

CiSFBR

CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY FEDERATION OF BIOLOGICAL RECORDERS

Interesting Find



Photo: M Lee

Chris Haes found *Volucella zonaria*, our largest hoverfly, at Ventonleague (SW575385) on 15th August 2005. This impressive fly (25mm long) is a local species in south east England, but here in Cornwall it is only resident by the Tamar, being a rare migrant to other parts of the county.

CISFBR AGM

Fraddon Village Hall 11th March 2006

The AGM of the Society followed the Spring Meeting on the subject of 'Ponds and Wildlife', when the following presentations were made - *Ponds in Cornwall* by James Burke (Environment Agency). *Vegetation and Ponds* by Nick Stewart. *Molluscs in Cornish Ponds* by Geraldine Holyoak.

The AGM was chaired by Adrian Spalding and there were 26 members present including the following Committee members: I J Bennallick, E C M Haes, Rosemary Parslow, M J Stribley, Dr C N French, A Spalding, Pamela Tompsett, A Atkinson, Rosaline Murphy, T Opie, Joan Carr, Catriona Neil. Apologies were received from, Mary Atkinson, M Lee, D T Holyoak, A Tompsett, C N Page, Jacqui Davey, Stella Turk, Frankie Lister, Loveday Jenkin. The minutes of the previous AGM of the 12th March 2005 were made available. There were no matters arising and the minutes were accepted.

Chairman's Report (Rosemary Parslow): At last year's AGM the theme was 'Recording Wildlife in Hedges'. Speakers included Keith Alexander speaking about the importance of hedges for invertebrates, Alex Howie on mammals in hedges, Sonia Hurley introduced the Hedge Importance Test and Jacqui Davey spoke about using the test by members of the Guild of Cornish Hedgers. Due to the Chairman's car having broken down on the way to Fraddon the meeting was chaired by Colin French. The CISFBR Spring Newsletter was published and circulated in late April.

A follow-up meeting on surveying hedges for wildlife was held at Mudgeon Farm in early August. This gave interested participants a chance to try out the HIT test for themselves.

As Sarah Board had gone on maternity leave, Trevor Edwards was invited to join the CISFBR committee to represent

ERRCIS. We were pleased he was able to attend some meetings.

During the year Colin French introduced his Windows version of ERICA database. A sub-group of the committee met to discuss this, as there had been some slight concern that there might be a conflict of interest with the ERRCIS RECORDER database. It has been accepted that this will not happen. Colin has now given demonstrations of the database to members, and several are now using the upgrade.

2005 was a busy year for many of the recorders in CISFBR. The Cornwall & Isles of Scilly botanical recorders have started work on the Cornwall Rare Plants Register & the Scilly RPR respectively.

Work continued on the revisions to the Recorders' Handbook - due imminently. The Fern Atlas for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly progressed, although more slowly than expected. Many more photographs have been taken in Cornwall to add to the illustrations. Meticulous checking of the distribution maps plus the inclusion of alien ferns is hoped to ensure the book will be of interest to fern enthusiasts outside Cornwall. It is hoped publication will be very soon.

Treasurer's Report (Chris Haes): This showed the finances to be in good health with a total balance of £1656.14 of which £450 is ring fenced in the publication fund.

Election of Officers: The following officers were elected: Chairman Rosemary Parslow. Vice-Chairman Dr Colin French Secretary Ian Bennallick. Treasurer Chris Haes. Minutes Secretary Matt Stribley. Newsletter Ed. Malcolm Lee.

Election of Committee: Rosaline Murphy said she wished to stand down. This was accepted and she was thanked for all her work, being one of the founder members. Two committee positions were identified as being vacant. Steve Hoskin and Bernard Hocking were nominated, and the Committee were elected en bloc.

Publications Report (Ian Bennallick): IB reported that work on the revised Recorders Handbook is complete and they are now available. There was a problem with the printing and only 50 copies have been produced. An electronic version in 'pdf' format is being considered. The Fern Atlas is due for publication later in the year and is part funded by CISBR. Keith Alexander's Hemiptera Check list is in preparation and publication will be supported by CISFBR

Any other Business: IB reported that Sarah Board will not be returning to ERCCIS as manager, the position presently being advertised. She will however be available to act in a consultancy role. PT mentioned that there is a Marine Algae workshop being led by Juliet Brodie in April. AA questioned who represents CISFBR on the ERCCIS Steering Committee. It was confirmed that Adrian Spalding and Chris Haes are the nominated representatives. AS said that often he was unable to attend. AA pointed out that this is a key role in CISFBR and the matter needed attention. AS pointed out that the meeting agenda is set well before any meeting, without input from recorders, with the clients setting the agenda. CISFBR needs to consider ways it can support the ERCCIS Manager. It was agreed to bring as an agenda item at the next CISFBR committee meeting. AA questioned the membership policy, asking 'who do we want to attract as members'? He pointed

out that other groups such as the Caradon Field Club were not very well represented on CISFBR (it turned out that 4 members were present for the AGM). It was agreed though that expert recorders from all groups should be invited to join CISFBR as well as Caradon Field Club. It was agreed to bring as an agenda item at the next CISFBR committee meeting prior to writing. The membership level was briefly discussed. CH pointed out it has been in slight decline from 50 a few years and now stands at 44.

A Handbook for Biological Recorders 2nd edition 2006 – fully revised and updated

*A manual for recording plants, animals and their habitats in
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly*

*Edited by Mary Atkinson, Ian Bennallick, David Holyoak,
Derek Lord & Paul McCartney*

The aim of this Handbook is to promote and assist biological recording in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, by stimulating recording; passing on existing experience of surveying techniques; and to encourage standardised record gathering for the various taxonomic groups. It begins with some introductory sections about recording, introducing the reader to the general standards that are expected in recording. For example, there are sections on what and how to record, and what you should do with records once you have collected them.

The majority of the Handbook deals with individual plant and animal groups, with each section having been written by a relevant expert. The species groups covered include fungi, lichens, bryophytes, vascular plants, plant galls, fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals, along with a wide range of invertebrates. The last eight sections deal with various aspects of marine recording covering such groups as sponges, molluscs, marine fish, cetaceans and seals. The second edition is fully revised and updated and also includes new sections on the use of hand-held GPS, introductions to ERCCIS and CISFBR, recording techniques and resources of non-marine invertebrates, Larger Brachycera (Diptera), woodlice, seaweeds, marine sponges, tunicates and sea squirts, and recording non-native flora.

The Handbook for Biological Recorders is a publication that has resulted from a collaboration between the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Federation of Biological Recorders (CISFBR) and the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS). It has been designed as a loose-leaf format held within an A4 folder, to allow for the possibility of inserting section updates or new sections.

The Handbook is available from the Records Centre at £15.00 each (plus £5.80 postage and packing) or £12.00 to CISFBR members (again plus postage and packing). Copies can be collected from ERCCIS to save on p&p.

Spring meeting and AGM 11th March 2006

‘Ponds and Wildlife’

CISFBR's Spring Meeting and AGM took place in Fraddon Village hall on the 11th March 2006, the topic for the day was Ponds and Wildlife attracting an audience of approximately 40. During the morning 3 excellent presentations were given the first being -

Ponds in Cornwall by James Burke

James is a Biodiversity Officer within the Environment agency and he demonstrated an extensive knowledge of Cornish ponds and the associated issues.

James gave a brief historical overview of pond and referred to Oliver Rackham's definition of a pond as being any depression in the ground which collects water. He went on to refer to many statistics relating to Cornish ponds, a few mentioned were:

- in 1190 CTNC estimated that there were 2610 ponds in Cornwall.
- That EA staff have visited over 258 ponds
- 58% landscape/amenity, 26% private fishery, 13% course fishing, 3% shooting ponds.
- The water source varies 63% off stream ground water fed, 19% on stream (often the larger ponds), 13% off stream with abstraction and 3% de silting.

James explained that much of his work is in advising landowners on the management or creation of ponds. He said that there are 3 main points to consider in all cases being:

- **Water** – find a source and keep the water in the pond. Many Cornish soils and rocks are very suitable with clays layers preventing ponds from draining too quickly in dry periods.
- **Use of spoil** – There is a large cost if taken off site for disposal so use in the landscaping of a new feature constructing banks or hedges.
- **Location and size** – off stream or on stream. One wetland for another? Size – can keep small in wetlands. On stream ponds will be more prone to silting so future maintenance is important.

James discussed other factors which also need to be considered such as the surrounding land use, receiving water courses, depth of water and side slope details.

Towards the end of the presentation James showed a number of interesting pictures illustrating some pond types the first being a simple scrape being constructed followed by a large landscape scale pond on the Camel fed in part from road drainage. An example of a balance was taken from the Amble valley where a balance of wetlands and ponds is used.

For future reference James recommended obtaining the following publication: The Ponds Conservation Trust 'The Pond Book: a guide to the management and creation of ponds'.

Vegetation and Ponds by Nick Stewart

Nick covered a couple of areas in this talk. He started with the Classification and assessment of Pond Vegetation then followed up issues affecting vegetation in ponds in Cornwall.

He explained that Rodwell is best avoided for classification purposes and discussed factors which make classification difficult. The main factor is that the plants are beneath the water surface making access difficult, also there are a small number of plants species and there are narrow depth zonations. (3 different zones).

Nick explained briefly work undertaken in Scotland and also the PSYM methods.

Nick gave an interesting account of survey work and observations on ponds in the Goonhavern, Perranwell and Zelah area where he surveyed all ponds in the area for Slender Stonewort (*Nitella gracilis*). Of the 34 ponds surveyed 10 had shade problems which severely limit vegetative growth within the pond. Filling-in had occurred in 3, and 5 had reverted to wet woodland. Introduced aquatic plants were present in 13, and 11 had water quality problems. Although the area isn't intensively farmed nutrient enrichment was an unexpected problem in the ponds with no cause or source being evident.

It was interesting to note that Nick reported that during the survey he found the gain (new ponds) outnumbered the losses but most new ponds were 'Sombrero Hat' shaped for fishing but these have steep sides and none of the important shallow edges or grazing.

Nick explained the importance of shallow edges combined with grazing and describes an instance (not in Cornwall) where the edges has been covered in swamp stonewort. This was cleared using herbicide but then with the poaching cattle pillwort returned to the site.

Molluscs in Cornish Ponds by Geraldine Holyoak

Geraldine gave a very informative talk and focused on 3 areas, Cornish Ponds, Sampling and the species.

A variety of ponds were described including simple ponds, ones resulting from mining for china clay, natural flooded area (in winter) such as at Campertown farm, interestingly Bude canal and other features.

Some good photographs were shown regarding sampling techniques. Typically a device to collect specimens off the bottom of the pond is required. Geraldine showed the '©' Holyoak Sieve, a home made but very effective and low cost device fabricated from a kitchen sieve reinforced with a steel hoop and clipped to a long pole. Apparently the gauge of the sieve is ideal for use in Cornish ponds.

Regarding species Geraldine said that there are 28 species of Mollusca associated with Cornish ponds. This is a relatively impoverished fauna compared to the the rest of England. This is attributed to in the main to the low availability of calcium, apart from certain maritime dune systems. Of the 28, 3 are not native originating from the souther hemisphere. Interestingly we have 9 non-native species in Cornwall which are native in England having arrived here via the nursery trade or fish keeping. There are however 16 species which are native here and thrive in the pond habitat.

Geraldine discussed 2 notable species. *Ferrissia wautieri*, an alien fresh water limpet first appeared in Bude canal but now has spread as far as Goss moor and *Planorbarius corneus* which is widespread in England but not spreading Cornwall.

It was interesting to hear about the habitats that *Omphiscola glabra* adopts. Apparently this snail is most prevalent on site where winter flooding occur, typically on moorlands. However this snail is abundant in certain ponds on Goss Moor a very atypical Habitat. It was interesting to note that there was a good transition zone between, from shallow to deep water, and no steep banks.

Following the presentations we shared lunch and proceeded by the AGM. It was an excellent informative day and I would like to thank all those who help arrange and to the 3 speakers.

Matt Stribley

Erica for Windows

The *Erica for Windows* database is now available for individual members of CISFBR. It is a very powerful, sophisticated, biological recording database, which is easy to use and flexible.

The *Erica for Windows* database has been developed over the past three years as a replacement for the Dos-based Erica database, which has been used since 1987.

Features include:

- 1,450,000 biological records covering 22,000 species.
- 3000 plant and animal photographs.
- Gazetteer of 15,000 place names.
- A variety of data input programs that allow rapid, accurate entry of biological records. Includes extensive error checking.
- In-built mapping software – both vector maps and geology, climate, roads etc.
- Easy to use and flexible tools to view the records of species, recorders, sources, sites, grid references, taxonomic groups, genera, etc.
- Fast generation of species lists for grid references, sites, people, etc.
- Export data to excel, DMAP, csv and html files.
- Import data from TAB-delimited files and Mapmate export files.

- Compatibility with Mapmate.

Erica for Windows has been developed to:

- Stimulate biological recording.
- Set new recording standards for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- Ensure Cornwall is at the forefront of biological recording in Britain.
- Provide a significant additional benefit for members of CISFBR.

Operating principles:

Erica for Windows is a recording system, which will operate on the following principles:

1. Each user has a copy of all the available biological records for Cornwall on their own personal computer.
2. Each user is expected to enter their biological records into the database.
3. Each user periodically exports their biological records to the central database.
4. In return, each user receives the new records from the central database, plus software updates.
5. New records will be subject to data validation procedures (quality control).
6. The biological records will be made available to ERCCIS, plus national recording bodies.

Everybody benefits from the collective efforts of everyone else!

Having all the available data on each user's personal computer is invaluable in so many ways, such as identifying gaps, planning future recording, and when entering records, checking what has already been recorded at a site or what other records have been made for that species. The possibilities are endless.

Cost:

The annual license fee for individual CISFBR members is £20.

System requirements:

To install *Erica for Windows* you need to have a personal computer running Windows XP or Windows 2000 and 1Gb of free disk space and 250Mb of RAM. This amount of disk space is needed to hold the 1.4 million biological records within the database, plus photographs etc.

Please note:

The database comes supplied with 1.45 million biological records. This represents a high proportion of all the biological records in electronic form held in Cornwall. However, it should never be regarded as a comprehensive source of information on the wildlife of Cornwall, and consequently agencies, such as ERCCIS or Butterfly Conservation, should always be consulted, before using the records, because they hold additional data, both electronic and paper-based, as well as expertise in interpreting biological records.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of *Erica for Windows*, please complete the details below and return this part of the form, together with a cheque for £20.00, to: Colin French, 12 Seton Gardens, Weeth Road, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7JS

Name:

Address:.....

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Telephone:.....

Email:.....

Please make the cheque payable to C.N. French.

2006 FIELD MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

Booking essential for these field trips and workshops -
(BCG): *Botanical Cornwall Group: Ian Bennallick (01726 890384)*
(CIG): *Cornwall Invertebrate Group: Ian Bennallick or Sue Scott at ERCCIS (01872 240777)*
(ERCCIS): *Ian Bennallick or Sue Scott at ERCCIS (01872 240777)*

APRIL

Wednesday 19th April (BCG): Kilminorth Woods, nr. Looe (SX25)
A pleasant walk through woodland alongside the West Looe River.
Meet at car park in West Looe, SX250537.

Tuesday 25th April (CIG): South Penquite Farm, nr. Blisland (SX17)
Freshwater Invertebrate day.
Leaders: Sally Foster, Phillip & Sarah Corbet, and Geraldine Holyoak

Friday 28th April (ERCCIS): Falmouth Area coast (SW83). Marine algae workshop (*intended as follow up to 2005 workshop*). Leaders: Juliet Brodie & Pamela Tompsett

Saturday 29th April (ERCCIS): Falmouth Area coast (SW83). Marine algae workshop (*intended as follow up to 2005 workshop*). Leaders: Juliet Brodie & Pamela Tompsett

Saturday 29th April (BCG): Bodmin Area (SX06 & SX17)
Bryophyte Recording Weekend. Leaders: Mark Pool and Ken Preston-Mafham. Meet: Car-park at Respryn Bridge SX099635

Sunday 30th April (BCG): Bodmin Area (SX06 & SX17) Bryophyte Recording Weekend. Leaders: Mark Pool and Ken Preston-Mafham
Meet: Near sharp bend not far from path to Devil's Jump SX105793.
For further information on this bryophyte recording weekend, please contact Nicholas De Sausmarez on 01872862773.

MAY

Wednesday 10th May (BCG): Trevigue, nr. Crackington Haven (SX19) Diverse habitats - cliffs, heath, woodland and unimproved grassland. Meet at Trevigue SX135951

Sunday 28th May (BCG): Hellesveor Cliff To Trevega Cliff (SW44)
A cliff walk along dramatic coastal scenery.
Meet at lay-by on Rosewall Hill SW487394

Tuesday 30th May (CIG): Boconnoc Estate, Lostwithiel (SX16)
A rare opportunity to explore the parkland on the estate. A must for deadwood invertebrate enthusiasts.
Leaders Ian Bennallick & Sue Scott

JUNE

Saturday 17th June (BCG): Browda, near Linkinhorne (SX37)
A farm with woodland, riverside and semi-improved grassland.
Meet at Browda SX308719

Saturday 17th June (ERCCIS): Trevenson House, Camborne College, Pool. Microscope Workshop
Leader: Kernow Microscopical Society

Wednesday 21st June (BCG): Blakes Keiro, nr. St. Minver (SW97)
Isolated wet heath with orchids and Meadow Thistle.
Meet at Blakes Keiro SW962759

Wednesday 28th June (CIG): Dunmere Wood (SX06)
A Forestry Commission wood with interesting old records
Leaders: Sue Scott & Ian Bennallick

JULY

Saturday 1st July (BCG): Eastcott, nr. North Tamerton (SX39)
Farm with woodland, culm grassland, and access to River Tamar.
Meet at Eastcott SX314956.

Thursday 13th July (ERCCIS): CWT headquarters, Allet
Habitat Workshop - Phase One Surveying
Leader Dr John Gowenlock

Wednesday 19th July (BCG): Wimalford, Upper Fowey valley (SX27). Acid bog, moorland and hay meadows
Meet at entrance to Wimalford SX213732.

Saturday 22nd July (ERCCIS/Camborne & Redruth NHS): Godolphin Estate, nr. Helston (SW63). Plant Gall Walk
Leaders: Elizabeth Jackson & Ian Bennallick

Sunday 30th July (BCG): Cow-y-Jack, Crousa Common And Main Dale, near Coverack (SW71)
Grazed heath, scrub and bog.
Meet at parking area at St. Keverne Beacon SW772197.

AUGUST

Sunday 6th August (BCG): Ventonteague And Trenerry Farm (SW85). Large wet woodland and scrub
Meet: lay-by at Boxheater SW820529

Wednesday 9th August (BCG): Eglosmerther, east of Truro (SW84)
Organic farm with a mixture of grassland, arable and woodland.
Meet: Eglosmerther SW861445

Saturday 23rd August (CIG): Millook Woods, Near Bude
Broadleaf woodland with sheltered wet valley bottoms
Leaders: Ian Bennallick and Sue Scott

Saturday 26th August (BCG): Tregirls, north of Padstow (SW97)
Numerous arable field margins for plants and birds.
Meet: Harbour Cove SW908771 (*Let IB have your car reg. number as parking should then be free*)

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 6th September (BCG): Dorminack area, nr. Lamorna Cove (SW42). Cliff grassland, scrub and small unimproved fields. Shore Dock will also be seen.
Meet: Lay-by at New Town SW435246

Saturday 9th September (ERCCIS) Duchy College, Rosewarne (SW64). Ladybird identification workshop.
Leader: Keith Alexander

Wednesday 13th September (BCG): Frogmore, Nr. Lanteglos (SX15)
Mixture of arable, cliff grassland and scrub and streamside.
Meet: Car park at Frogmore SX156516

OCTOBER

Saturday 7th October (BCG): Court Farm, Philleigh (SW83)
Extensive wooded frontage to the estuarine River Fal.
Meet: Nr. church in Philleigh SW871393

Saturday 7th October (ERCCIS): Duchy College, Rosewarne (SW64). Myriapod identification workshop.
Leader: Tony Barber

CISFBR Officers for 2006/07

Chair: Rosemary Parslow, 17 St Michael's Road, Ponsanooth, Truro, TR3 7ED. Tel: 01872 865013

Vice Chair: Dr Colin French, 12 Seton Gardens, Weeth Road, Camborne, TR14 7JS. Tel: 01209 613942

Secretary: Ian Bennallick, Lower Polmorla, St Wenn, Bodmin, PL30 5PE. Tel: 01726 890384

e-mail: ian@bennallick.fsnet.co.uk

Treasurer: Chris Haes, 6 Hatch's Hill, Angarrack, Hayle, TR27 5HY. Tel: 01736 752940

Newsletter Editor: Malcolm Lee, Gullrock, Port Gaverne, Port Isaac, PL29 3SQ. Tel: 01208 880106

e-mail: gullrock@ukonline.co.uk

Minutes Secretary: Matt Stribley, 20 Green Close, Truro, TRI 2DD. Tel: 01872 272900

Committee: All the above plus Tony Atkinson, Joan Carr, Tim Dingle (*corresponding member*), Chris Hinks, Bernard Hocking, David Holyoak, Steve Hoskin, Loveday Jenkin, Catriona Neil, Treve Opie, Dr Chris Page, Adrian Spalding, and Pamela Tompsett

Articles For Future Newsletters

If you have news, articles or photos of interest to CISFBR members, please send them to the newsletter editor.

Sending articles by e-mail as a WORD document is easiest, but any other format, or a typed or hand written article will always be very acceptable.