**CONFIDENTIAL**

Date Transcribed: 21st May 2020

INT:

P23:

**INT: That’s all working ok. So, my first question is how long have you been doing any sort of recording and how did you start?**

P23: Sure, let me think about it. I’ve probably been recording for nine or ten years I’d say, for some extent. I grew up in [county] and very much introduced to natural history by my parents and then went to University in [CITY], stayed in [CITY], worked in advertising and had a massive breakdown, so it wasn’t for me. Then, I went to work for the [wildlife charity] and during that time it kind of rekindled my love for history and I got really into fungi and I got back into birds and things. Fungi, I think, particularly at the time. I wasn’t really thinking about recording at the time but I started using a website called Wild About Britain at that time and they were very helpful in id-ing fungi from photographs. As a complete newbie, I didn’t know all the things you have to know about a fruiting body to get an ID and I really was starting from the beginning. Finding quite an unusual species of earth star there and someone being like, you should definitely record that. That was probably about it, the first time I got into recording and then it grew from there, I got further down the line, I got massively into inverts and flora much more, the whole thing. So, that’s pretty much how it all started.

**INT: I’ve not heard of that app.**

P23: It’s not an app, it’s just a forum, really. I haven’t used it in years and years and years but at the time, that’s what I was using. From that, I moved onto I Spot and used that for quite a few years.

**INT: That forum wasn’t anything to do with recording?**

P23: Helping you get these ideas and having people that were experts or quite knowledgeable in that field saying you should record this, this is why and this is the way you might want to do it. That was the introduction to it, I suppose.

**INT: I suppose motivating for you then?**

P23: Yes.

**INT: Somebody thinks that your record is valuable.**

P23: Yes, exactly that.

**INT: What sort of species do you record on now, is it anything and everything?**

P23: I don’t record on a huge amount, I don’t record as much as I should do but I am always intending to get better at that. I think if something is unusual for an area or scarce, I’ll record it. Equally, I use twitter quite a lot and particularly with true bugs and so on, [NAME], the [CITY] bug recorder, he’s really active on twitter, he’s really helpful. So, sometimes I’ll say to him can you please record that. He’s always putting something on Irecord, that’s why I put something on Irecord if he says so or it might just be something that I found in one of my books is a bit on the scarce side, I’ll put it in one of my books.

**INT: Your recording activity is mainly around going out doing and looking for things anyway?**

P23: Yes. A walk in a particular place, I’ve always got my eyes open and seeing what I find, taking pictures as well. That’s how I generally do it. I think, with [Name] as well, the way that I have interacted with him is with [Farm], outside London, which is quite close to where I used to live. They saw what was happening with that and it was a potential for [TOWN COUNCIL] and trying to have a football training ground there and it’s actually the site of a lot of value for biodiversity so I thought I can get involved with that so I’d go there and record whatever I could find, flora inverts, birds, fungi. They sent a spreadsheet to one of [farm] people and they were happy to make records that way. So, I did that as well.

**INT: Did that do any good in terms of protecting the site?**

P23: I’d like think so. There’s definitely been some good news, things have certainly been delayed, nothing’s happened yet and it’s gathered pace since then, there’s more people and they’re aware. It can’t hurt. Even just for people who don’t know anything about natural history, when you see this great big list of inverts or what have you, or even Latin names that won’t mean anything to you, it can’t hurt if you don’t know anything about that sort of thing.

**INT: What kind of geographical area do you cover with your recording?**

P23: I live in central [Town], so very much the coast and the town very locally, down to the north coast, bit of inland reservoirs, that sort of thing. Coastal, I’d say coastal.

**INT: How do you plan where you’re going?**

P23: Generally, I decide with my partner, he’s the driver, he’s very patient, he does like natural history but he’s not a fungi person particularly and he doesn’t like me spending too long on anything.

**INT: I set up for a walk with my husband and I’m like something’s just flown ahead!**

P23: That’s how it tends to go, there’s an element of that. I will think seasonally though, I was very excited about going to a particular spot last year that just had tonnes and tonnes of sea holly and I had a lovely Mayday last year and it was just covered in inverts, butterflies, bees, I’m looking forward to it. I’ve got in my mind, if the weather is the same this May, I’m going back.

**INT: Is it sometimes around a particular species if you want to see a particular species?**

P23: Sometimes. Certainly with birds it can be. [PLACE] have got all this amazing flora that you don’t necessarily get anywhere else and that’s something that I love to look at. There’s so much interest wherever you go, especially all the flora around the coast, and it’s a treasure trove pretty much anywhere. It’s really exciting and through the seasons as well. Now, we get into spring and I know I’m going to find something that’s a little bit tasty.

**INT: Every week is it what you do with your weekend?**

P23: Yes, so at least one weekend day and a couple of afternoons in the week when I can, or a bit of the garden as well.

**INT: So are you recording in the garden as well? Do you do moth trapping or anything?**

P23: I do have moth traps, but I haven’t used it in a while as I think a rat has chewed it, and I’m scared, so in theory I do moth trapping. I’ll get back to that a little bit. Just being in the garden, I garden a lot, looking to see what’s around and noting the dates for the first dragonfly or anything. My latest thing is my cat, he likes to do his business in the garden sometimes, and for sometimes last year and some of this year, they are full of beetles. I’m determined, the way I work with that, is try and get some decent pictures and put that on twitter, to see if we can get an ID down and probably put it on irecord.

**INT: That’s really interesting because you wouldn’t think cat poo would be the most nutrient rich…**

P23: It’s absolutely full of them in some cases.

**INT: It must mean there’s healthy populations. It’s a sign of a healthy ecosystem.**

P23: Hopefully so.

**INT: You don’t do any kind of verification of records or anything like that?**

P23: Just through I spot. If I do put something on there and I have interest, I will add that to the comments if its confirmed on twitter.

[Timestamp 00:10:07]

**INT: You don’t verify anyone else’s records?**

P23: No. I don’t tend to put really tentative stuff on ispot. I tend to use it when..

**INT: You’ve almost got there?**

P23: Yes.

**INT: It’s hard isn’t it, I saw this bee in the garden and I put a really dodgy picture of it on I naturalist. What do I put? Bee?**

P23: Just bee, start with something!

**INT: Then it didn’t get any response and I thought, what’s the best thing to do, suggest something even if it’s wrong?**

P23: Suggest something that’s way off and then someone wouldn’t be able to resist responding to you.

P23: It’s funny how people can get so prissy about id-ing and who has id’d first. I remember when I first starting using ispot, I found this fungi in beach woodland somewhere in Surrey. It must have been an owl or a rat pellet and these fruity bits growing from the bony bits in the pellet and because it’s so distinctive, they can be really quite scarce. When it’s scarce, you don’t want to call it and I put it on ispot as a really tentative thing. Two people came on and someone is having a go at someone else, you put up your ID when someone has already guessed it! I’m going off in a tangent now. I think being a woman can be harder in some of those communities. Whether that’s me, but.

P23: A surprising amount of male ego.

**INT: The more specialists the better, but there does tend to be. A bit like hierarchy isn’t it?**

P23: Definitely.

**INT: Talking of that, do you have any concerns about recording or visiting sites on your own?**

P23: No, that’s very much something of the moment with things that are happening abroad and in the UK, but I’ve never had an issue personally, I’ve never felt unsafe, I’m lucky. I’m not going to change any of my behaviours based on what’s happened recently because I feel safe enough to not have to do so.

**INT: Are there any types of site that you don’t like to visit or any sites that you’d like to visit but something stops you from doing it?**

P23: Sure. Just not driving, nothing more sinister. No, I don’t think so. I do feel quite safe wherever I go, whether it’s a woodland. I think it’s because I’m best I've seen on

**Audio ends: [00:36:41]**