**CONFIDENTIAL**

Date Transcribed: 18.05.2021

Interviewer(s):

Respondent(s):

P20: Morning.

**INT: Hello. How are you?**

P20: Fine thank you. Sorry, again, about last week.

**INT: That’s okay, don’t worry, not at all. I had another interview straight afterwards, as well, so I just got on with another bit of work while I was waiting for that, so it was not a problem at all. I can hear you but I can’t see you.**

P20: I don’t have a webcam.

**INT: Oh, you don’t have a webcam.**

P20: You won’t be able to, no.

**INT: That’s absolutely fine. Right, so, some background about the project. So, it’s a two-year project that’s funded by the government, through the [environment research agency] and it’s led by the [research institute], down in [TOWN] who run the Biological Record Centre. And they have pulled together a team which involves us at [University] and then there’s people at [University] and [University], [wildlife charity] and then two of the local Environment Record Centres in [area] and [city], which are our focal areas for this phase of the project. And the aim of the project is to think about whether we can improve species distribution models which could be used for different types of environmental decision making. The team down in [TOWN] are looking at where records would be most valuable in terms of [unclear 0:01:50] those models. The bit that I’m more involved in is thinking about whether we can then encourage some of the recording community to visit those places in order to gather those records. So, this kind of series of interviews that I’m doing with people at the moment, is to get some background information about how people record, so how they decide where to go and when to go and what to record and also what motivates them to record. So, that’s kind of what the focus will be today. Does that all sound okay? Have you got any questions about any of that?**

P20: No, not at this stage, no it sounds perfectly reasonable.

**INT: Fab, okay. So, I have got a list of questions but just can be a bit of a chat as well, rather than you feeling interrogated. So, the first question is, how long have you been doing any recording and how did you start?**

P20: I started submitting records, officially, to [wildlife charity] as a group back in ‘96, but my background goes back a bit earlier, a bit longer than that. I started working in the conservation field in ’86 as an assistant ranger at a local country park, a team was there and we started recording what we saw on the site and this was before computerisation, so everything just went in a big book, like a daily diary of what we’d seen out that day. And I was there for a year, it was one of these one-year funny schemes by Manpower Service Commission, back in the day. So, after a year, there was, most of us had left, there was a change-over of staff and in the coming years I was still involved in the site in various ways and I realised that subsequent staff had decided to clear out a lot of the old paperwork and lost records. And I realised that species had been lost from the site as a result of not knowing what was where and management decisions were taken which meant a loss of the species. So, it became apparent that it was, recording was important to have, to know what was where so you can base management decisions. And when I became involved in [wildlife charity], I started submitting records on a sort of formal basis.

**INT: And is it just butterflies that you focus on, now? Or do you record other species, as well?**

P20: Butterflies is my main focus. I will submit records of any other species I find of interest, whether it be flowers, beetles, flies, Hymenoptera. I’m by no means an expert on any of the groups, or butterflies come to that, but any other thing I find, I think of interest, I will submit, I found iRecord a very useful tool, recently, for doing that. I did a couple of site records for a quite rare longhorn beetle last year, which was rather nice, up in [COUNTY].

**INT: And so, what sort of geographic area do you cover with your recording? Because you’re vice county recorder for-**

P20: For 62, yes, I tend to do the bulk of my recording in the local area, I’ve a number of sites I like to visit, some are my local patch areas and record what I see there. I do occasionally make visits further afield. I like to, like all of us, it’s nice to have a run out and see what else we can find or visit sites for a particular species. And I’ll record what I see there.

**INT: So, how do you sort of plan those visits, then? Do you have, like you say, a list of sites that you want to visit throughout the year that are in your local area? How do you kind of, say if you want to go out and do some recording, how do you decide where you’re going to go?**

P20: It depends on what I think I’m likely to see. I do like to see certain species throughout the year, so come June I’ll be visiting the sites that have Small Pearl-bordered fritillary to see and photograph those. Later in the year it will be different species. August I’ll plan a trip through to [SITE] to look for the Scotch Argus, etc. In May, coming up, I’ve got two weeks off and I am involved in the project to monitor the [species] locally, so that’s co-ordinated by a chap who lives in [COUNTY], [Name], you know [Name].

**INT: Yes, I know him because I did some breeding for him for the re-introductions, probably back in 2012, 2013, something like that. Were you involved in that?**

P20: No, I wasn’t. Not in the release, I know of it, I’m going to guess that was the [SITE].

**INT: Yes, it was. So, I helped go and collect some of the eggs, with [Name] and then because, for my PhD I’d done some rearing of butterflies in controlled conditions, but that was Brown Argus and Speckled Wood but I’d had that bit of experience of rearing eggs through to adults, so I offered to help with that, which was really successful, that first year, I don’t think the re-introduction was particularly successful but the rearing was quite successful. And then we did it again and it didn’t work, for some reason, for none of us, it was really strange. I don’t know whether it was the climatic conditions or, I don’t know what it was, but all the larvae that we had, just died, basically. Whereas the first time, they pretty much all survived, the second time it was really unsuccessful, it was very strange.**

P20: Oh, right. I know [Name] had a theory that a lot of commercially available compost had insecticides, whether that was a factor or what.

**INT: It did seem to be something like that because there were four of us, there were four of us the first time around and maybe perhaps there was only two of us second time around, but we both had the same problem across, you know, yes it was strange. So, that, presumably, that population never got established at [SITE], then, is that right?**

P20: We didn’t find any last year or the previous year. There’s still a chance it would recolonise, from since 2018 we have found them able to move quite a fair distance from the original sites. So, yes, so coming in May, [Name] has arranged all the [species] site visits, so we’re all allocated a selection of sites as the areas I do in [DALE], which includes [SITE], I think I’ve been visiting since about 2001 on a yearly basis.

**INT: And is that a structured technique that you use? Or is it just a visit to the site to see if it’s there?**

**[0:09:47]**

P20: It’s a kind of structured technique, it’s a time count and taking into account weather conditions, temperature, etc BC will then use a formula to calculate an assumed total population.

**INT: Right, yes, and are there any other species that you do that for?**

P20: No, my other recording is pretty much on a casual basis, just as what I see at the sites I visit. This is the only sort of formally organised recording scheme I’m currently involved with.

**INT: You’re not attracted to the UK BMS transect system?**

P20: I don’t have the time to commit to a weekly transect, working full time currently, so it’s something I’d like to do in the future but just don’t have the ability to commit to that, currently.

**INT: And then, so you spoke about wanting to go to particular sites to see particular species throughout the year, then are there other kind of ways that you might select particular places to go to, you know, they’re a nice site to visit, or anything you know about they’re under-recorded or anything like that, is that, do you kind of organise your recording in that way as well?**

P20: To be honest, a lot of it is, is it a nice site to visit? I’ll look on the other [wildlife charity] websites and see what species are at a particular site. If I’m going to be driving two hours there, two hours back, I do want a result, I want to see what I’m going for, to be quite honest with you, rather than visit a site in the hopes I might see something and come back disappointed. So, there’s an element of wanting to have a successful day and planning my visit according to that.

More locally, visiting areas, I will go, I’ll make speculative visits to look for things like White-Letter Hairstreak, for instance, if I’ve seen a site where I know there’s a group of elms, [DALE], again, I’ve been visiting that for, I think, four consecutive years, looking for White-Letter Hairstreaks and had no success until last year. But it’s worth a visit just to see. So, it’s a bit of both, to be fair, it’s just one of those things.

If I’ve got time off from work and it’s a nice day, I can jump in the car and go anywhere, I have no other constraints on my time, currently, so, I know, I’ll nip out to there. And I will visit sites that I know other people aren’t visiting. There’s a Small Pearl-border fritillary colony nearby in [COUNTY], which is under-recorded so I’ll visit there. I may be the only one who submits records from that site. But I know there’s a good chance of seeing them there and other species, so, it’s a bit of both. I want to go out and see something and if I’m driving a fair distance for a fair length of time, I want a guaranteed, successful day, as much as that’s possible.

But I do visit sites which are otherwise unrecorded and I do occasionally look at areas, this year, sorry, I’ll be visiting sites which have no records because I’ve found Small Pearl-borders, again, nearby, in my local patch and I know there are areas between there and the nearest known site for it, which have a good chance of success. So, I will be making speculative visits to sites on the [NATIONAL PARK] in the hope of finding Small PearL-bordered this year.

**INT: And so, is that using your kind of local knowledge of the site and what looks like good habitat? Or are you using maps or other peoples’ knowledge to kind of target those places where you think you might find those species?**

P20: Maps and Google Earth. The site where I found them locally is kind of my local patch, I was there yesterday evening looking for Green Hairstreaks and I’ve often thought, this looks a good area for Small Pearl-bordered fritillary but I thought they’re too far away, currently, so I was very surprised to find them last year. So, the next step was to look at the OS maps and Google Earth and look for potential sites between there and the nearest known site so I can target those this year. So, it’s a bit of both, really.

**INT: Yes. So, do you feel like your motivations have changed over time, then? So, you obviously started with that very much one site focus, but now, I guess your reasons for visiting particular places have changed, do you feel like what motivates you has changed over time?**

P20: It’s a bit of both, really. There’s still the knowledge that knowing what species are at a site can inform management decisions. And I think that’s of vital importance, having seen so many species disappear from sites through inappropriate management when it could have so easily been avoided. But there’s also the desire to sort of fill in gaps, if we think there are gaps in distribution of a species, there’s a good chance it should be there, then it’s worth looking for it. Last year, again, Small Pearl-bordered we found it at a site in the western side of the national park, for the first time, when we were looking for [place]. Sir [Name] has arranged with the estate for me to visit in June some of the areas which are private land where there’s a good chance of finding Small Pearl-bordered, so I’m hoping, again, to fill in gaps of an under-recorded species.

**INT: And when you’ve, so say you did find a species, do you then try and have a direct conversation with the landowner, to talk to them about management? How does that work?**

P20: Well, it’s not something I’ve done yet. Any records, for instance, this year of Small Pearl-bordered from the [estate] will be fed back to the estate’s team, so they will be aware of the presence of the species there. Whether that informs their management decisions, is yet to be seen. Their priorities are different. I do record on [woodland management department] land and report back to the [woodland management department] ecologist, so she can then take into account management decisions on given sites. I, personally, have not, I’ve never contacted a private landowner in that respect. If I’m visiting a site which is a [wildlife charity] reserve, the results are fed back to them. They presumably have their own database, or should have their own database of species and I would imagine that would be used to inform management decisions. I know that’s true of our local [wildlife charity] because I did work for them for a few years, looking after sites and recording on other sites for them. And management decisions were made on the basis of what species we’d found.

**INT: So, with your data, are you putting it into the vice county and county database as well as them passing it onto those landowners, like the [wildlife charity]?**

P20: Yes, my first port of call is to input it into Lavarna [phonetic 0:17:51] and then at the end of the year that goes through to [Name], the county recorder, and to head office for their national database of records.

**INT: And so, do you get feedback from any of those groups, as to what that data is used for? So, say, for example, you passed it on to the [wildlife charity], do they ever give you any feedback on what they’ve done with it?**

P20: Yes, if I’ve found a particular species, Grayling, on the [wildlife charity] reserves, they then institute the appropriate management and interpretation, as well, to highlight the presence of the butterfly there to visitors. So, yes, I do get feedback from them.

**INT: Yes, that’s nice, yes. It must be nice to feel like there’s a direct impact of your recording?**

P20: Oh, absolutely, yes. Yes.

**INT: And then, once it’s got passed up to kind of national [wildlife charity], do you get any feedback as to what that data is then used for at a national level?**

P20: Yes, I know it’s being used to produce butterfly atlases. I’ve received copies of those in the past, as a contributor. So, yes, I’m aware it’s used to inform national decisions on conservation using what we know of distribution of species and whether they’re expanding or declining.

**INT: And do you, in terms of entering your data into the system, do you save that up and do it at the end of the year? Or is it something you do as you go along?**

P20: I do my own as I go along. I log onto iRecord on a regular basis and verify records. But I save those up till the end of the year and download them in one big tranche and import them into Lavarna, [phonetic 0:19:59] it’s easier to keep track of what I’ve done, what I haven’t done.

**[0:20:03]**

Similarly, with the records that come from other sources, the butterfly count stuff, again, that’s sent through from head office in a big Excel file, it’s easier just to do that in one go. I do get emails from recorders who prefer to just email me with what they’ve seen on the site. So, I tend to enter those in as I go, otherwise they get lost down the email chain, it’s easy to forget them.

**INT: Yes. So, you must spend a lot of time, over winter, verifying records?**

P20: Oh, a fair chunk, yes, iRecord makes it easier in that I can do it in bits on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Prior to online recording, I used to get envelopes full of wadges of paper, recording sheets, all around the same time. That was such a chore. There’s still a lot of people who do it old school, send in paper records.

**INT: Gosh, yes. How long have you been VC recorder for?**

P20: Since 2004.

**INT: Okay, it’s a huge commitment, isn’t it?**

P20: It is. I enjoy doing it, I enjoy being a part of that. I mean I’ve always, one way or another, I’ve enjoyed conservation and volunteering, whether it’s been to start with, in the ‘80s was practical conservation work, then getting more into the recording. Then I answered a call in the early 2000s from [Name], the then county recorder, for volunteers. So, he sort of earmarked me to take over as VC recorder because the current chap, [Name], I don’t know if you know of him?

**INT: No.**

P20: He was wishing to pass, to give up that. So, I sort of, I shadowed [NAME] for a year before he decided to give up. And it’s something I enjoy doing, I enjoy being a part of BC as a volunteer and knowing that I’m doing something of national importance.

**INT: Yes, yes. And do you get any kind of, you know, when you say about being part of something, do you feel that you’re part of that community? Do you have conversations with other BC recorders who are doing similar things?**

P20: Yes. Not tremendously often, but a few of us are active on Facebook, there’s the Facebook butterfly and moth group and I think most of the other VC recorders are members of that, so we do, we’re not constantly ringing each other. There’ll be emails back and forth and Facebook posts, etc. That’s largely me, I tend to be quite a solitary person, to be quite honest. So, I enjoy being part of a community but I also do, sort of, set myself apart, but that’s just the way I am.

**INT: Yes, so when you’re going out, doing your recording, are you usually on your own?**

P20: Pretty much, yes.

**INT: And that’s part of the pleasure of just being out on your own in nature, I guess, is it?**

P20: Yes, exactly, yes, yes.

**INT: Yes. And so, do you still work in conservation, then?**

P20: Currently, no, I was working as a countryside ranger for a local authority but my post was axed due to the various budget cuts some years ago, so I was redeployed, so I’m still working with a local authority but in a completely different role.

**INT: Okay. So, when you were working in that role, were you ever using any sort of biological data in your job, professionally?**

P20: Yes. My actual role was countryside access ranger, so I was looking after public rights of way, but I did also assist the other rangers who were site based and in management, so knowing that particular species were at a particular site, for instance, often helped. So, there’s a site nearby, [woodland], we did quite a bit of management there, throughout the winter just removing birch regeneration. So, I’d suggest we targeted areas because I knew there was Green Hairstreak butterflies there, I knew that opening up the area would increase the habitat for them. So, yes there is that, my knowledge of the species that were on the site did help make management decisions.

**INT: Yes. It must be nice to kind of see that full cycle of how the records are used.**

P20: Oh, absolutely, yes.

**INT: Yes. And so, is there anything else that you use your kind of vice county database for? Do you ever try and encourage other people to fill gaps that you know about or to visit particular sites in your kind of vice county?**

P20: Yes, there’s a particular area nearby, used to be my local dog walking patch when I lived nearby, and I counted, recorded I think 20 or 21 species on the site. I’ve since moved away from there but there’s a Friend’s Of group being set up and the site was then earmarked for building a spine road, it’s quite a local sort of controversy. So, I did meet with some of the Friends Of and took them on a site visit and basically gave them a little tutorial on recording, butterfly recording, how to use the iRecord app and ensure the importance of submitting records, so we had a database of species on the site which was then ammunition to take to the local authority to protest against the development of the site. So, I know there are members who are continuing that and are submitting records.

**INT: Yes, and so is that still an ongoing process, then?**

P20: It is still an ongoing thing. The development plan has been revised but they’re going to put a spine road right through the middle of what is a really, really nice, unimproved grassland. But it’s okay because they’re going to create a country park and plant trees up so it will all be lovely, but it’s not going to replace meadows with orchids and Dingy Skippers and whatnot. So, you know, it’s this developer mentality, “It’s okay, we’ll just plant trees, dig you a pond and it will all look lovely.” But no. So, that is ongoing and the recording process is all part of a potential ammunition against the development plan.

**INT: Well, fingers crossed it does some good. You always suspect that the, it’s weighted in the favour of developers in these cases. I think if they want to do it, they’ll often find a way, won’t they?**

P20: Sadly, money talks. I mean, again, on [county] we have some nice population of Grayling butterfly, which, before 2001 was [COUNTY]’s rarest species. And it was, we found, last year, on a site, just close to a [dock], right in the shadow of the [LANDMARK], is that a picture of the [LANDMARK] I can see behind you?

**INT: It is!**

P20: [laughs] I thought so, so yes, there’s a nice colony on wasteland which was earmarked for a development, the snow centre, a big indoor skiing and whatnot centre, but that fell through because there was no money, so what then happens to this land is up in the air. But it currently has a nice population of Grayling on it.

**INT: Yes, I was talking to [Name] the other day and he was telling me about some of the sites, because my PhD was on Brown Argus and he was telling me about some of the populations he’s been monitoring there on the kind of industrial areas, you know, like the [COMPANY] and, yes, it’s really interesting. And just kind of these places, I guess, that not many people can access or would access or really know about, but the biodiversity value of them must be extraordinary. And he was saying there’s, you know, records of species that otherwise are very much southerly, or kind of new colonisers, so they kind of offer these microclimates as well, don’t they? These microhabitats that you get species in that you wouldn’t necessarily expect to be in that area.**

P20: Yes, I mean there are some amazing areas of habitat, there’s one of the sites I record is known locally as [SITE], it’s a right of way, runs from [LOCATION] right through, goes all the way to [county] Mouth and it takes you through the most horrible looking industrial area, past [SITE], I’ll get three figure counts of Grayling. But this is on like a two metre wide stretch of path between hectares of what looks like perfect habitat for Grayling and Wall Brown and Dingy Skipper. And I know [Name] from [COMPANY] has even suggested if there are any populations of Small Blue left in the area, they could occur there.

**[0:29:57]**

There’s just these fenced off areas and they’re awash with Kidney Vetch, they’re inaccessible. I know [Name] re-introduced, or introduced sorry, Small Blue to a similar area, I think north of the [county], [VICE COUNTY], but there’s such potential. I mean whether the sale and potential development of the former [COMPANY] site will have an effect, it’s something I’ve mentioned in my, in the annual reports in my write-ups for Grayling, so that remains to be seen. But there’s just hectares of ugly and smelly, to be fair, but perfect habitat.

**INT: Yes. So, there are areas that you can’t get into, I guess.**

P20: Exactly. Physically can’t, they’re just off limits.

**INT: Yes. It’s a worry, I mean it’s absolutely fascinating to think about what must be up there. If you’ve got somebody from Bug Life or something up there, to do a full invertebrate survey, I bet they’d turn up all sorts.**

P20: Oh, absolutely, yes. Yes, whether you do moth trapping or solitary Hymenoptera, they might still find that on all of the bare ground, it would just be incredible.

**INT: It would be, but I guess the landowners don’t really want people going up and finding nationally rare species that might put a spanner in the works, like you say, if they want to sell the land.**

P20: Yes, it’s as much from a health and safety point of view, as well. I have visited some sites with [Name] in the past, from [COMPANY], and we’ve had to sit through these safety briefings before we’re allowed near and obviously, we have to sign in and let people know where we are. Again, because we’re working, it’s near plants which are making some fairly horrendous chemicals and there’s the potential of an industrial accident, low, but it’s still there, so there is the health and safety viewpoint as much as anything.

**INT: Yes. So, are there any kind of sites that you wouldn’t go to because you were worried about that kind of thing? Or are you kind of quite open to going anywhere?**

P20: Quite open to going anywhere. The safety risk is more from other people. One of my friends told me quite a funny anecdote, he was looking for Grayling on one of the sites nearby and he said he got chased by a gang of gypsies who thought he was interfering with the horses that were in the field. I thought that’s quite scary, to be honest.

**INT: Yes. You’ve never had any?**

P20: I’ve never had that, no. It’s quite funny.

**INT: Have you even been put off going somewhere, though? Have you ever turned up somewhere and thought, actually, no, this isn’t sensible?**

P20: I used to, when I worked for the [wildlife charity], I looked after a site [VICE COUNTY] [NATURE RESERVE], a lovely little [valley] which was really biodiverse but the area itself, [TOWN], was one of the ten most deprived areas in the UK at the time and some of the anti-social behaviour. And I always thought I’d love to run a moth trap, but there was no way I’d go there on an evening with a generator and moth trap without armed accompaniment, to be honest. And even, during the day, it could be dodgy, you’d see youths with air guns, etc. So, there are sites which I would be wary of visiting, especially since I’m often going with a fair chunk of expensive camera equipment, because that’s my other hobby, is photography, I do like photographing the things I see. So, there are some sites I simply wouldn’t go to, for those reasons.

**INT: Yes, yes. Is the photography a big motivation for you, then, in terms of choosing where to go, sometimes? If you want to photograph a particular species?**

P20: Absolutely, yes.

**INT: Okay. And what do you do with your photographs? Are they for your own kind of personal pleasure? Or have you got a website or something that you put them on?**

P20: Largely for my own pleasure. I have some of them framed. Some have been used in the local branch publicity, the forthcoming booklet on the [COUNTY] species, some of my photos have been used in that and I know one of them was used in our display banner for events, which is rather nice. So, yes, it’s nice to see my work sort of being used to publicise the branch and I’m quite happy for them to use my photos for that.

**INT: It’s another way to feel like you’re contributing, isn’t it?**

P20: Exactly, yes, yes.

**INT: Yes. And so, do you ever respond to requests to go to particular places to record? Do you ever get a message from, I don’t know, [Name] or the county recorder or anywhere or anyone to say, “Could you go and visit this particular place to do some recording?” Or is it all kind of based on your own decisions about where to go?**

P20: Currently, it’s primarily based on my own decisions, but I have in the past, when [Name], for instance, said would I be able to visit a site to see if it had potential for Duke of Burgundy, so I have visited a number of sites on request. I’m happy to do that.

**INT: And would that be, you know, would there be particular reasons why you would respond to a request like that? Are there certain things that would motivate you to do that?**

P20: The chance to find a new site for the species or a negative result. I think, in the past, I’ve probably visited nearly every site in [COUNTY] which holds or has held or has the potential to hold [species] and a negative result can be as important as a positive, because we then know where to target monitoring and the practical management, which I’m also involved in. There’s no point in going and clearing a site if Duke or Burgundy, or another species, isn’t there and there’s little chance of it colonising.

**INT: Yes. And so, those requests have tended to come from individuals rather than an organisation, as it were? It’s because you’re kind of part of that network of people?**

P20: Yes.

**INT: Yes. And are there certain places or requests that you wouldn’t respond to? Are there barriers in terms of distance or the type of site that you would just say, “No, I haven’t got time to do that?”**

P20: I don’t think so. I haven’t had a request I’ve had to turn down. I’d be open to any reasonable request to visit a site in [VICE COUNTY] because you never know what you’re going to find, there is the thrill of discovery, I dare say. It’s always nice if it’s a new area, if you think there’s a chance of something there and particularly if it’s been unrecorded, for whatever reason. So, no, I don’t think I would turn down any sort of reasonable request to visit a site, as long as it was reasonably accessible.

**INT: Yes. Okay. I think that covers everything that’s on my list. I’m just going to have a look at my questions. Is there anything else that you wanted to say about how you record, what you record, why you record, that you haven’t said already?**

P20: I think I’ve covered pretty much all my motivation. I will admit, the other part of it is there a competitive element and I think any recorder will admit that, when they get the annual report, I dare say the first thing they turn to is to look and see if they’ve got their name on the first report, the last sighting or the most sightings. I think we all like that, though I suspect it’s mainly a man thing, dare I say? [laughs]

**INT: It might be. It’s funny, isn’t it? These kind of gender differences as well, because the vast, vast majority of county and vice county recorders must be men, as well. I’ve not really come across any women who do that role.**

P20: I’ve read theories about how it’s subsuming the hunter instinct in us, you know, whether there’s any merit in that. I’ll admit, for myself, there’s the thrill of getting a good photograph of a species I haven’t managed to do before, and I dare say it is an element of hunting. I’m doing it with a camera lens rather than a gun. It’s no different to stamp collecting or the obsessive twitchers.

**INT: Well, that’s it, it’s, you know, and it’s train spotting and all those things which are male dominated past-times, don’t they?**

P20: Yes.

**INT: I’m just sitting here next to my grandad’s enormous stamp collection that I inherited when he died.**

P20: [laughs] Yes, I’ve got my dad’s collection behind me, his stamps and his coins, yes. I think we all have, to an extent, that sort of collecting instinct, whether it’s stamps, coins, butterflies or rare birds. I don’t know.

**INT: Yes, it’s interesting, isn’t it? What it is about, it’s not like you don’t get women who are involved, who are engaged in that, but it is so dominated by men. There must be something in it, I would have thought, that means that it’s so male dominated.**

**[0:40:10]**

P20: I’d be surprised if there weren’t.

**INT: Yes, it’s really interesting. Yes, so, that kind of wanting to get the first record or the last record, does that, to some extent, affect where you go and record at particular times of the year, then? Do you kind of say, “It’s a sunny day and I know that that place is particularly good for that species, I’ll go, because I might get the first record of the year?”**

P20: Yes. Yes, I’ll admit to that, yes, it is. Yep. I know there’s a couple of people visited the Duke and Small Pearl-bordered at the Pearl-bordered sites this week in the hope that there’s an early emergence, but not. So, yes, there is that drive to get the first record of Duke for the year or the first record of Pearl-bordered or whatever the species, Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak, so, yes, there is that.

**INT: It must be frustrating when you’re working full time and you know it’s a perfect day.**

P20: Absolutely. All this week, it’s been horrendous, yes.

**INT: Yes. So, is there anything else that you want to say about what motivates you and how you organise your recording that you’ve not said already?**

P20: I can’t think of anything. I’ve covered all, pretty much all of the motivations. I think the primary one is a desire to have the knowledge of which species are where to inform management decisions. I think, for me, having seen what can happen if we don’t know what’s there and seen habitats be trashed and species lost, I think that’s my primary motivation for doing so. I use it as an excuse to get out somewhere nice in nice weather and meet up with like-minded people, the [species] monitoring, there’s a group of about five of us, so, I’ll visit sites on my own or in company with others. And it is nice to meet up with people who share your interests and have a chat, properly socially distanced, of course, this year. It is nice to meet up with like-minded people.

**INT: Yes, very nice. So, have you got any plans for today, in terms of going out and recording, because it’s quite nice and sunny here?**

P20: It is, yes. I’ll see what the weather is like later in the day and have a nip out. I did a visit to my local sites yesterday teatime and saw a single Green Hairstreak but I know I’m not the first person to record them there, this year, so I missed out on that one.

**INT: Very nice. So, are you up on [county], now, then?**

P20: I am, I’m in [Town], yes.

**INT: Okay. So, yes, I should explain. My husband is from [Town], he grew up in [area], which is why we have the [LANDMARK]. But it’s been interesting to talk to yourself and to [NAME], as well, about those sites and, you know, particularly right in the centre of [county] because, yes, when we go up there, we don’t tend to go into the city centre very often, or into that part. We went up to that [wildlife charity] that’s just on.**

P20: [nature reserve], yes.

**INT: And [nature reserve], is that what it’s called?**

P20: Yes.

**INT: Yes, but other than that, I’ve not done that much exploring around there.**

P20: There are some really interesting places. This area called [NAME], which is where the proposed development and road is, I was first involved with that back in the ‘80s as a conservation volunteer when we were doing tree planting and the whole area was managed as playing fields. So, it was close cut grass, but as it was left and left to transform, it’s turned into a really valuable meadow and 21 species of butterflies on the site is really, really good for a site that’s not that far from the town centre. And again, in the shadow of the transporter Grayling butterflies, I’d be surprised if the likes of Brown Argus and Dingy etc weren’t there too.

**INT: Yes. And are they in areas that are publicly accessible, then?**

P20: Yes, yes. Just the scrappy bits of land, some of them not that big and you’ve got these, presumably, transient populations of stuff moving from one area to another as the habitat changes.

**INT: Yes, well, that’s the thing with those sorts of sites, isn’t it? The value comes from that kind of early successional stage where you’ve got all the bare substrate and, like I say, the warm microclimate and they quickly develop, don’t they? And as the vegetation develops, they kind of lose that, I mean they develop value for other things, but they lose that value for those species that need that kind of bare ground and warm microclimate.**

P20: Yes.

**INT: Lovely. Well, thank you so much for your time.**

P20: You’re welcome.

**INT: It’s been really interesting to talk to you. It’s given me new insights into [county], as well, which is nice.**

P20: It’s often, yes, we’re unfairly maligned. It’s often said the best thing about [county] is the roads leading out to it, but there are some pretty amazing sites, you know, just on the doorstep, if you care to look at them. [SITE], which is a really unprepossessing site, had the, I think it was the best site for White Letter Hairstreak in [VICE COUNTY]. It was the first record of Brown Argus north of the [county], like I counted something like 50 bird species. We had an area of unimproved grassland which was visited by our local expert botanist who figured it was possibly the best area of grassland in the [REGION], it was pretty incredible, that was all there, it was pretty much neglected. So, once you start looking, it’s amazing what you can find.

**INT: Yes, which is hopeful, in a way, isn’t it?**

P20: Oh, yes, absolutely.

**INT: I feel like it’s quite easy to get depressed, isn’t it, about the state of the environment? But, yes, you and a lot of other people that I’ve spoken to, while I’ve been doing these interviews, have said exactly the same thing about when you start looking, you’ll find stuff which is hopeful, isn’t it? It kind of makes you feel like all is not lost, necessarily.**

P20: Yes.

**INT: Okay, thank you so much for your time and if you’re interested in hearing more about the project, I can send you a link where you can sign up and we’ve got mailings that we’ll send out to people as we develop the next stages of the project, so I can send you that.**

P20: Oh, yes please, that would be useful.

**INT: Okay, I shall do that. And yes, you’ll hear more through that route.**

P20: Brilliant.

**INT: Okay, thank you so much.**

P20: Thank you.

**INT: Okay, bye bye.**

P20: Bye.

**Audio ends: [0:47:41]**