**CONFIDENTIAL**

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Interviewer:

Respondent:

**INT Following on from that really my first question is how long have you been recording species for, when did you start?**

P02 Right, I was probably about three years old.

**INT Oh really, oh wow.**

P02 We only had a small garden, but my parents used to leave me out there, I can’t think why, but I’m told that I sat on an ants nest at the age of about three and was fascinated by wildlife ever since, and I used to have a sort of tin bowl that I put bits of wood and grass and stuff in, and when I found beetles in the garden I used to put them in there thinking they might stay there, and snails, and all that sort of thing, so this was my little zoo.

And as you get older you actually start to identify things, which is one of your things, obviously one of the things you first start taking interest in, and I can remember my mother taking me on a country walk, this would be before I went to school and just seeing the most amazing things, like primroses for the first time, or a brimstone butterfly and I got completely hooked from that age, and it’s never gone away.

Actually, started recording we’re probably talking about the late 60s and even earlier than that, so I think it was around about 1962 the [field trips club] started, you won’t have heard of the [field trips club].

**INT Where is [TOWN], it rings a bell?**

P02 Well, it was North West [COUNTY], and I was sort of born in one of the little [place], what was a village then, but it’s all built under now, and it late became part of the borough of [Town]. All of which was very annoying. We actually had a home North [TOWN] campaign at one stage, didn’t work, but still – so I would do some recording through the [field trips club] mainly butterflies initially and we had a butterfly moth expert. I doubt if you’ve heard of him but [Name], he was an expert on micro lepidoptera and so on. We also had living locally a guy called [Name] who was quite well known in entomological circles at that time, so I got to meet him.

I met some very interesting people at that time all of which enthused me further and further, so I used to – in those days I used to collect my records Tetrad form and I used to type them all up. So, collect them on field notes and then type them up at the end of each year and send them to the field club’s butterfly expert, and he then used to write a report. He would get all these in from various people.

The [field trips club] still just about exists. It was one of those organisations that used to organise walks. It was a proper club. It had a treasurer, auditor, all those things that nobody really wanted to do and so in recent years it finally fizzled out, nobody wanted to do all those jobs, but they managed to keep it going on Facebook. So, it still has a Facebook group and because it has records going back so long there’s an organisation, I don’t know whether you’ve heard of these, goes by the name of [wildlife records].

**INT Yes, they’re part of the project team actually, yeah, so they’re involved in this project.**

P02 Oh are they? Right. Well, they’ve been looking – they’ve been digitising all the [field trips club] records, which is great, and another thing I did for the [field trips club] – you wouldn’t know about the ZX81 probably.

**INT No.**

P02 Well, back in the early 1980s you started to see adverts for a personal computer in the Radio Times for under £100 you could buy a personal computer, you’ve probably heard of [Name]?

**INT No. Am I exposing my ignorance?**

P02 Yeah, the Sinclair C5, three wheeled car?

**INT Well, I have seen a few three wheeled cars in my day.**

P02 You’ve missed out on so much, but he produced this little, tiny computer and you – it was a little plastic box with a touch sensitive keyboard, and you had to – to store data you used the same cassette recorder that you would record the Top 20 on and that sort of thing, in those days things were very different, before the internet, you listened to the Top 20 on Radio whatever it was, and you had your cassette recorder going at the same time with a microphone.

**INT I did see that I am old enough that I did that.**

P02 Right, well this was the way that you stored your programmes and data on the ZX81, and this spawned a lot of the people who made fortunes out of gaming and so on. On this little computer you could write programmes in machine code and that, it was an absolutely amazing thing, and they made like a million of them, it was very popular at the time. So, I developed on this – you could get a printer as well, a little printer that used a roll of metallised paper and you had a 16kb memory extension pack that plugged in the back, and sort of wobbled about so every so often you lost the connection.

And you also had to plug it into one of the old televisions and if you wanted to save your eyesight you got a sort of green plastic thing to stick over the screen so that you could actually look at it closely for any length of time, and then you wrote programmes on this computer and I wrote a dragonfly and grasshopper recording system. Each record was compromised of just five characters. So, you could use alphanumeric characters, so the first character would be the species. The next character would be the year. I think I used probably two characters for the grid reference, and one character for the site.

And I produced – I shall show you; I don’t know how well these will appear – so you have a list of the recorders. They send me their information, because I was the dragonfly recorder, and then on the species you had species maps, so there are loads of these. My book binding skills weren’t too good. So, you had all the species there and where they had been found and then a bit more information, a map of the various sites, and I had sight lists as well I think in here somewhere. Probably sight lists.

So, that was good, and I did one for the grasshoppers as well. And this was all just the very local distribution. All the records that I could get hold of because of course you couldn’t get everywhere. So, that was that.

**INT Amazing. And so did that then turn into another system when that kind of technology moved on, it kind of evolved.**

P02 I got a BBC Micro with Winchester Disc Drives, and I did a most sophisticated dragonfly recording system on that, but ever only for my personal use and records for the field club. And I remember at the time the British Dragonfly – we’re in for another anecdote here, I’ll keep it brief – but I was getting very interested in dragonflies and a very good book came out by a guy called Hammond, who was an expert on all sorts of things, but he produced this brilliant guidebook on dragonflies where even someone like me could identify every British dragonfly from it very easily.

So, I got that, and I got – so I was very interested in those, and I was on holiday in Scotland and there’s a remote forest up there, [Forest], which is on sand dunes and it’s on the [place], it’s vast, hardly anybody ever goes there, and the sand dunes have kind of moved over time and swallowed up whole villages, so it’s got this kind of mystique to it, so I thought I’ve got to go there.

So, I went for a walk around there on an incredibly hot day. Got very lost, only just – I didn’t have much water with me, nearly didn’t make it back, so it was exciting day out, and I came across a pond in the middle of the forest and it had one of the southern species of dragonfly, about 200 miles north of where it had ever been recorded. So, this is great, I’ve got a camera with me, I took some photos, slides they were then I was taking.

And this was all about the time the British Dragonfly Society was about to kick off. So, I’d met some of those people who were going to start that up and we had a meeting, they looked at my slides. They were trying to puzzle over whether it was one of the foreign species or not, but it turned out to be the Southern Hawker, I don’t know how much you know about dragonflies.

**INT A little bit, not a huge amount.**

P02 They’re very interesting. Anyway – so this was a completely new record. Somebody else went and found one slightly further north, which was incredibly annoying – how dare they! But anyway, this got into the entomologist records, you know, and I thought this is great, this is really pleasing. I’ve got to be careful not to wander off into another anecdote there, but how I came to deliver a lecture to the [insects study society], not quite what it seems. But anyway the – about that time, when we had our initial meeting of the British Dragonfly Society there was a guy there from what has become Natural England, but in those days it was, I’ve forgotten what the name of it was.

**INT English Nature it was before Natural England, wasn’t it, but it was something else before that.**

P02 It was before that, and Nature Conservancy or something.

**INT Nature Conservancy Council, yeah.**

P02 And that was when it was properly resourced, and they were really good. You could get them out – if you found a place that was good for wildlife, and you met the land owner, because I used to wander off on to private land occasionally, with varying results, but in one case I found a really good sight on the North Downs, and I hadn’t realised I was on private land but I met the owners and when I told them what I was doing I was told “You can come back any time, pop in for tea and cake, and tell us what you found”.

This is the better end of what happens, I’ve also had Alsatians set on me, but anyway – so I would go to – I would contact the Nature Conservancy because they said “Well, how do we look after this land” and I said, “Well I think we need to do this but why don’t we get an expert” and I’d just get in touch with the Nature Conservancy Council and someone would come down, and spend the day with them, talking to them, this is what you need to do. Brilliant. Natural England nowadays –

**INT Bare bones isn’t it?**

P02 - they can’t keep up with planning applications. This guy who turned up there was starting up a computer system to do mapping and he said they were looking for somebody to do the programming and I kind of ummed and ahhed, because I was in a job – I was already in a job, not programming, but I can’t say I was that happy in the job, it did pay the bills and that was the main thing, and I was a bit uncertain about where this computer project was going. So, I thought no I don’t think I’ll apply.

So, I didn’t go down that road but obviously they did start doing all that stuff and so you started getting these, what’s turned into the Biodiverse Network, all those wonderful maps you see. Yeah, so where are we going – am I still –

**INT Right, I’ll go back to my questions. So, I guess my next question is, so currently do you have any sort of official role, are you a county recorder or vice county recorder or anything like that?**

P02 No. Well, apparently – I’ve been advising the local parish council on the management of a meadow for the last 18 years or so. I wrote a management plan for them, and I’ve organised volunteer work parties there and so on, and they come to me with any questions they’ve got, and I found out the other day that I am the [position].

**INT Oh! Unbeknownst to you.**

P02 Unbeknown to me, they put me on their website as the [position], so I’m thinking about contacting them and saying, “Please to see you’ve appointed a [position], I just wonder what his job is” you know.

**INT But nothing in any of the kind of recording schemes or anything like that then, at the moment?**

P02 No, but I contribute to them.

**INT So, which recording schemes do you contribute to at the moment, or have you kind of – for the last 10 years or so?**

P02 For the last 10 years or so I submit records through [NAME] on butterflies. On moths I submit records of particularly rare things that I find to the [COUNTY] Biodiversity Information, and I know the landscapes officer for [COUNTY] Wildlife Trust, so I submit records to him. Bees, I’ve done quite a lot on bees in the last few years, so when I can I put my records into a spreadsheet and send them to the [COUNTY] Biodiversity Information Centre. Another one that I do a lot of is hoverflies and you really should look – join the [Facebook page], it’s a private group but I’m sure you will get in easily enough.

That group is absolutely brilliant. It is the best wildlife group that I’ve come across on Facebook. It’s run by [Name] and a guy called [Name], and he has just produced some brilliant information from the records, and they do a lot of analysis of the records they get in. If you send them a photo of a hoverfly you get an answer about five minutes later on what it is. If they can tell.

And the other useful thing you get from them is “Well, you didn’t quite photograph this from the right angle, we need to see how many hairs it’s got on it’s eyes” or something. “So, try photographing it from this angle” that sort of thing. So, it’s all done with digital photography nowadays and if your like me I’ve never collected anything, that’s just not me. Killing things and sticking pins through them, and then looking at them under a microscope is not me at all.

The fact that I can’t identify everything doesn’t bother me too much. Some of the differences are so obscure.

**INT Like you say, if you’re talking about hairs on eyes and things like that, yeah.**

P02 You know, evolution doesn’t stop. Who knows what actual changes have happened in our lifetime. Tiny changes. What we’re recording today, over time, things won’t be the same. Anyway, I do that. Another bit of recording I do is when – have you come across the [Wildlife charity] atlas series?

**INT No.**

P02 They’re absolutely brilliant. This is one that’s relevant to what you’re doing. Written by a gentleman called [Name] who is a great naturalist, sadly we lost him last year, but he studied bees all over Europe as well as Britain, and he really enthused me on bees, and he wrote this wonderful book on grasshoppers. So, I contribute – whenever they’ve got a new book in their atlas series and they want information I send it to them, and it might be – a lot of it is records but it may also be some sort of anecdote.

We used to have an inland colony of the great green bush cricket at [TOWN], near [Garden], not in [Garden], but nearby and at that time I used to be commuting on the [MOTORWAY] and the colony lived on the – part of it lived on the banks, the roadside banks of the [MOTORWAY] . So, I used to come home on the way home from work I would get on the inside lane and slow down to about 50 or something and wind the window down, and listen to these bush crickets as I went past.

And that was how I knew they were still there. That colony has died out unfortunately. As far as I know. I’ve been back several times to try and find it, but they widened the [MOTORWAY] , that bit went, and I can’t find them there now. And that’s the sort of thing that brings the records alive, I think, and that’s the great thing about these atlases. There’s lots of good information in them, quite apart from the bare records.

**INT And so it sounds like you record far and wide then, do you have a kind of local patch that you go to quite regularly and then –**

P02 That’s become narrower and narrower, because I’ve also always been a wildlife gardener and I’m very fortunate to have a large garden, over an acre, and it’s on the chalk. So, huge potential, and I’ve been managing it now for 27 years and it has some very rare species here. And that’s partly because I’ve allowed things like ant hills to develop, and there are some very rare hoverflies that depend on ant hills.

And we’ve got those here, in large number, in some years, but they’re very hard to find anywhere else. So, if you look on the hoverfly maps you will see there’s a – the particularly rare one that we found here for the first time last year was something called the phantom hoverfly, [unclear 00:23:21]. Nobody fully understands it’s life cycle. There’s a theory that it feeds on aphids in a particular species of ant that depends on two other ant species, so it’s an amazing thing. Great big hoverfly. Very rarer, hardly anybody ever gets to see it. The snag is when you find that in your garden you have this dilemma. Who do I tell.

**INT So, is your garden now a triple SI?**

P02 Well, it probably ought to be because that’s just the beginning of it, but it’s partly because I’m there looking at things, and I’m not going to be anywhere else at the time that thing flies. I will want to be out there checking to see whether it’s still there. I cannot be in two places at once. I would love to be going all over the [NATIONAL PARK] looking for this thing at that time of year but I’m the only person who can look for it in my garden because apart from the people, like [Name], I’m not letting anybody else in.

And I had this problem – how many people do I tell, because you know what birdwatchers are like, a rare bird appears in somebody’s garden and you’ll have 100 – so, it’s important that people know about it because to the local council’s point of view my garden is somewhere that developers could build on, and they actually reduced it’s protection, it was green belt, well it’s still green belt but they’ve decided it should be part of a settlement area. So, I get letters from developers, quite often, saying “Do talk to us about selling your property to us” and I won’t of course, because, you know, money – what would I do with money.

Buy another garden, you know, I haven’t got another 27 years to spend it. I’m trying to get back on to the question where do I go, one of the problems with lockdown is you can’t go very far. Well, you could but you shouldn’t. So, I want to go to [NATURE RESERVE] to see a particularly rare bee, just to increase my knowledge. If I can actually see this thing that helps me because I can then distinguish it. I might even find it somewhere else that nobody knew about, who knows.

But I can’t do that at the moment, so I do tend to go to some more distant places looking for particular things and there’s a rare hoverfly that’s in my garden, and I’ve agreed with the kind of national recorder that I will look for it in other places on the [NATIONAL PARK]. This is a different one, to the one I was talking about, but it’s not an easy thing to spot, but because I can go down my garden and see them regularly I’m thoroughly used to it. I can spot them a mile off.

So, it’s quite useful, I can go to somewhere where they may have been recorded years ago and I know exactly what I’m looking for, and more importantly where it’s likely to be. You can look at the habitat and you say “Well, that’s the sort of place they like to sit” so I can do something useful there. But again, it’s taking me away from garden.

**INT That kind of feeds in nicely in terms of the next sort of question. So, when you think about going out to do some recording what is the process that you go through, what do you – and it might, I guess, differ for every trip, but is it you want to go to a particular place or you want to look for a particular species, or you want to contribute to a particular scheme, is there kind of a typical thought process that you go through or is it kind of different for every time you go out?**

P02 Yeah, that last one, particular places on the [NATIONAL PARK], it means getting into some fairly obscure bits of the [NATIONAL PARK]. So, there’s a couple of [wildlife charity] that are actually quite difficult to get to. One of them you need a permit. The other one, if you’re going by car you need permission from a land owner to park and go across their property to reach it. But one of the [COUNTY] Wildlife Trust people told me of a route I could take off the paths, get off the paths, go down through a wood, and if you navigate carefully you can get into the top end of this reserve.

And it happens to be just a few miles walk from me. I can still just about manage it. I do it that way and it’s great, you disappear off this public footpath and you’re just following your nose basically and eventually you come into this wonderful reserve and you’ll be the only person there. Acres of wonderful chalk grassland, nobody in sight and it’s amazing. So, that’s the sort of place that I’ll for these special things.

Another one, I have to get a permit for, and again it’s a huge site but the only people who ever go there are people who have got a permit.

**INT So, it’s often about going to new places where particular species are likely to be, but you’ve not recorded – or they’ve not been recorded there for a long time or they might be there –**

P02 Yeah. It’s kind of figuring out where that habitat might be, and sometimes you will go there at a different time of year and just assess the habitat, and say well does this look right.

**INT So, it’s about kind of trying to identify new places that particular species are likely to be, or are, and I guess them – so you’re saying that kind of feeds into the atlases and the recording schemes as well. So, would you – say if an atlas was being developed would you help in terms of visiting squares that haven’t been visited or in terms of kind of helping to put dots on those maps?**

P02 I’ve contributed my records to them but often I don’t see the maps until it’s too late. The atlases actually – it works the other way with me, the atlas creates a new interest. So, with the – we did one on the micro lepidoptera which I knew nothing about, but I found a very striking example in my garden again, and it looks as if it ought to be very obvious what it was, so I sent a photograph off to an expert and they said to me “We’re going to do this [COUNTY] Wildlife Trust atlas on them, and the one you’ve found is so and so, and this is what it lives on” and all the rest of it.

So, already quite interesting, this has become much more than just a pretty little moth I found. I now know it’s life history and so on. And they said do photograph as many micros as you can and send us the photos and we’ll identify them for you. So, that worked that way. And it did – there’s one record there which is the only one for Surrey, and that was from my garden.

**INT So, you find having that conversation to be really helpful in terms of motivating you to find out more. I guess it’s being part of a community, isn’t it, and –**

P02 Yes, very much so.

**INT And also feeling like your records are useful, is that like a – is that a motivation for you? I mean I guess is your overall motivation because it’s personal pleasure or you’re wanting to help a particular organisation, or is it for the greater good of the environment in terms of protection, that kind of thing?**

P02 Right. It is environmental protection for me, that’s a big motivator. Now, obviously I love seeing things. I love finding things. Love photographing them. I take so many photographs when I want to know what things are, but I have always been an environmental campaigner. I don’t go down tunnels and bolt myself to fences, or anything like that, but I probably went to my first – I suppose you would call it a public enquiry or planning appeal way back in the 70s and spoke.

I think I went on about great spotted woodpeckers or something, but we did actually win that one so – but we are locally in the [REGION], we are under assault from developers, it’s appalling, and they are so underhand in the way they go about it. And unfortunately, the council was very pro-development when we came to produce our last local plan, and they did things like well here’s an SNCI, but somebody wants to build on it.

Okay, so we de-designate it. That sort of thing. Shocking. There’s a consultation but it means nothing. It’s just a way of you venting your feelings, it just gets filed away somewhere and it’s kind of dominated my life for the last seven or eight years because I – and it had an amazing effect on the local community, everybody was up in arms about it. We actually marched on the council offices to complain, which was fascinating. I don’t know what impression you’ve got of [Town].

**INT One of my good friends from university, well she’s from [TOWN] actually so I do know that part of the world a little bit from having visited her and she went to the high school in [Town] I think.**

P02 It’s where I live now. I live on the outskirts, one of the villages, which they decided should double its population under the local plan, that sort of thing, so I have – I went on this march. A lot of older people, as you can imagine, on them but this march because it was weekday, old people wondering quite what they’re doing there. And we actually – we marched on the council offices singing songs and I think we sung about building Jerusalem in [Town]’s green and pleasant land which I thought was a bit off myself because I wasn’t sure we were going to put that.

It was – all got very lively. I can remember at one stage sneaking a placard into [Town] Council’s planning – into one of their planning meetings, which you’re not supposed to do. The rules – forget the House of Commons, that is absolutely total rebellion compared to [Town] Council. You are not allowed to speak, but I had – I knew there was going to be a bad decision and a lot of us were there expecting this bad decision, and determined to do something.

I made a placard that said shame on you. Stuffed it up my jumper and walked in. Got in, got past security and this decision was made and we all started shouting at them basically, but I’m quite softly spoken so I got my placard out and waved it at them. Directly at the councillor I knew who was behind it all. And – I mean I was next to – it was the Conservatives who were doing it all – sorry to bring politics into this.

I was next to my county councillor, who was also a conservative, but was telling everybody not to vote for them, which I thought was great. And he was shouting at them as well. Anyway, it led to the formation of the [Town] Greenbelt Group which became a political party in order to fight it directly in the council, and we got councillors elected. So, me, just an ordinary naturalist finds myself playing around the streets, campaigning, knocking on people’s doors. Canvassing. It was great. I enjoyed it.

I never thought I would have done that, but I enjoyed it. If you go on YouTube you may find a [Name] thing he did for the telly where he surveyed people in [Town] High Street and it’s really very amusing because he would ask them about three questions, and they would give him an answer, the answer was always yes, and then he would say to them “I see you’re a Jeremy Corbyn supporter” and the look on their faces “Oh, no”.

**INT Am I?**

P02 “I always vote Conservative”. And this is the problem with [Town]. They’re snobs. And they don’t really think, they just think that somehow it makes them a bit more special by voting the way they do. So, we fought that way and in the last elections we had another party formed which was a residents part and we kicked them out basically. But they’d already – a week before those elections they implemented their local plan. Incredibly underhand thing to do. And we’re stuck with it, and now we’re having to try and fight it with it in place.

Site by site, and that’s what’s going on. I even found – my background is quite technical, and I looked at things like their transport assessment, which most people would look at and spend about a minute looking at it and saying well I’m not getting into that, but I went through it in detail, and I found an awful lot wrong with it. And I even produced my own transport models now, partly to understand it in more detail, and partly to fight it.

So, I’ve been to a planning appeal, a place called [former wartime airfield], I don’t know how widely that one is known, but it has a possibly – it has a large population of skylarks nesting there and possibly of national importance, it’s that sort of scale, but they still want to build on it. This was the one that was the site of nature conservation interest that they de-designated. It’s right next to a special protection area. They’re not supposed to build next to special protection areas because of all the people walking their dogs through it.

So, really up in arms about that and that is an ongoing fight. They lost their first planning application, went to appeal, I went to the appeal not expecting to say a word, ended up cross examining their transport – so you can see that from naturalist who just enjoys watching butterflies you get to a point where you want to protect it all, and it leads on to other things.

**INT I can see that. And would you say that’s your main motivation to carry on recording then?**

P02 Yes. I mean I – actually compiling the records is an awful chore. It takes me a long time to do because as I write it all down in field notes, as I go around, and then I have to put it in a spreadsheet, or use iRecord or something like that, but that all takes time that I don’t want to do, but I do it because I know that it might help to protect a site.

**INT And so those records that you put in your spreadsheet you put in your spreadsheet, you described earlier that the different schemes that you pass them on to, so that’s how you kind of then get those records in the system, through those various schemes and atlases, and all those different routes. And has your awareness of sites that are under threat from development, have you targeted some of those for going and doing surveying as well? Or maybe you can’t access them if they’re kind of –**

P02 Well, it’s mainly [former wartime airfield] is the current one and I know of a few things there I’m trying to find. Unfortunately, they’re not always on a public footpath and they have a couple of security people there keeping an eye on things, so I have to be careful about how I do it, but I’ve got my excuse, you know, “Oh, we haven’t marked this footpath very well” I’ve got my ordnance survey map with me “I thought I was on this path, why isn’t it marked? Why aren’t you looking after these paths?”

So, I’m prepared but, you know, to find the actual things that were recorded there it can be quite tricky.

**INT So, when you go to a site do you make lists of all species that you see or are you really trying to target – you don’t kind of make lists of the common things or –**

P02 No, you can’t, because I’ve been interested in so many different branches it would be impossible. I’m a member of the [wildlife society] and I did quite a bit of recording for them in the last 10 years but now it tends to be just something really special that I’ll send to them, and the other way I use it is you spot opportunities. So, the latest one was where the county council offered money for local community things and I didn’t look too closely at what their criteria was, I just pounced on that.

And said, “Well, we could turn this road into a linear nature reserve” because I know there’s a lot of good stuff along it if only they managed it better and I got an immediate response from my county councillor saying, “That doesn’t qualify under this scheme” but fortunately I had quite a good councillor and they said, “But we’ve passed your suggestion on to so and so” and it turned that they had changed their road verge policy very recently and I hadn’t heard about it.

But then I was able to say “Well, do you know about this thing, and that thing, at these various points, and if you just modify where you mow slightly you could help it” so there’s a lot of that.

**INT It’s having that really in depth local knowledge that’s so valuable isn’t it because without that it’s impossible isn’t it, to do that kind of fine scale management. So, you also mentioned like finding out about the life history of a particular species, do you find that kind of thing to be motivating as well in terms of like finding out about maybe a new species group or something like that?**

P02 It’s incredibly motivating. It creates a dilemma as well because when I’m managing my garden or managing the meadow deciding what needs to be done in the meadow down the road that the parish council own, any management you do damages something. You try and do it in such a way to minimise damage but inevitably you tend to favour certain species, so it’s important to understand what species need.

There’s another book in this series, [wildlife book]. [Name] I think was probably one of the authors of that. I wrote the wildlife gardening section in it, and what I stressed there was you hear – you see all this stuff on wildlife gardening, plant a buddleia and the butterflies will come flooding into your garden. So, the point I wanted to make was that you need to – if you really want to support things like butterflies you need to understand their whole life cycle and what you can do to avoid damaging them at every stage of their life cycle.

**INT So, much of it is about nectar provision and just planting flowers so they can come and feed, and you’re right, there’s no consideration of the host plants for the caterpillars often, and you need the native species that those caterpillars need to feed on.**

P02 And things like the orange tip butterfly is a case I use as an example, it likes to lay it’s eggs on a wild plant called Jack by the Hedge, quite a pretty little thing with white flowers, and the caterpillars start feeding on the seed pods and then this plant begins to look really untidy, so they’re still feeding on it, so along they come with their strimmers and strim it all down and that’s why you don’t see too many orange tips.

And I had a – I do take every opportunity I can to talk to people about it and I noticed down the road from me some new people moved in. They chopped a load of trees down. They manicure their garden, and they were manicuring the front bank and I could see – they weren’t doing it themselves; they employ gardeners to do it, and they had a patch of this by the hedge out the front. So, I spoke to the gardeners and I said, “You know, the orange tip butterfly lives on that and if you cut it down you’re probably going to be destroying their eggs or caterpillars” and they were incredibly receptive, and they said “Yeah, we’ll leave that bit. We won’t tell them what we’ve done but we’ll just leave that bit” and they did. I know other places where the things just get tidied away and it’s just so annoying.

**INT It is. We used to live by the river in [CITY] and you would see over the bank of the river the orange tips flying about, laying their eggs, and then two or three weeks later the council mower would come along and mow it all away.**

P02 It’s because they don’t know. If they did know they might change what they do. So, there’s a communication thing.

**INT And often it’s communication with the contractor isn’t it because I used to work for the Wildlife Trust in [place] and we had all these management plans for protected road verges, but often it was then not communicated to the contractor who just, you know, carried on with his mower instead of stopping at the bit that he was supposed to stop at.**

P02 I’ve got a couple of examples of that locally, I won’t go into them, but a similar thing to what you’re saying. The council wants to do something right. They put it out to contract, but the contractor doesn’t stick to their instructions. Maybe because it’s more convenient for them to do it a different way and they don’t watch what’s going on.

**INT Yeah. I’m just looking back to my questions. So, I guess from the perspective of this project then, we’re thinking about whether people would be kind of nudged to visit particular places, so is that something that you would kind of be receptive to if somebody said could you visit this place, and what kind of – what might motivate you to do that?**

P02 Somebody asking me to do it is hugely motivating. That somebody thinks that it’s worthwhile you are going there, that is motivating in itself. But because I’m so heavily invested in my own garden I might say “Well, I can’t do it at that time of year because I need to keep an eye on so and so”. I even have to tell my wife “Well, you can’t go on holiday then we might miss so and so”.

**INT And I guess your focus is on – like obviously you’ve got a real interest in the kind of rarities but if somebody asked you to go to a place to make a list of just whatever you could see, so could you go to this site at this time and make a complete list of butterflies, would that be something that you would be motivated by, or is it more about the rarities for you?**

P02 I think I would want to know why they wanted the information. It could be a developer who simply wants to find that there’s not much there. I have actually had this in the past with the channel tunnel, believe it or not, and my girlfriend at the time worked in – worked for [wildlife charity], what is now for [wildlife charity] and she said “Would you survey the grasshoppers behind – on the hills behind where they wanted to put the big area where you park to go on the channel tunnel.

So, I said, “Yeah, I’ll do that” but I only got one day to do it – this was completely unpaid I have to say, but you couldn’t find much in a day. It wasn’t a particularly good time. It wasn’t particularly good weather. To really assess a site, you cannot rely on one visit. So, you know, even a lot of our nature reserves are under recorded because not enough people record there.

**INT So, you mentioned obviously you wouldn’t want that information being used for kind of dismissing a site as not being important so what sort of organisations do you think you would be willing to kind of receive those messages from in terms of could you go to this particular place. Would it be more coming from the recording schemes, or the local wildlife trusts or other types of organisation?**

P02 I have had [wildlife society] contact me to say somebody has reported these things from this place, we know they’re there, could you count them for us, because I’m the one nearest to it and I go and count them, and that sort of thing. And, yeah, it doesn’t happen a lot to be honest.

**INT And then – I think we’ve kind of covered a lot of this in terms of how you use your data, so you kind of seem to use it for lots of different purposes and you use it for yourself as well as passing it on to other people, do you kind of compile all your records at the end of the year and submit them in one go or do you try and keep up with them as you go throughout the year?**

P02 I always try and get my records to [Name].

**INT As you go throughout the year?**

P02 No.

**INT You compile them at the end of the year.**

P02 I do it at the end of the year in one hit. I do the same for hoverflies. I don’t record dragonflies now. I’ve submitted one record in the last 10 years probably, of something special I saw. You cannot do it all and it is time consuming, because you can’t just stick your records in a spreadsheet and send it off – you need to go back and check that you’ve done it properly. Checking is very important. And occasionally you will get a query back – are you sure about this record, then you go back and check and if you’ve got a photo to support it, that’s good.

**INT Do you any verification of records yourself, do you ever get sent records as an expert in something in particular to say can you check that you think this is –**

P02 Right, that happens very locally. The lane I live in a lot of people are sort of interested in wildlife without getting into it too deeply and what I do there is we have a sort of email communication thing going, and I – all through the season I’m sending them photos of things I’ve found in my garden and trying to encourage them all to be wildlife gardeners you see, and with some success. And they will also post pictures of things they’ve seen and they’re wondering what it is.

I help them in that way. And there’s the – [Town] has got a local electronic newspaper, the [NAME], and they have somebody who does a birdwatchers diary, and he will cover insects as well, and he sends me his photos and if I can put an identification to them I do. I tell him about them. He then compiles it into an article in the [NEWSPAPER]. So, the reward from that is that it’s trying to make people more aware of what’s out there, and you’ll sometimes get nice comments back, you know.

**INT So, do you know if those people submit their records elsewhere, so the people on your lane and this birdwatching guy, do they then pass their records on anywhere?**

P02 The birdwatcher probably passes on his bird records. I doubt if he does the rest. He may not even submit bird records, I don’t know, not formally, I don’t know but there is an awful lot of birdwatchers out there, and they all know what’s around. They know exactly where to go to see things. So, I think bird – the distribution of birds is pretty well covered I think.

**INT More so than bees and hoverflies I expect.**

P02 I’ll get the occasional – I sometimes hear things because I know these people, they’ll say, “There’s a pair of goshawks nesting at so and so” and the birdwatchers know about it, so I sometimes get a tip off like that. I might not even bother to go and look to be honest. It’s a day out to go there. And another thing actually relevant to your question, quite an important one, [wildlife society] – and all this depends on having individuals who are keen to do things in a particular way. They have somebody who is very good with Excel and he’s compiled all their records and he produces a spreadsheet with number of records by [unclear 00:58:55] and this is meant to inspire members to go to the sites that have got no records.

Because that’s where they can add the most to the coverage. So, it’s doing exactly what your question was about, encouraging people. That’s the way they do it.

**INT But you don’t – you wouldn’t find that particularly motivating yourself. If you saw a zero on a map like that would you think oh I will see what I can go and see in that square?**

P02 Probably not. No. The reason nobody has recorded there is because it’s not very interesting but occasionally – I got another request from [wildlife society], could you go to [airport], this road that runs past [airport], and look for a plant called [unclear 00:59:53], I don’t know if you know it, rather a nice plant, but quite rare in [COUNTY]. So, I said “Yes, I’ll go and count them for you and check it’s still there” I knew exactly where they meant and one of the reasons I went there is because – I mean I’m very much into climate change mitigation and so on.

But I also rather like what aeroplanes take off and land and I was into time lapse photography at the time, so I took my camera along with a tripod and while counting this [PLANT] I was also making a time lapse film of the planes taking off and landing, because they were right at the end of the runway. This roadway where they don’t let anybody park. They try to keep people away from. But I was there counting these plants and just happened to have my camera set up on a tripod filming the planes taking off and landing. And that worked rather well actually.

**INT Killing two birds with one stone.**

P02 Yeah, if you have many interests you might find that where they want you to go, actually, I quite like that idea.

**INT So, when people give you feedback about your records, so somebody says “This species” or “This is a little bit about it’s life history” or “This is a good record because it’s the first time it’s been seen at this site” or something like that, is there a particular format you like to receive that information – is it a phone call or is it an email, or does it not really matter?**

P02 It tends to be by researching it afterwards. So, if somebody confirms the record I will then think well this is something that I ought to make sure I keep here. So, I will go away and read the hoverfly book on the details of the life cycle. So, I’m learning something from it and I’m also thinking that’s the sort of habitat it likes, have I actually got that habitat, what do I need to do to keep that habitat.

**INT So, you do that research yourself rather than it necessarily coming from somebody else?**

P02 Yeah, so you’re looking, I mean the internet is a wonderful thing. You Google the species and look for papers on it, and that sort of thing.

**INT Okay. And then I guess just a couple more questions about like how you think the data that you submit to recording schemes, for example, is used. Do you kind of have an idea of what that sort of data is used for?**

P02 I think so. So, places like [wildlife charity] – as an individual you can ask for information. As a commercial business you have to pay for it. So, people like an ecologist working for, working as a consultant for developers who may live somewhere like [city] will produce a desktop study for a site in the [Town] area. It will be rubbish. But they will get their information from record centres. So, you get the sort of things like they will say – they have to say what’s nearby, and they will say “Well, 5km away there is an SSSI that is a well known spot for the Duke of Burgundy Fritillary” and they will put that in their report.

And I know that the Duke of Burgundy Fritillary died out in [COUNTY] in the 1990s and yes that was a good site, maybe up until the 1970s, but you get this kind of rubbish that comes through in desktop studies, and that worries me slightly, but obviously the information has got to be there.

**INT So, is that motivating for you in terms of you want to see – you want to submit your records so that they will be turned up in these desktop studies so that particular sites can be recognised as being as important?**

P02 Yes. And if anybody did ever try to build – my garden is not the only big garden. Because they’ve undermined the planning protection from greenbelt, it’s still greenbelt but settlement area therefore back gardens ripe for building on. Never mind that part of that back garden is really a field. There are – my neighbours have all got them and one of them may decide I want to build a housing estate here, right next door to me.

Undermining the hydrology, the light and all the rest of it. I would want to be able to say actually you check with the records centre, that’s what we’ve got here, that’s what could be next door if they managed it properly. Hopefully, I would win then. The neighbours wouldn’t like me very much but, you know.

**INT And so are there things that you wouldn’t like to see your records used for?**

P02 Very often you can say whether the record is confidential, so yes, I wouldn’t want somebody looking for records of that species with a view to then going to that site to collect them. I know full well that the people who do – the top experts who collect them are contributing a great deal to our knowledge, there’s no question about that, and it’s the people who have ripped ants nests to pieces to find out the life cycle of these things that have contributed to the knowledge that I use.

So, there’s this kind of dilemma and I know that my views on collecting are a bit pedantic because, as [Name] will say to me, “When you drive down to [NATURE RESERVE] you will kill thousands of insects with your car”. To me, it’s different. There’s something different there, and I’m not going to change.

So, I literally wouldn’t kill a fly. If I find one indoors I carefully capture and put it out the window, it’s just the way I am. It’s too bad. I’m not going to collect anything for the hoverfly group to increase their records.

**INT So, I guess for our project we’re thinking about moving from kind of raw data, so points on a map to modelling – not necessarily just the distribution of individual species but using the kind of biodiversity data that we’ve got and other types of environmental data to produce models of areas which are likely to be of biodiversity value. So, is that the kind of thing that you would be happy for your records to be used for as well?**

P02 Yeah, I think so. I mean [Wildlife Trust] are trying to do something like this. Define the habitat and from that decide what could be there and how you could do things to improve it. I think that’s the idea. So, there are some habitat modelling tools out there that people are using. Again, UK hoverflies, I do recommend that you join that group and look down and this was only a couple of weeks ago, you will find their mapping scheme, and what they’ve done with it.

So, the latest thing they did, [Name] did, was to produce an animation where you’re not only looking at map of the distribution but it’s changing over time. And that is so fascinating. And the other thing you could do, you mentioned other environmental information, well climate is the obvious one. So, one of the things that I look at is the Met Office historic dataset. It’s all free, online. Month by month – so places like Oxford you’ve got over 150 years of data. So, you can look at rainfall patterns.

And it’s quite interesting because you tend to think well is it getting wetter, it’s not as simple as that and it’s how it’s changing in particular months. So, the distribution of rainfall over the year is interesting and that can affect the life cycles of species. So, I think potentially you could do an enormous amount – the climate data available to habitats.

**INT My PhD was on speckled wood. Well, I did it on speckled wood and brown argus looking at how climate has affected – so for speckled wood it was looking at how changes in temperature and rainfall patterns have affected its distribution between woodland and grassland areas, so this move out of woodland that we’ve seen, and then for brown argus it was – it was kind of moving away from the chalk grassland sites out into the wider countryside.**

P02 That is fascinating because of course on chalk grassland traditionally it was on rock rose, but you find it in sites where there is no rock rose. They go on small geraniums. But is that something that’s changed over time, as it has with some butterfly species? The brown hairstreak is now living on things other than blackthorn.

**INT Is it, okay, I didn’t know that one.**

P02 They’ve moved on to plum trees that people grow in their gardens. So, other prunus species, and that’s fairly recent I think. The comma is another example where it started feeding on nettles.

**INT So, interesting isn’t it.**

P02 And then you’ve got the wall, which as you probably know they think that’s trying to have a third generation, but we’re in this particular stage of changing our weather that means that that doesn’t survive.

**INT Can’t fit it in, yeah.**

P02 Completely died out in [county], and that’s in my lifetime. As a boy I used to find it in [Town], almost in the high street, the wall butterfly. Gone completely.

**INT Well, I think the last one I saw was probably about 10 years ago on the Great Orme in South Wales.**

P02 Wonderful place.

**INT Okay. I think I’ve taken up plenty of your time. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your recording activities?**

P02 I made a little – I was going to say the difficulty of keeping up with records, it is hugely difficult getting it all into a digital form. There’s been a huge growth in recording in recent years. Facebook, digital photography, they’re all helping enormously. You have to be careful when you look at historical data.

**INT And do you think those kind of Facebook communities would be places where you could do this kind of targeting of asking people to visit particular places, do you think that kind of community would be receptive to that kind of –**

P02 I think some of them would, yes. It’s very variable.

[IRRELEVANT CONTENT]

**INT Okay. Thank you.**

P02 Well, I hope it helped.

**INT It did, very, very much, thank you. So, I guess this project is going to evolve and we’re going to get to the next stage where we’re wanting people to test the various tools that we produce, so would you be happy with us to keep your contact details online so we can – not online, but on our system, so we can keep you in touch with the project, is that something that you’d be interested in?**

P02 Just one thing I ought to say, my phone, it’s a wonderful device, it’s the extra miniature version.

**INT Oh yes. So, that’s an important point, yes.**

P02 I haven’t got a smartphone. I have no intention of getting one. Not at the moment. I quite like the GPS facility, that would be useful, but I can’t see me getting one until there’s absolutely no choice but to have one. I guess a lot of your stuff will be on smartphones.

**INT Well, I think we’re trying to do something that’s both kind of a browser, a web browser, and an app, so it would be perhaps like a web interface where you could log on and it would give you a message in terms of these are places that we would like you to go and visit. So, I think the idea is that it will be an app and a web platform, so it shouldn’t be – it shouldn’t exclude people that have smartphones.**

P02 That would be good, yeah. I just don’t want to be forever looking at a phone. It’s as simple as that. I hate it.

**INT I know. And they are addictive, that’s the problem isn’t it. They’re designed that way, to be addictive. Okay, thank you so much that was really, really interesting.**

P02 Thank you. I mean it’s really interesting what you’re doing, and I look forward to hearing more about progress.

**INT I would love to see some photos of your garden, it sounds absolutely fascinating.**

P02 I might dig one out and send it to you.

**INT If you’ve got the time that would be lovely.**

P02 Not for public sharing.

**INT No, I won’t, no, don’t worry. Now, I’ve got a picture of it in my mind and, yeah, it would be nice to see a photo of it in reality.**

P02 I’ll try sort something out. I will send you a photograph of the hoverfly as well because that is special. You may never see one of those.

**INT I doubt it. Okay, thank you so much.**

P02 Right, nice to meet you.

**INT And you. Take care.**

P02 Bye.

**INT Bye.**

**Audio ends: [01:17:58]**