that I would be the primary supervisor and he could support.**

P32: I’d be very keen because I think we are going to – well, we are running into an issue of understanding – and actually it would be good – as you said, it would be a good time to look at it because, obviously, we don’t know what the end games going to be. Will it start to push the Northern Brown, particularly of the populations – the very special populations that are in [VICE COUNTY], you know, their headline sites are [village], and [nature reserve], I mean, supposed sub-species as they were considered to be in the past, not really now, but it would be a shame to lose – or will they survive side by side like they do over in the islands in Denmark? So, we just don’t know any of that really. And if they are coming up it would – it turns itself into a multi-year lots of MSCs, potentially, because you’d need to [unclear 00:18:02] -

**INT: [Over speaking] Well, that’s it, and there are other species that [Name] has worked on, like the Silver Spotted Skipper, where they do the very regular – they’re quite far apart, you know, I think [unclear 00:18:13] –**

P32: [Over speaking] Yes, they just [unclear 00:18:13] every five years, or something.

**INT: Yeah. But yeah, then you’ve got that longitudinal data as well to work with. And for that kind of thing they follow the fixed methodology each time for each round, so you can then look at where metapopulations have gone extinct, and where they’ve come in, and which ones have lasted. So – but yeah, I will – so yeah, I will drop him an email.**

P32: Okay, appreciate that. I know that wasn’t part of this conversation but [laughs] -

**INT: Yeah [laughs].**

P32: So yeah, so that’s really how I – that’s the extent of my recording. Quite a lot of casual – I’ve got to admit, I don’t record every single thing I ever see, because I think I’d be on iRecord all the time, but -

**INT: Yeah. But do you record other things that aren’t butterflies, or is your -**

P32: I used to do a lot of birds. So again, where we live, we’ve got something like 75 species of bird in this area. We’ve had something like 50 in just our garden. So I did that every single week for two years with the [WILDLIFE CHARITY]. But it’s a bit of a chore and it got a bit repetitive, so I just tend to record highlights now. So yesterday we were walking part of the [LONG DISTANCE ROUTE] and there were two red kites up there, which was lovely to see. You don’t see them that far north that often, so those are the sorts of things I’d record.

**INT: And does that go on iRecord?**

P32: No, I tend to do that through – I’ve got so many bird tracking ones – that’s the problem with all these things, like, you know, BirdTrack I think, which is the UK one. And then there’s an eBird one, which Cornell University use, which is where I put my life list, so when we travel abroad I put all my records on there.

00:20:07

Apps are wonderful. They’re just – because everything’s at your fingertips and, as I guess where you’re going with this, I find some of the – certainly the bird ones are amazing, because you can go anywhere in the world and it will bring up a species list for that area, and the time of year, and everything, so you know whether you’re going to stand a chance of seeing stuff, or not. Makes your life a lot easier when you’ve got that in your hand, rather than carrying it round in a book, and not understanding whether you’re going to see it or not.

**INT: Yeah, it slims down your list of possibilities, doesn’t it? I like that you – what’s it called? What’s [APP], that moth -**

P32: Yeah, the moth one. Really really good. I think it could be better, I mean, I know I find a lot in the traps - because I moth trap in our back garden and there’s a lot that’s never on it and I think, well that’s a bit bizarre because I’ve got records [unclear 00:20:57] even just one [unclear 00:21:00]. So I’m not quite sure – do you know where they get their records from?

**INT: I don’t. And I don’t know – yeah – no, I don’t know.**

P32: It’s [RESEARCH ORGANISATION] isn’t it? Is it [RESEARCH ORGANISATION]?

**INT: Yeah.**

P32: So I presume they’re doing it alongside [wildlife charity] but -

**INT: Yeah, and it also makes you doubt yourself if you think you’ve seen something [unclear 00:21:18] -**

P32: [Over speaking] I know [laughs] -

**INT: - can’t be -**

P32: I’ve got to admit, I’m a bit of a beginner on the moths when it starts to get a bit brown and have a look and think, well is that an aged one or is it a [s/l fresh one 00:21:28]. The new moth Atlas that has just come out with the photographs in has been a godsend, I must admit, except it’s so big it takes a while to wade through.

**INT: So do you submit your moth records?**

P32: Yeah, I submit my moth records to [Name] [unclear 00:21:45] for [VICE COUNTY]. And as I say, [Name]’s the Chair of the [WILDLIFE ORGANISATION] group that I work with – or volunteer for. So yeah, he’s extremely good on moths. Very very good. Including the micros, which I’ve really not gone very far – not got very close to. Stick to macros at the moment. I photograph them all anyway, so I’ve always got a record of them.

**INT: So in - moths is just in your garden. And then, in terms of casual butterfly recording, is that in your local area?**

P32: [Over speaking] Anywhere.

**INT: Anywhere.**

P32: Local area I do a lot. So whenever I’m out I’ll try and record. But I – because I travel – I’ve got – another obsession is to photograph all the British butterflies. So whenever I go to a site I will record on iRecord, because I know those will go back to their recorders, so I’ve recorded all over the country, basically, on iRecord.

**INT: And do you record everything you see, no matter how common it is? Yeah.**

P32: I do, yeah. I always make sure – it’s a bit like the bird ones, they always ask you, do you submit a full list or are you just submitting – and, I guess, because iRecord you can [unclear 00:22:51] can’t you, you can do it on a species list or you can do it by an area, so I always try and do it by an area. Although some places you only see one butterfly. [Unclear 00:23:02] Heath you see the Silver Studded Blue, the only thing you see is hundreds of those, and you don’t see anything else.

So yeah, I will record – I use iRecord – and the nice thing about that is, it’s really good because you know it’ll get to the other recorders. It’s not like the paper copies we were working on where, of course, you then have to submit a paper copy record to every branch that you – area you visited. And you don’t have to worry about that anymore, you know it, hopefully, get [unclear 00:23:29] to the appropriate places. And, obviously, most recorders now are pretty good, because they do the checking and feedback quite quickly these days, which is also helpful. And I know a lot of them now, and they know me.

**INT: Yes, that helps as well.**

P32: It does, yeah.

**INT: [Over speaking] [Unclear 00:23:46].**

P32: [Over speaking] [Unclear 00:23:46] question, or they do question. You really mean you saw that? Yeah.

**INT: So when you’re going out and about, what kind of things are you considering when you’re deciding where to go to record? Is it the place that comes first or is it the species?**

P32: I guess, in the past it’s been the species because I’ve been on this photographic mission, so I’ve only got – I’ve still got three to do. One in Ireland and two on the south coast of England. So it meant, most of the time, I was going to a specific location - outside our local area, I was going to see a certain species, or number of species, obviously, in some cases. But obviously, like most butterfly areas, as you know, you’ll find numerous other species at the same place as well, and that’s the joy of doing it. It takes you to see one but you always see more. I don’t think I’ve ever been to a place where I’ve not seen other than [unclear 00:24:44] I think, lots of other species at the same time, just because the nature of the habitats you tend to visit.

**INT: And have you revisited those places? Have you [unclear 00:24:56] -**

P32: [Over speaking] Most of them I have, yeah. I mean, the Lakes, obviously, for us has always been a good one. So I’ve been over to [estuary] quite a few times because, obviously, seeing the fairly elusive High Brown Fritillary is always a nice thing to see, and we were over there two years ago. In fact, we had a week’s family holiday, not planned around butterfly season, it just happened to be in the middle of July. And we were staying just south of [TOWN] in a really nice couple of cottages, and I decided we’d go out for a walk with the dogs over to [PLACE], which is where – a famous place to go and see them, and Brown Argus, there were Brown Argus out. And in fact, [Name] was there doing a guided walk with a load of people from [wildlife charity]. And we saw a few tatty High Browns and then, actually, there was a buddleia bush in the garden of where we were staying, and there were dark green Fritillary’s on there. And then all of a sudden a High Brown Fritillary turned up. I never thought in a million years I’d see one in a garden on – so I franticly went, I can’t believe this and dragged the whole family out. You’re going to see the Britain’s rarest butterfly on a buddleia bush in the back garden. And it came back three days on the trot.

**INT: Did you get a good photograph?**

P32: Yeah, I photographed it, just because I wanted to prove it definitely was, and I sent it to [Name] and the guys, and they said, “Oh yeah, we know about that site. Nobody knows about it.” Just off the back of the property is – I wrote to them and said, ‘it’s perfect’, and they said, “Yeah, we’re already there.” And actually, one of the guys had been there the day after we left.

So I do try to go – I try to get up to [nature reserve] to go and see the Northern Brown Argus, same with [village], because it’s only 20 minutes from me. I have a sister who lives near [village] in – where there’s all the Spotted Skippers are, which is quite helpful. Friends who live in ]CITY[ still, so going down to [COUNTY] to go and see the Heath Fritillary. So some of these I’m not going to do again. But most of them I try to – just because they’re beautiful places to go and walk, and they’re always quite quiet as well.

Went up to Scotland to see the Chequered Skipper, my wife and I did a long drive one Friday night. Weather was lousy. Got up the following day thinking, oh dear. But it was absolutely perfect. It was lovely and cool. Sun just popped out once or twice. Lovely little clearing and these things just sat all over the bluebells. If it had been any warmer we wouldn’t have seen them. They’d have been flying off at 50 miles and it was – so no, it’s brought an enormous amount of enjoyment, and given me a bit of a project at the same time, as not only seeing them but photographing them as well.

**INT: So where are you getting the information from about where exactly to go?**

P32: I tend to write – because, I guess, knowing what I know, I tend to write to the county recorders, tell them who I am and – most of – a lot of the sites they’ll tell you about are not things that are public. So the High Brown Fritillary site that I’ve seen them at most is not publicly known. And there’s no parking – well, there’s parking for one car I think and that’s it. And you get some great sightings. Whereas, I’ve been to the popular sites and never ever seen them.

So it is a bit of inside – and it’s about like it is in Yorkshire, people know, you know, Duke of Burgundy site we know about, but there are multiple others, but most of them are on private land. Same with the Pearl-Bordered Fritillary. We have – we declare one public one just to keep people away from all the others. But that’s always the best source.

There’s some wonderful books that people have written over the years about main sites, because some of them are just obvious. They’re owned by butterfly – or managed by [wildlife charity], so you turn up there you’re pretty much guaranteed to see what your target species is.

**INT: So then, in your local area do you have places that you like to visit regularly, in addition to your transect sites?**

P32: Yeah, definitely the back of where – we’ll do it this afternoon, we’ll go and take our dogs down there, because there’s a river down there, they can go swimming and stuff in it. And it’s just – it is so warm down there compared to anywhere else. It could easily be 10 degrees warmer than it is surrounded, because it’s a very very old valley, wooded on all sides, and it’s just very very warm. You wouldn’t even believe you’re in the same place sometimes. So there’s no wind down there at all. It has spectacular early orchids and stuff down there. And supposedly has otters down there. I’ve seen goosanders down there breeding. Kingfishers. Dippers.

It’s very unusual, particularly this part of the world, because there isn’t much woodland in [COUNTY] at all. There’s not a lot in [COUNTY] really, of this type. Old deciduous. It’s got spectacular displays of primroses in at the moment. Be a beautiful Brown – Duke of Burgundy site, if they were up this far. So that tends to be the main one. I’m trying to think if there’s – certainly, for butterflies that would be the one that would draw me.

00:30:00

And there’s walking round here, I mean, we have – I’ve seen Essex Skipper here. We’ve got a lot of Small and Large Skipper across the road, because the farmer doesn’t mow large areas of grass, so it’s great Skipper country. Burnet moths. I’m trying to think what else we’ve had over there.

**INT: [Over speaking] How long’s the Essex Skipper been up there?**

P32: Well the Essex Skipper’s in [build-up area] you see, it’s quite strong. So on our biodiversity site we’ve got a large population of Essex Skippers, found there in 2017, I think. So they were found the year before about two miles up the road, and then we found them on our site very -

**INT: [Over speaking] I’m totally out of touch with that because when I was down in [COUNTY] it was, like, at that point, I mean, that was 15 years ago now, but at that point it was moving through that area, so it’s – yeah.**

P32: It’s missed out most of [COUNTY]. Just appeared in this one place in [build-up area]. And nobody knows how. A lot of people have suggested it came up the A19, which is a big Corridor, lots of [unclear 00:31:06]. I don’t believe that, I mean, other people have suggested there was some hay moved, or something, that might have just had a few eggs in. But they’ve [unclear 00:31:12] really quickly. Because as I say, it’s four or five kilometres to our site, and we get good numbers of them on our site now, alongside the Small’s, obviously, it gives you a bit of brain ache trying to see them apart. [Unclear 00:31:24] data to tell them apart. But yeah, we get good numbers there.

We’ve had – we’ve got a little oak tree just outside our window here, we’ve had Purple Hairstreaks in there. And one day, just looked out and I thought, I can’t believe that. I found one a few years ago in another sycamore. We’ve got lots of old trees around our house and – so yeah, we’re just – and I say, good populations of White-letter Hairstreak. The only thing’s we’re missing are Brown Argus round here. We don’t have Gatekeepers this far north. So they stop about where you are. They don’t really come much further. Had a Wall for the first time in six years, I think, last year, so I’ve got a couple of those. No, I just – wherever I walk I’m always looking. Doesn’t matter where I am it’s -

**INT: Would you say it’s a daily activity then that you – would you say, it’s daily?**

P32: I’m in – almost, in permanent watch mode. My wife [unclear 00:32:21] we’ll be sitting eating tea because, again, Brimstones don’t come up here very often [unclear 00:32:25] and it’s, like, there’s a Brimstone, so I literally – we had a group of family in the house, all of a sudden I’ve gone, I’m outside, where’s the Brimstone. Because I’ve got – I don’t know what it is, I almost have sixth sense, wherever I am in the world, I can spot wildlife better than almost anybody. I’ve got – must have incredibly good peripheral vision for movement, or something. And even out beating guides that we’ve had many many times over the years, and it’s – so I can spot – even down in our garden, which is what? Probably 100 metres away, the wildflower area we’ve got. If I saw a – I could see a bee from here if there was a bee down there. And that’s how I saw the – have you ever come across the Small Yellow Underwing, about that big?

**INT: No.**

P32: Beautiful little moth, not very – not overly common up here. And I was stood in our kitchen and I saw it flying over there. Went over and it was the first time I’d ever recorded it up here.

**INT: I think you know don’t you, when you’ve seen something a bit different as well. Just by the way something’s flying and -**

P32: [Over speaking] It’s [unclear 00:33:26] they call it, isn’t it? Just its mannerism you know it’s not what you’re normally – your inner brain is used to. If it’s tuned into doing that all the time it’s – no, it just fascinates me. Has done all my life. As my father, and my father was a – or still is, I mean, he was one of Britain’s spider experts. So he knows his – is [Name] at [YORK] still?

**INT: I don’t know, to be honest, actually. I think – I haven’t come – heard his name -**

P32: For a while.

**INT: - in the last year or two. I think when – because he shared a lab with us when I was doing my PhD, and I think he retired down to the office, which was [Name], and [Name], and [Name], and I think [Name] died, he was Head of Department for – when the Biology Department first was set up. And I don’t know whether he’s still in there. But I know he was doing quite a lot of stuff on the Tansy beetle wasn’t he? That’s where I kept on hearing his name.**

P32: Yeah, that makes sense, I suppose. Yeah, well my – I think he took over from my father as the Secretary for the [wildlife research community]. And my dad knows [Name]. I don’t know how well, but – and that’s where it all started really. When I was a kid we had every eye spy book going and it was all about – and then we’ve been fortunate enough, we’ve travelled all over the world to see wildlife. There’s some amazing places and just to see whether it’s big cats, gorillas, orang-utans, polar bears, it’s -

**INT: So can you pinpoint what it was that made you actually start submitting those sightings of species then? Was it somebody suggested you do it?**

P32: I don’t know actually. That’s a really good question. What was it – I guess, part of me was wanting to add to the database of records that – I guess, I’d never really appreciated the importance of them until more recently. And, I guess, that’s what [wildlife charity]’s really brought that home to me. And, obviously – and from a bird side the eBird one that Cornell University, obviously – well, they have this enormous ornithological lab. It’s world famous these days. And they use their data for a lot of very useful things as well, I mean, their database is absolutely monstrous. It covers the whole world. And obviously, for keeping an eye on what species, and what’s going on in the world, it’s very powerful indeed. So I think it was probably, really, it was probably the advent of Apps and things, and good websites for uploading data too, was probably the thing that – recording stuff on paper’s never interested me.

And also, the other is the visual feedback. I’m a very visual person, which is why I went ahead and put the [COUNTY] Butterfly Atlas together, because that for me works in my brain. Doesn’t always work for everybody. I don’t like seeing things on paper, which are a bit static. I struggle with that. I want to interrogate data more and get more out of what we’ve done. So yeah, I think that’s what made – the advent of things like that were the things that really made a big difference to me. And being able to go back and say, quickly, have I already seen that? Where did I see? When did I see it? If I had to go back through a paper record I wouldn’t bother.

**INT: So do you do that interrogation of your own data on iRecord then? Can you -**

P32: Yeah, because you can, obviously, go into the website can’t you, and download all of your data, so that’s what I’ve done. I always go down and have a look at it in that way. Slightly irritating, because the one thing it doesn’t do is the number of adults – I’ve never found a way of downloading that. I don’t know what’s wrong with it. Maybe I’m missing something. But anyway, so that’s – and you can do the same thing with birds and stuff as well, so it’s – so I think – and I think the nicest thing about the iRecord it just takes so much of the effort away. If you’re standing there you say, X marks the spot, I’m standing here and I’m recording here. You don’t have to go back and do all that again, and again, and again. So I think it’s just very clever the way it’s been put together.

**INT: And do you think your – what motivates you has changed over time, as you’ve got more and more into doing recording?**

P32: Yeah, and again, I think that’s more the awareness of how important the records are. And I think what you guys are trying to do, it gets back to the resolution being more important. And that was a frustration when we were doing the Atlas, realising, particularly a lot of the older records, were done on 10k resolution, and you look at 10k on a map and thinking, well that could be somebody’s back garden or the middle of the sea, it’s – and there’s no reason why, with the capability of an App now, why you can’t be doing it to 10/20 metre resolution without any risk of being out.

I know with all – I ploughed through all the data from the vice county recorders to put the Atlas together. The number of wrong grid references in older datasets was horrible. People had got the 100k SD or SC letters wrong. They’d got the first three numbers, as quite common in grid reference, it’s got the first three - and so we ended up with something stuck out in the North Sea or something, and – but you wouldn’t get that with an App. It takes all that human error away. And I think that’s so important, particularly if you’re going to rely very heavily on the data if you’re looking at a finer and finer resolution.

**INT: So, what sort of things is it – so you do some kind of interrogation of the data yourself, in terms of looking at, what did I see last year, and when did I see it. Is there anything else that you use the data for?**

P32: Well, I guess, up until last year because – well, the next bit, I guess, during lockdown I taught myself how to use QGIS, so I can go to the next level and, obviously, plot all that data without any trouble. It would take me five minutes now. And, obviously, it took me a little while to learn it but – and, obviously, [unclear 00:39:39] did a lot of training as well, but I’d already taught myself most of it. I find that incredibly powerful. And obviously, that’s – that was part of my motivation for doing the online Atlas. Not just for me to be able to see all that data, because it was me and the five vice county recorders. Well actually, the only person who could see the whole of [COUNTY] was [Name], because he was the only person who held any of it.

00:40:00

And I thought, well this is wrong really. [Unclear 00:40:02] publish an annual report, which is a paper copy and the maps about that big [laughs] and there’s no reference point on the map, whether that’s [CITY], [CITY], whatever. I mean, people haven’t got a clue unless they know their – or [s/l figure 00:40:19] a ten square grid reference, which most people won’t.

So I thought, well there’s got to be a better way. And so I did QGIS and then decided, well QGIS doesn’t relate to the web, you need to do something completely different. So I talked to people like [Name], [wildlife charity]. She’s just left there, [JOB TITLE], [NAME]. I talked to [Name] [00:40:44] who was the – I presume he was probably a lot behind the iRecord stuff [unclear 00:40:50] now somewhere else. And he said, “I suggest you go this way.” And then I found a web developer who’d already done something similar but a bit more static for – and just thought, wow the power of what you can do today, without too much effort. We’ve got all the data, what can we do with it? And we’ve only done phase one. Phase two’s going to be all the flight period data, [unclear 00:41:09] and stuff, so the web developer’s working on that at the moment.

So that was what it is. I just, being a Scientist, I guess, data for me, drives me. I want to understand more. I want to find squares that nobody’s recorded in. I want to go and understand why that habitat does or doesn’t have records in it. And I found a few, for the first time I can see that. On our Atlas now there’s a square, actually, where my Yoga Teacher lives, nobody’s ever recorded it. And we did a walk with her a few weeks ago, and the countryside is amazing [unclear 00:41:41] 20 species of butterfly.

**INT: Why has it never been recorded before then?**

P32: Because nobody lives there.

**INT: Okay. That’s the problem in [COUNTY], isn’t it?**

P32: But it’s not private land. There are footpaths through it.

**INT: Yeah.**

P32: So that’s what I’m hoping that what we’ve done will drive people to go and do a bit more, and look at their local areas a bit more, and record -

**INT: [Over speaking] Yeah. Is that the kind of thing that you’re hoping that mapping will do then?**

P32: Yeah.

**INT: It’s part of [unclear 00:42:07] -**

P32: [Over speaking] For me, it was all about, how do we get the data available to our membership, so that they can go and look at what’s local to them. And actually, if they’re travelling a bit further, what might they see when they’re travelling to a certain area. What to keep an eye out for. And obviously, hotspots as well, because they’re, obviously – which, typically are, obviously, where the heavier recording is, but you can’t overcome that bias unfortunately.

**INT: And then, are you hoping that you’ll also be able to use it for looking at distribution changes and things like that, or is it more passing that level of analysis on to Head Office?**

P32: Well we could, it’s just a question of how much you put on that – obviously, it’s the data that everybody’s got. There’s no other data. But of course, because you’ve got 20 years worth of data, we’re going to modify it so, hopefully, we can animate it. So, literally, if you choose years 2000 to 2020 there’s an animation button, hopefully, going on it. So, literally, you will step through either year by year, or possibly even month by month. So you should be able to see changes over time. I mean, we haven’t quite got – whether we’re going to get there in this time – hopefully – but that’s one of the things I’ve put in the original proposal. So all that should be possible.

And even now, I’d not seen any Orange Tips, but in [COUNTY] there are probably quite a few out already. But hopefully, even if you had that much resolution you might start to see temperatures, and you might start to see them just starting to appear week after week as you go through [COUNTY], and stuff.

**INT: So it’s very much intended to be live update -**

P32: It’ll only be live from a previous years data point of view. It’s not going to be – not like the sightings site, which is live on the day, because obviously, that, you can go and see the maps on there and see where people have seen anything at any time. So the data from that, along with the data from iRecord, will all get uploaded into this Atlas once a year, at the end of the season. Just because it’s a bit of [s/l chew 00:44:08] if you wanted to do it every month. We could do it because there’s going to be an admin section and I can do, but we haven’t decided we’re going to do that. We might just wait for a whole years data and then upload it. Bearing in mind the sightings – site data will give you the – what’s happening immediately now, already on Google Maps. So we’ll want to try and keep the two separate in some respects, but the data will always go into the Atlas at the end of it.

**INT: Very good.**

P32: It’s going to be a heavy recording session, because it’s already going gangbusters already. So many people are using it.

**INT: Yeah. Has it gone down well then, people have – yeah.**

P32: Well I don’t know if you’re aware, it’s the one that [COUNTY] built. So we got in touch with [COUNTY] – I really like the [COUNTY] one. One or two people didn’t, but [COUNTY]’s uptake went through the roof when they launched it. And the guy who built it was happy to build ours for nothing. He was quite happy just to see it being used. So he modified it a lot for [COUNTY]. And [COUNTY]’s already overtaken [COUNTY] in the number of records it’s – because it’s got just a much bigger number of people. And of course, you get absolute resolution on there as long as somebody puts it – still relies on people putting the right grid reference in, because it puts a marker on the map for that species, and creates real time flight period data and everything on it as well.

**INT: Amazing. Very good.**

P32: It is, yeah. Very clever.

**INT: So do you get any – so your records, obviously, then at some point all get passed on to National [wildlife charity] and beyond. Do you get any feedback on what the data are then used for by those organisations?**

P32: Not really, only – I guess, I personally have because I talk to people like [NAME] and stuff, but most – I don’t think any members do, and it’s – I think it’s one of those things – many things – I’ve talked to [Name] about a few weeks back, is how, more of what the organisation’s doing needs to be publicised. Because they’re doing some fantastic stuff, and my guys are [unclear 00:46:13] they’re not doing this. And I said, “Well actually they are they’re just not communicating it very well.”

Said the same thing to – who’s the Head of – [NAME] – [Name], so I talk to him and [Name], the [JOB TITLE] who’s just come in from the [WILDLIFE CHARITY] – [Name] – and we were talking about tree planting, and the issues that it’s causing us in some places round here. And the willy nilly, just plant loads of trees, doesn’t mater what species they are, and it’s going to be on prime real estate for butterflies and other inverts, how do we – not going to say, prevent it, but how do we educate people.

But – so yeah, it’s only – I’m fortunate, because I’m in the position and I have the conversations with them, but most other people don’t know. So I have to try and disseminate then back to the Committee, but then it becomes more laborious, how do you feed that back to the membership? And I think that’s the – yeah, talking to [unclear 00:47:10] -

**INT: [Over speaking] Well I think it’s closing the loop to the people that collect the records initially, isn’t it? Because I – yeah, get a strong feeling that people submit those records and then, actually – unless they seek out that information, like you’re doing – don’t really receive any feedback as to what that data’s then used for.**

P32: No, and I think the only feedback, really, people get at the moment, which is why we’ll keep the paper Atlas that’s published every year, is, people like to see their name in print, that they were the first to see – there’s a bit of competition who’s the first to see a species. Who’s the first to, I don’t know, whatever, you know, peak numbers of things. And it gets a lot of people named and noticed, for some reason that matters to some people. I don’t quite get it myself, but – so, there’s not an anonymity to the records. Whereas, obviously, with the sort of thing that we’ve just done with the web App, it’s completely anonymous, there’s no recorder names in there or anything. It’s not even in the data that goes into the database.

So I think – the thing is, it drives different people, you know, some people will religiously just go to the same places every single year, that’s why some people, I think, love doing transects. I must admit I started to find the transect walking a little bit of a chore, because I’m a person who, on holiday, will never go back to the same place [unclear 00:48:35] going back to the same place, doing the same recording, week in week out, really irks me a little bit. As much as I love seeing the change over the summer, towards the end of it I thought, phew, it became a bit too collecting numbers. And I’d rather spend a bit more time just looking and watching and observing. And yeah, both the transects are – and I love both the places, they’re fantastic, that – well they – both of them are about 45/50 minutes to walk, so they’re not short. And it’s a good 20/25 minutes drive, which I know a lot of people do.

**INT: Yeah, it’s a big commitment, isn’t it?**

P32: It is, yeah.

**INT: And you – you’re always, I guess, likely to choose the best weather day to do your transects, and then you – that means you can’t go to other places, doesn’t it?**

P32: Well that’s always a restriction, yeah. I mean, my wife, although she’s retired, she still works a couple of days a week, because she’s a [JOB TITLE], and she wants to carry on doing it. So it’ll be tying in and praying the weather’s good on the days she works, otherwise it’ll disrupt what we want to do elsewhere. Even last year, the weather wasn’t great, certainly up here, to do the transect that’s on the coast. Some days it was lovely here, you’d get up there and the wind was howling. And I thought, well I’m not going to see anything because everything’s going to be pressed to the floor. And sure enough, I hardly saw anything. Whereas, I know if the following day it had been lovely and warm I’d have seen tons.

00:50:00

So some days I think I went out when I really shouldn’t have done, because it wasn’t worth it. I should really stick hard and fast to the temperature and the timings that the transect suggests. And I’m going to do that this year. Because I’ve not been out yet, although, we’ve not really seen much around here. It’s just too cold. And the coastal one will be very cold.

**INT: Yeah, we often have – my husband’s parents will leave [county] and get here and it’s glorious here. And they’ll say, it was 10 degrees colder and foggy.**

P32: That’s the problem, even, just a bit further north from here, [county] and up in [Town], my brother who lives up there, the sea fret and stuff that comes in can be really quite bad at times. We don’t get it here.

**INT: [Over speaking] Even just going from their house in [TOWN] out to the coast, can be very very different. So are you the kind of person that would take up a recommendation of somewhere to visit to record if somebody asked you to, or do you like to do your own thing?**

P32: That’s a good question. I think I would. If it was new to me I would definitely be interested in going.

**INT: New, in terms of site or species?**

P32: Site. For me, now, you see, it’s not going to [unclear 00:51:29] for me, now it’s not likely to be about species, because I will have seen everything. And actually, because I spent so many hours in the field studying these things I’m not going to top some of the sightings I’ve seen, unless I’m incredibly lucky. So it’s more about going just to enjoy and see something different. That’s why doing the [LONG DISTANCE ROUTE]’s been great, because we’re walking bits I’ve never walked before, yet they’re 20 minutes/30 minutes away. It’s just so nice doing that, sharing it with somebody as well.

**INT: Yeah, so are you -**

P32: [Over speaking] So yeah, I think I would.

**INT: - usually going out with somebody when you go out recording?**

P32: No, actually – well, I guess, if I’m doing casual stuff we’re probably walking the dogs. But if I’m doing my transects – although, [Name]’s come with – my wife’s called [Name] by the way – she’s come with me quite a few times just to get out and walk around as well. She’ll probably hold the clipboard and record the stuff while I’m spotting, because when it’s busy it’s quite handy having a second person with you. So I don’t think these days – in the past it might have been about the species, because if I haven’t seen it, it will really drive me to go somewhere. Whereas, now, it won’t be about the species it’ll be more likely be about the site.

**INT: And would you be willing to go to any sort of site, or would you want some guarantee that it’s a nice site where you’re likely to see something? Or, would you be motivated if somebody said, we just need some records from this area?**

P32: I think the latter. I think I’d be quite – particularly if there’s no records from somewhere I’d be more than happy to do that, because, as I said, I appreciate the importance of data and understanding that in area. I mean, yeah, going back to where I worked, nobody had ever recorded on that area, and then we suddenly discover we’ve got an absolute hotspot for butterflies in the north of England. And we’d done nothing – well we – it’s not quite true, we’d planted a few plants but it hasn’t brought any of these species in, they’re just there. So we just happen to go – because all of sudden somebody said, “Well why haven’t we got Dingy Skipper?” And I looked and I thought, well we haven’t been out.

I only got involved in it about three or four years ago, and other people had been doing it for a few previous years, I just didn’t have the time to go out. And they just weren’t – they didn’t know what they were looking for, and they weren’t necessarily going out regularly, and they weren’t going out at the right times of year. And so I just said, “Right we’ll go out, we’ll look for Dingy Skipper.” Dingy Skipper everywhere.

Yeah, what else was there? Grayling, they’d already spotted because there quite a few Grayling on the site, so we saw those egg laying. What are the others? I’ve got pictures – [Name]’s pictures, I have a frame of his – the butterflies – on our wall. Yeah, Brown Argus, told you that story. The White-letter Hairstreak story, again, I’d been out to site near [TOWN] way, which is quite famous for White-letter Hairstreak, they come very low down. And I was just walking round the site, pointing to two trees, which I thought were Witch Elm, and I was telling people the story of where I’d been the day before. And said, “If you look over the top of the trees you’ll see them flying around.” I said, “These might – I think these are Witch Elm,” and we looked up and there it is, there’s three White-letter Hairstreaks going – and this is in the – right in the middle of industrial [build-up area], and there’s two trees, which at the time we thought were Witch Elm, and turned out not to be. And four years on the trot, in exactly the same place, and -

**INT: That sounds like another Masters project, potentially.**

P32: Yeah, we’re really – we really don’t understand that one at all. Everybody’s completely clueless. It’s – because it just doesn’t have the flower bud at the beginning of the year, the Alder doesn’t, so it can’t bury it in there and feed on that flower bud, so we don’t understand it at all. I really don’t.

So yeah, I mean, I think, going back to your point, the site that I record on now has taught me, you never know what you’re going to expect. You really don’t. And that, for me, I mean, I’ve just written an article on it, actually, it’s going in the next Branch Newsletter, which will be out in a couple of weeks. And it just blows you away when you realise it doesn’t matter where you are in the country, this could be the grottiest piece of land you’ve ever seen, but in the right conditions it can support so many things.

We’ve had, I think, there are four or five species of Shield bug with only the second records in this part of the country. Water Stick Insect, which I’d never seen before, we found in one of the ponds there.

**INT: Yeah, when you start looking you find things, don’t you? And I think -**

P32: [Over speaking] I think that’s something that I brought home by my father really. It was, this country is very heavily recorded. So he worked in the [species recoRding community] in [county], when it first got set up. And so it was all on cards, and stuff. But he said, yeah, massive numbers of records. But there’s always more. And you only have to look on the NBN database and realise how poorly recorded certain things are. And it just takes somebody with a bit of nouse to go and look at – so we brought entomologists onto the site now. We’ve brought botanists onto the site. We’ve brought all sorts of experts at different times of the year, just to keep looking at stuff, because we find something new every single time. And we’re not heavily recording on it yet, you know, we haven’t done a bio blitz on it, particularly, in the way some people do.

**INT: And is part of the motivation about protecting the site, potentially, from development, or something like that in the future?**

P32: Yeah, and I’ve had this really fine line to walk, bearing in mind I was a senior – well, one of the most senior managers on the site. And also, not – this piece of land is – I know how much it cost, it was in the millions when they bought it, and they’ve been trying to sell it. But the fortunate bit is that we’ve kept the – the biodiversity site is actually an old railway site – railway line, so it’s down in a dip. So again, another beautiful microclimate, and they can’t do anything with that part of the site because, actually, there’s a row of houses back on to it. It will always be a greenbelt [unclear 00:57:37]. So we don’t do much on the 75 acres of site. We only do something on the four acres.

We haven’t even touched the biodiversity on the rest of the site, I mean, it’s enormous. But actually, fortunately, most of the butterflies seem to be on the bit that we’ve adopted. But I think, more than ever, as I’ve said, that site has made me realise how important anywhere is that’s under recorded, because you just never know what you’re going to find.

There’s a lovely piece of land, which is again, real scrub, right on the [River] in [county]. And a woman I’d been in touch with, she wrote to me and said, ‘oh yeah, we’ve just found Brown Argus on here.’ And they found Grayling on it as well. And it’s just next door to [county] football ground. And again, it’s just scrubland.

**INT: A place I know too well.**

P32: You’ve not been forced to stand on the terraces have you?

**INT: Occasionally [laughs]. When I first met my husband he did have a season ticket there, but he doesn’t -**

P32: Oh did he? Yeah, right.

**INT: - have one anymore [laughs].**

P32: Yes, I used to go a few times. My brother-in-law and father – father-in-law, were both season ticket holders for many years.

**INT: Well, I think I’ve taken up plenty of your time.**

P32: No, that’s fine. It’s good to talk to you. Fascinating project. It’ll be really interesting to see where it goes. So what’s its timeframe?

**INT: So it’s two years, and it started October last year, so we’ve got – yeah, probably, towards the end of next year. So the aim is to have an initial version of an App that we can test with people this summer.**

P32: Oh wow, okay, that’s pretty quick then.

**INT: Yeah.**

P32: And who’s building the App? Is that [Name] or -

**INT: It’s [Name], actually. [Name], yeah. And then – but it’s very much going to be like a – hopefully, what we’re trying to do is co-design it with people. So we’ll – the aim is that we’ll have something that’s very very simple, and we’ll engage with a selection of the recording community to say, what do you like about this? What don’t you like about this? Is this useful? Is this not useful? So it’s very much going to be developed in iterations where people can give us feedback. So it will be useful for the people who are using it as well as the people that are using the data that’s collected through it.**

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**And then, we would probably do a bigger update over the winter, and have more final version to launch with a bigger collection of people next spring. And then we’ll do some final edits over next summer.**

P32: So how’s this going to mesh in with things like iRecord, things like iNaturalist, all that sort of stuff? Because, obviously, there’s more and more people trying to do more and more Apps, aren’t there?

**INT: Yeah, so the idea is that we won’t actually be collecting any data in our App. So we will be giving recommendations to people. And then – and so it’s more like a tool that people can use before they go recording somewhere. So it will be more about when you’re planning a visit, or you want to go for a walk somewhere, it will be something that will tell you, like, suggest places that you could go.**

**And it’s – it will be personalised as well. So if you sign up to it, then you’ll be able to put in information like, where you live, and how far you want to travel from your house, and what kind of species you’re interested in, and things like that. So it’ll give personalised recommendations.**

**What we were talking about when we had our last meeting was that we would be, potentially, able to link it with iSpot accounts and iRecord accounts, for example, so that people could draw their data into it from those places, so that they could visualise data in it as well. But it won’t be that people will record -**

P32: Record on it. Okay.

**INT: Yeah. So that slightly gets around that issue of it being another recording platform, because that’s the last thing we need. But it does create us a problem, in that, we – it creates us a problem, in terms of how we give feedback to people. Because we can’t see that somebody’s gone out and actually recorded in that place. So that’s the kind of thing that we’re grappling with at the moment, is – so the basic idea will be that, here are suggestions of places that you could go to.**

**And then what, ideally, what we need to do is for people to come back into and say, yes, I did go to that place, or, no, I didn’t go to that place, and why. And so, how we link all those things up, and how we encourage people to come back and keep on using it, and telling us where they’ve gone to, or where they haven’t gone to and why, that’s what the challenge is at the moment. But like I say -**

P32: [Over speaking] Yeah, it would be neat if somebody recorded on iRecord and they just could tick a button, yes, I’ve found this on whatever. Or somehow there’s a feedback into your App [unclear 01:02:39] -

**INT: Exactly, yeah. Yes, that was one thing that we were thinking about, whether we could do that. Yeah, I visited this place because I got the recommendation through, whatever our Apps going to be called.**

P32: I’m trying to think if there’s some of the Apps that I use - I’m trying to think of the bird one, the one that I’ve used. Because one of them is fantastic because it does allow you to download a local – wouldn’t matter for things like this in this country, so it’s probably not relevant – you, literally, download just your area of data, and so you can actually – you get an idea of a species list in just your area, rather than the whole country. And it wouldn’t be a very big file, I guess, in the UK. Because it means then, this part of the world you’re not going to go and search for Silver-studded Blue or [unclear 01:03:23], or whatever. But if you went somewhere else, locally, you’d see that list. I think it’s on the Cornell one. I mean, it’s – I don’t know whether you’ve seen it, eBird is just quite incredible as a site. And of course, those tend to – they go on to your location and just tell you what’s within 5/10/15/20 kilometres, depending what you set your radius as, and highlights them on a map.

**INT: Yes, it’s interesting because it’s a fine line as well – so we were – one of the modellers was saying in our last meeting, that she was a bit nervous about saying to people – so she was a bit nervous about the recommendation being, could you go to this place because you might see X, Y, and Z species, because she said that, potentially, then creates more bias in the data because that’s what people -**

P32: [Over speaking] They will be hunting for that species, yeah.

**INT: Yeah, and not looking for other – because, I mean, ideally, so this is what the modellers were saying, ideally what you want is, like what you do, for everybody to create a list – so I’ve been to this place and this is everything that I’ve seen. So you know what people haven’t – so you know that people have looked for something and they’ve not seen it, because that’s the only real way of getting negatives or -**

P32: Yes, it wasn’t present but I saw the following, yeah.

**INT: Yeah. Exactly. So yeah, that’s what we’re hoping that the recommendations will be. So, go to this site and make a full list of the butterflies you see or [unclear 01:05:06] you see, or whatever species groups. But yeah, how it sits alongside all the other myriad recording platforms. And the idea is that, ideally, it will be agnostic to any recording platform. So you get the recommendation through our App, but you can do your recording anywhere.**

**But the challenge that presents for us, is, getting feedback on what people are doing, yeah.**

P32: [Over speaking ] Feedback on, yeah. Yeah, I don’t understand, you know, going back to the App thing, I get contacted – I’ve got another – a South African company contacting me about using some of photographs of some wildlife I took over there. They said, “We’ll send you a trial version of our App.” And I think this Apps the same as half a dozen I’ve already got on my phone, apart from, you’re covering birds, mammals, and amphibians at the same time, rather than just one of them. It must have cost them a fortune to develop.

**INT: Yeah, I know, yeah. The motivation for that kind of thing is a bit strange isn’t it? Because you think – especially with things like iNaturalist that you can use anywhere, and a perfectly good tool. Then what is the motivation for another one?**

P32: I don’t really want another App. I’ve already got my lists sat in three other Apps for birds already. So, I mean, I said, well you can’t upload it. Oh, we’ll change that we can upload it now and I think, well -

**INT: Yeah.**

P32: Anyway. I shall let you go. It’s a Saturday. I’m sure your family are wondering where you are.

**INT: Yes, we are. Somebody – we’re just selling our campervan, somebody’s coming to pick it up. We’re selling an old one and getting a new one.**

P32: My wife’s been trying to convince me that we need one. We, both of us are very tall, and with two big dogs as well it’s -

**INT: Yeah. No.**

P32: I said, no, give that a miss at the moment.

**INT: We have a campervan for me, and then my husband sleeps in the tent.**

P32: That’s not a bad way of doing it, yeah.

**INT: I will email [Name], probably [unclear 01:07:03] -**

P32: [Over speaking] Yeah, that would be great. I mean, I’d love to continue the story that he started, and you started, and stuff. And I think there’s some mileage in it, I really do. I don’t know what the answer will be. And, particularly, my worry is – well it’s not a worry, it’s just understanding, with the two populations now, what appear to be butting up against each other, the recording of them in the future is going to get very muddied, unless we really start to understand, are there hybrids? Are they going to survive as two individual so called species? Or, they may already be hybrids – well, the Brown Argus may well be a hybrid already. It probably is, from previous work, but – and what does that mean for both species, really? And quite a long on running story now, probably. I know there’ll be a lot of people keen here and, obviously, particularly when you’re getting over to [VICE COUNTY] where the Brown Argus is butting up against a Northern Brown Argus as well, so it’s – the [COUNTY] AND [REGION] branch concern. Not so much on the west coast when we did the mapping. The Brown Argus is miles away from running into the Northern Brown Argus there. [CITY]’s in the way. But yeah, do let me know. I’ll be very interested.

**INT: Yeah, I will do. And it might be that he says, that the expertise now sits more in [CITY] or [CITY], given that, what other people are doing, because I don’t know what he’s necessarily done, particularly on the genetic side of stuff, because we never really did that in York, it was more down -**

P32: No, it does give the impression, I’m pretty sure he went to [CITY] when he asked the question.

**INT: Yeah, so it might be that –**

P32: [Over speaking] [Unclear 01:08:36] be the genetics now.

**INT: Yeah, so it might be that it just gets passed on there. But it’s useful to have your connections, in terms of sampling and stuff like that, potentially.**

P32: Well exactly, you know, we’ve got all that. And, obviously, access to sites will be easy enough to arrange as well. It’s just a bit further away for a student who’s based in [CITY] to come up on the [laughs] -

**INT: Yeah. Okay. Thank you so much for your time.**

P32: No problem at all. Take care.

**INT: Okay. Take care. Bye.**

P32: Bye.

**Audio ends: [01:09:07]**