**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Interviewer(s): INT

Respondent(s):

**INT: Okay, so the first question is, how long have you been recording and how did you start, what got you into it?**

RES: Since 1999 when a meeting at a dinner party with somebody trapped moths, I said will you come and put the moths up in my garden and she did and I was amazed at what was there the following morning.

**INT: So, that was it?**

RES: And that was me, that was me smitten.

**INT: Was it, immediately?**

RES: Yes, yes so I made my own moth trap.

**INT: I was going to say did you buy a moth trap but no, you made your own.**

RES: I've never bought a moth trap.

**INT: And do you just do moths, do you do anything else?**

RES: I record all sorts of things, if it moves I record it.

**INT: So, how did it evolve from moths into other species groups then?**

RES: Well, like a lot of people I started off on birds and birds are easy aren't they and I thought moths were too difficult, I mean proper people evolve more than moths don't they, proper people evolve into flies and clever things but I've got stuck with moths. I do things when I've got time like beetles and flies and things but I find them too time consuming, you can't be an expert in everything, I'd love to be. What I thought when I retired, the year of retirement I would try and find 1000 species in my garden in a year and if you have all the time in the world you can do that quite easily whereas I got bogged down I ended up about 900 and something in the end.

**INT: Oh, so close.**

RES: But if I had all the time in the world I'd have found everything.

**INT: So, you had that interest in birds before the moths then?**

RES: Yes, I've always been interested in everything wildlife.

**INT: Okay, and you submitted those bird records?**

RES: Yes, yes.

**INT: But then you moved onto the moths and as soon as you started trapping the moths were you submitting records?**

RES: Yes, yes straight away.

**INT: And what's your kind of, your kind of patch, what would you call that, do you record far and wide or do you record close to home?**

RES: Well, I record in my garden every night except when I'm trapping somewhere else. We trap at local nature reserves around here and occasionally a bit further afield.

**INT: So, but it tends to be close to home does it?**

RES: Most of that yes, because we're quite lucky here I mean we're on quite a secure site so I can go out and leave a generator running overnight and hope that nobody's going to nick it and I'm touching wood that nobody has done yet but there’s always a danger. We've got some nice secure MOD sites where we can leave it and lock doors and things so you know its places where very few people roam at night, so there are places a lot in Yorkshire where you can't do that.

**INT: Yes, people will be attracted by the bright light and think what's going on in there.**

RES: Well, I don't know if interviewed [Name]yet but he left a generator running at [SITE] last year and it was nicked so, somebody came with chain cutters.

**INT: Oh really, they knew it was there then.**

RES: They could see the lights from where they were, yes.

**INT: Gosh, yes. So, yes we'll come onto that but what kind of motivates, what motivated you to start recording and has your motivation changed over time? What is it that kind of drives you to do it?**

RES: I don't know, it's a combination of things really, its finding new things, it's finding things in places where you don't expect them to be, it's trapping in different places and filling in dots on maps, I like filling in dots on distribution maps, that's always good fun.

**INT: So, moving on from that then, how do you choose where to go and record? Do you have a strategy over the year of places that you're going to visit, or is it week by week that you think let's go here or there?**

RES: Week by week, I haven’t trapped at so and so for a while, let's go put some traps up there.

**INT: So, you kind of have a list -**

RES: If people ask and say will you come and trap here for us, yes fine and there might be a [NATURALIST SOCIETY] outings or something but there weren't any last year but you might have a [NATURALIST SOCIETY] new outing in some far flung bit of [COUNTY] which has never seen a moth trap, so we'll go off there and that's all good fun.

**INT: Yes, and who are the types of people that are making requests of you to record in particular places?**

RES: Nature managers in particular, a chap has just got in touch with me from the [Park], I don't know if you've heard of that place, it's open to the public now but he's got interesting moths he wants somebody to come and trap moths a few times a year and all sorts of places.

**INT: And are there, do you ever kind of turn down a request, are there places that you're not keen to go to?**

RES: Usually it's geographical, I mean if it's somebody from [COUNTY] saying I want somebody to come and look at an area of land they'll try and find somebody that's a bit closer to them.

**INT: Yes, and then in terms of filling in dots on maps, how do you go about doing that? What's the kind of thought process or the process you follow there in terms of targeting recording?**

RES: It's just going and seeing what's there really, I like trapping in different places.

**INT: So, is it focused on particular species or is it just areas that have not got many records of anything?**

RES: Areas which haven't got any records are good, I mean in the annual report you'll see every year I do a map every 10 kilometres square showing how many species are on each square and any unrecorded squares are always worth targeting.

**INT: Yes.**

RES: So, I try and get other people to do that, I try and point people in the direction you know, there's a bit square over there, the worst recorded 10km square which is completely in [COUNTY] is the [civil parish], I mean trying to get somebody to go up [civil parish] is a holiday cottage or something but nobody’s taken me up on that yet, I might have to go and do it myself.

**INT: So, is that just very remote, someone would have to carry a moth trap a long way to be able to trap there?**

RES: Well, not if you hired a holiday cottage but if you were doing that then you'd have to speak to some landowner or do something, yes.

**INT: Yes, so how do you, how receptive do you find people when you make requests of them to go to particular places or have you kind of got your trusted group of people that you know will be receptive?**

RES: There's people that do and some people don't, so it's no problem.

**INT: Yes, and what, so the people that are not keen why do you think that is? They just like to record in their own, the places that they're familiar with.**

RES: It's much easier to record in your own garden or places near you but if you ask me, if you want to see different species then you need a generator and head out into the countryside, and some people really do this big time and some people don't, some people are just happy in their garden. That's fine, it's one of these hobbies you can do at whatever level you want.

**INT: Yes, exactly, yes. And so, whenever you're trapping you're making a full list of what you see then, do you ever do any kind of single species targeted recording?**

RES: Well, you might take some pheromones and look for a clear wings or something or an emperor moth, that's targeting particular species isn't it otherwise you're just seeing what's about. It's pointless just going looking for one species because you never find it, you always find something else.

**INT: You never see the thing you actually want to see.**

RES: Not usually, no.

**INT: And then do you, so you get landowners making requests of you at particular places to go but other than that, are you just kind of using your own data or the county data to work out where to go?**

RES: Well, you get things like the forestry commission people want, a couple of years ago they wanted me to look at [Forest] which is towards the [VALLEY], they wanted to know what records there were from there and I said there aren't any, would you like me to have a look? So, they gave me a key to the gates and I pop along there a couple of times a year to have a look if there's something, so.

**INT: And does that lead to conversations with landowners about management and things like that?**

RES: It can do, yes.

**INT: So, you kind of, you're not just collecting the data it's actually being used to -**

RES: It's important to give feedback to whoever, I mean if you're tracking on MOD land I try and give feedback to the MOD, I'm on the MOD conservation committee and it's very important that they know what's on their land. I went to a place called [army training area] which is just north of [TOWN] which is a wonderful location with limestone grassland that they train on and I'm hoping to go there this weekend. We trap all, we found I think four species new for [COUNTY] there, we got one species which is the only place in the UK you get it, so you know unless the MOD know about this, so the feedback is terribly important and in most cases they really love it. And nature reserve managers love to know what's on the nature reserves.

**INT: And it goes beyond just giving them lists of species, do you kind of give them some interpretation of that list as well?**

RES: Oh yes, very much so.

**INT: And do you find that having that conversation with people then they're more willing for you to come back and do more recording or?**

RES: Yes, possibly, yes.

**INT: And then, I mean you do a lot with the data obviously in terms of processing the data and for the whole county, so not just your own, do you analyse your own data separately say for your moth trap that you have at home, do you keep those records separately and look at trends over time, things like that?**

**[0:10:20.6]**

RES: Yes, it's easy just to extract my own records, yes.

**INT: And then obviously you produce the report for the county, do you then and then you pass your data onto, all of that data onto [wildlife charity], is that right, yes?**

RES: [unclear 0:10:37.0], yes.

**INT: And then do you get any feedback from them in terms of how that data's being used, what it's being used for?**

RES: Well yes I've got, I'm in regular correspondence with [Name], yes.

**INT: So, what sort of things does he tell you about the use of that data? Is it about producing trends and distribution maps and things like that?**

RES: Well, if you look at things like that state of the nation’s moth [unclear 0:11:05.2] come out I mean it's all in there isn't it, I mean [COUNTY] is a huge chunk of England so you're looking at all that and I don't know what percentage of England [COUNTY] is but it's got to be 10% or something so I feel responsible for 10% of the country really.

**INT: And then so that's kind of the maps, do you get any feedback on how that data's used in any kind of decision making or you know, government consultations or anything along those sort of lines?**

RES: Well, it's not really about that is it and I think, no really no, I don't think I have any influence on the government, no.

**INT: But, and so you're not really interested in what that data's used for beyond the point that it gets to producing an atlas or something like that, you kind of -**

RES: Well just producing the atlas is a huge thing in itself isn't it and that's got run offs of that, and as I say the state of for instance larger moths has got big run offs there because that in itself, that document will advise further bodies won't it really and actually indirectly it'll advise the government I suppose really, so I'm responsible for a part of that, yes.

**INT: Do you feel that responsibility then? Do you feel like it's a -**

RES: It's good fun.

**INT: It's fun, yes.**

RES: Yes, if I can shake a few things up its particularly good fun.

**INT: You wouldn't do it if it wasn't fun I guess because it's an awful lot of work isn't it.**

RES: Most of it yes. When I say like for the [protected site] I'm on the [protected site] Butterfly and Moth Action Group and they've got their agenda and I've got my agenda and the two don't always coincide which is great fun really so I like making trouble in that group.

**INT: So, what's your agenda then?**

RES: Well, they're hamstrung on the focusing, the [protected site] lot have to send a report in every year on bat species and the bat species list is terribly outdated and irrelevant to the [protected site] and full of species which don't occur in the [protected site] or are as rare as hens teeth in [protected site] compared to for example in the lowlands of [COUNTY]. So, I say every year that this is completely irrelevant, it's not relevant to the land management in the [protected site] so I've just produced them a big document this year on things that really are relevant and I've shaken things up a bit so I hope things will happen.

**INT: Yes.**

RES: I just like making trouble.

**INT: Oh dear, well I think we've rattled through all of my questions, so I guess the other thing is would, so you are to some extent responding to requests of places to go to, are there other organisations that you would be willing to respond to requests from or are you happy to do your own thing?**

RES: There aren't enough hours in the day, I can't adequately respond to, I can't trap in all the places I want to trap anyway, I have other interests, I have a family life and even with all this so called extra time in lockdown it didn't work like that, so and retirement isn't a time where you have more time, in retirement you have less time to do things.

**INT: Yes, so -**

RES: I managed to do all this whilst working 60 or 70 hours a week as an NHS GP and I haven't found this any easier in retirement.

**INT: No, yes. Why's that, it's just expanded to fill the time?**

RES: Because when I retired everybody thinks oh he's retired he can do this, he can do that, he can do the other whenever he wants to, so yes it's quite difficult.

**INT: You need to retire without telling anyone you've retired.**

RES: I need to retire from retirement somehow.

**INT: Yes, okay. So, is there anything else that you want to say about your own recording or any reflections that you've got about recording in general that you think are of relevance to the project?**

RES: Not particularly, no. There's so many, we've had so many more recorders in this last 12 months we really have and we've had some very good people as well starting it and taking to it like a duck to water.

**INT: Yes.**

RES: Moth recording is so much easier nowadays because of the help that you get and the online resources that you can get.

**INT: Yes, just being able to go on Twitter and sharing a photo and saying I think this is this, is it? It's amazing the amount of time people are willing to provide other people in providing advice and, it's almost like mentoring isn't it but virtually rather than in person.**

RES: Well, I mentor a large number of people.

**INT: Yes, it will be interesting to see whether all those people that have kind of come to it during the last year or so stick with it or whether -**

RES: I think a lot of people will, a lot of people have been meaning to do this for years and never quite got round to it.

**INT: Yes, well I was one of those, I got a moth trap last year but I've not done anything with the data yet because I don’t quite trust myself.**

RES: Ask questions, that's how you learn.

**INT: Yes, yes. Well thank you for your time.**

RES: Okie dokie.

**INT: Very much appreciated, maybe go and have your stiff drink now.**

RES: I've calmed down now, I'm feeling much better, you've calmed me down.

**INT: Oh good, have a cup of tea instead. Thank you very much.**

RES: Okay INT.

**INT: Okay, bye-bye.**

RES: Nice to see you, bye-bye.

**Audio ends: [0:17:09.6]**