



NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR BIOLOGICAL RECORDING

NEWSLETTER No. 16

June 1994



National Federation of Biological Recording Newsletter 16
Incorporating Recorder User Group News

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Articles for the newsletter should be submitted to the editor, preferably on computer disc, either 5.25 or 3.5 in disc in ASCII format, or Windows Word format on DOS compatible discs, or in ASCII on Unix/Xenix format discs. The deadline for the next newsletter is 1st September 1994.

News

FEDERATION FOR BIOLOGICAL RECORDING

NOTICE

NFBR ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 1994

Venue: International Centre of Landscape Ecology, Loughborough University, Leicestershire.

Dates: 18th & 19th July, 1994

Theme: 'Action on Biodiversity - legislation, standards and policies in biological recording.'

The morning session on the 18th July will be taken up by presentations on the British Government's response to the Earth Summit at Rio, in particular the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and its implications for the Government's data requirements.

The afternoon will be used for workshop sessions dealing with standards and quality assurance in terms of the data which records centres can provide and the associated services they can offer and on the legal situation for holders and suppliers of data.

The morning of the 19th July will examine data needs of other users and summaries of the previous day's workshops.

After lunch there will be the Federation's AGM followed by a shorter Recorder User Group meeting.

Booking forms are included with this newsletter. They should be returned to the International Centre of Landscape Ecology at Loughborough University by the beginning of July.

Bill Ely
Chairman

Nominations for NFBR Council

Nominations are required for the posts of Chairman, Secretary and Ordinary Council Members. Nominations should be sent to the secretary, Marie Moreau, 69 Mill Lane, Greenfield, Flitwick, Beds by July 1st.

Update on CCBR

Some NFBR members will be wondering what has happened to the long anticipated Phase 1 report of the Co-ordinating Commission for Biological Recording. Since the joint NFBR/CCBR meeting in October 1993 (see NFBR Newsletter No. 15, page 6-7), work towards completing the report was delayed for several months whilst funding was secured and the form of the final report and that of the CCBR database was agreed.

An important development is that the sponsoring bodies (JNCC and DoE) have asked that the final version of the report should not exceed 100 printed pages (approximately 50,000 words plus tables and figures). In addition there will be a larger, separate volume of appendices, containing, for example, lists of organisations, lists of data holdings and a bibliography. As a consequence of these changes, the report will have to be rewritten completely and will be much shorter and less detailed than the partial draft prepared for CCBR in August 1993. A brief synopsis of the report is included below.

Work is well under way again and we can report the following progress and developments.

1. The form of the report has been agreed with the sponsors.
2. All the completed CCBR questionnaires received up to the end of August 1993 have been computerised in the CCBR database.
3. A detailed manual to the CCBR database has been prepared.
4. Work is well underway on re-analysing the results of the CCBR survey and on drafting revised text. We expect a first draft of the report to be completed during June 1994.
5. Copies of the CCBR database have been installed at JNCC and DoE and CCBR's own copy is installed at the Biological Records Centre, ITE Monks Wood.

Provisional synopsis of the CCBR report

Title: **Biological recording in the UK**

Section 1: **Background**

Chapter 1: Background, objectives and methodology of the CCBR review.

Section 2: **The findings**

Chapter 2: The current state of biological recording in the UK.

Section 3: **Policies and potential for a national system**

Chapter 3: Future needs in biological recording.

Chapter 4: Potential for a national system for biological recording.

Section 4: **Implementing a national system -necessary actions**

Chapter 5: Types and format of data

Chapter 6: Verification and standards

Chapter 7: Computerised data management

Chapter 8: Data exchange transfer and availability

Chapter 9: The development of a national system, organisation and funding

Section 5: **Recommendations**

Chapter 10: Main recommendations for action and timing.

Further information about the CCBR report will be given at the NFBR Conference at Loughborough on 18/19 July 1994.

Paul T Harding
Secretary, CCBR

Environmental Information Forum

The Environment Council has recently received a grant from the DoE's Environmental Action Fund to undertake a project called Information for Local Action. The project aims to provide support and guidance to ensure that local environmental information is effectively gathered and exchanged. The project includes a research phase, focusing on a sample of local environmental information centres, provision of guidance and support through reports and training, development of existing databases of national and regional organisations and the identification of effective ways of exchanging data. A newsletter is to be produced regularly.

Further information is available from Rachel Adatia, The Environment Council, 21 Elizabeth St, London SW1W 9RP.

Planning News

The impending reorganisation of local government is likely to have a marked effect upon systems of planning and development control and on the funding and operation of many local BRCs. The Local Government Commission has included a special section on planning issues in "Renewing Local Government in the English Shires" HMSO.

The Commission draws attention to the difficulties that are likely to arise if unitary authorities are established. The Commission suggests that strategic policies should be set down and maintained by a joint structure planning unit based upon the old county boundaries or regionally if sensible. Local plans prepared by the unitary authorities would have to be based on these strategic structure plans.

Environmental Assessment

The Institute of Environmental Assessment have prepared **Guidelines for the baseline ecological input to environmental assessment** jointly with a wide range of organisations including the statutory nature conservation agencies. The guidelines stress the need for assessments of groups other than plants and have considerable implications for all record centres in terms of potential demand for information. The consultation period has recently finished and it is planned that the guidelines will be published by Chapman Hall in the autumn. Information is available from IEA, Fen Rd, East Kirby, Lincs PE23 4DB.

NFBR Publications

Back numbers of NFBR Newsletters are available from the editor.

Proceedings of the 1991 NFBR Conference, **Invertebrates in the landscape : invertebrate recording in site evaluation and countryside monitoring** have now been published by the British Entomological and Natural History Society as a supplement to the British Journal of Entomology and Natural History as Vol. 7, Supp 1, Harding, P. (ed), Feb 1994, ISSN 0952 7583. Copies are available from R.D. Hawkins, Sales Secretary, 30d Meadowcroft Close, Horley, Surrey RH6 9EL.

All other published conference proceedings, 1985-87 & 1989, are available from Paul Harding, ITE Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2LS. It is hoped to publish the proceedings for the 1992 conference in the near future.

Membership leaflets

New membership leaflets are now available. In addition a membership form is printed on the last page of this edition of the newsletter.

RECORDER USER GROUP

Aunty Stuart's Problem Page

One of the most frequent problem areas I get asked about is printing maps from PLOT5. This program draws maps by sending instructions to a suitable plotter in a language called Hewlett-Packard Graphics Language (HPGL). This was designed to drive pen plotters made by Hewlett-Packard, but has been used more widely as a general way of describing pictures. Many plotters, made by many different manufacturers, are capable of accepting HPGL instructions and some laser printers (especially Hewlett-Packard's) have an HPGL emulation mode which allows them to print an image directly. The latest versions of PLOT5 has the ability to write the HPGL code to a file on disk, as well as to send it directly to a plotter or printer. Several of the "heavyweight" word processors (e.g. WordPerfect, Microsoft Word) will accept this file and incorporate the image in your document. This has several advantages - it allows you to position the image appropriately in your text, caption it as you wish, and adjust its size to fit your page layout.

Nevertheless, most users probably want to get the image from the screen on to paper as conveniently as possible and probably do not have access to a pen plotter. Enter a piece of shareware called "PrintGL". This was brought to my attention by Terry Rowell, an environmental consultant based in Wales, who writes:

"PrintGL is a shareware pen plotter emulator. It will print HPGL files on Epson and IBM 9 pin printers, Epson, Fujitsu, IBM, NEC and Toshiba 24 pin printers, HP LaserJet (inc. LaserJet 4 at 600dpi), DeskJet, color DeskJet (inc. 550c), PaintJet (inc. XL300), QuietJet, HP-GL/2 devices, and HP-GL plotters, IBM ExecJet, Quietwriter 2 and 3, LaserPrinter, and plotters, Canon LBP, BJ, and BJC printers, Kodak Color 4, PDP ProTracer, Tektronix ColorQuick, and PostScript printers. It will also display plots on screen using CGA, EGA, VGA, enhanced VGA, or HGC graphics, and output a ZSoft PCX bit map file or an Encapsulated PostScript file with preview bit map. If your printer isn't listed, it will probably emulate one of the above.

In addition, PrintGL allows manipulation of line width, pen colours, pen shading, orientation and position of the image, and much more. PrintGL can be run directly from the DOS command line using a complex range of parameters, but a menu interface is also provided which enables you to select and test parameters on-screen. Once you have things set as you wish, there is a menu option which will generate a DOS batch file to run PrintGL from a simple command such as `PLOT plotfile`.

The shareware version of PrintGL is available to try out for £6 or less (if you order other disks) from:

The Public Domain and Shareware Library
Winscombe House
Beacon Road
Crowborough
Sussex
TN6 1UL

Tel. 0892 663298
Fax: 0892 667473
BBS (8nl) 0892 661149

The registered version costs \$50 from:

Ravitz Software Inc.
P.O. Box 25068
Lexington, KY 40524-5068
USA"

For those of you who haven't encountered "shareware" before: it is a method for distributing software by individual programmers and small companies on a "try before you buy" basis. The fully functional software, usually with documentation on disk, is available either freely, via electronic bulletin boards, or for the cost of the disk and handling from a "Shareware library". You may then try it out without any further commitment. If you find it useful, you "register" your copy by sending a payment to the author who will usually supply a proper manual and the latest version. Shareware is *not* free software - you are expected to pay the author if you continue to use it!

I have tried PrintGL out with my ancient Epson RX80 dot matrix printer and with an HP3Si laser at work and can confirm that it works very well. The procedure is to ask PLOT5 to produce its output to a file and then to use PrintGL to send the file to the printer. The documentation states that PrintGL is also available, for a commercial licence fee, in the form of a print driver which can be incorporated in other software to allow it to drive the wide range of printers that PrintGL supports. English Nature are investigating this to see whether it would be feasible to buy a licence and include it in a future version of PLOT5.

Progress with Recorder 3.2.

Recorder 3.2 is going to be about 6 months late. We initially said that it would be out in January 1994, its likely to be June 1994! However, many of the features which were initially going to be in Recorder 4 are in 3.2 so it will be worth the wait (honest!).

The main phase of development was actually completed by early January 1994, but unfortunately, due to wrangles over the Runtime Deployment Kit (the licence to distribute runtime copies of Advanced Revelation) I could not actually get it out to the Technical Group for testing until February. Several "beta test" versions then did the rounds during February and March and I had it ready for release to new installations for the User Group Meeting in Newcastle in April. At the last minute, I received a copy of Stace's flora and Kent's checklist of flowering plants on disk from BRC. The Technical Group took the decision that we should wait until the Stace/Kent lists could be incorporated in the species dictionary since so many people had been asking for this. Merging these lists with the plant list already in Recorder has been no easy job and Derek Wells has been of tremendous assistance. The job is nearly complete, but needs to go back to Derek for checking.

I have also written the necessary programs to move existing Recorder user's data from their current version to Recorder 3.2. This went to the Technical Group for testing last week (16th May). The final decisions on a release date will be made at the next Technical Group meeting on 16th June. By then I hope to have both the Stace/Kent list and the Technical Group's comments on the upgrade programs. Providing nothing (else) goes horribly wrong, the whole thing should come together by the end of June and be made available for new installations, and as an upgrade package for existing users, all at the same time (and I can go back to having sleep, weekends and a family!).

Some highlights of Recorder 3.2:

- A runtime version of Advanced Revelation 3.1 will be included at no extra cost! Arev's improved interface fully supports mouse operations including scroll bars and buttons. This makes using Recorder more like many other software packages and should make it easier for new users.
- Much improved reporting via nearly 60 predefined reports which can be simply selected from a pop-up.
- Much improved handling of printers including support for different paper sizes and fonts.
- Additional types of user allowing different levels of access and security.
- Many of the facilities that system managers need for managing users, configuring the system, etc. that required delving into the depths of Arev are now available from the menus.
- Bryophytes, Charrophytes and lichens fully sorted out in the species dictionary.
- European statuses, British Red Data Book and nationally scarce statuses and Wildlife and Countryside Act schedule listings for all species except birds.

RECORDER Support

All support calls until further notice should be directed to:

Telephone: 0483 48055

Fax: 0483 486505

Letters Surrey Wildlife Trust
School Lane
Pirbright
Woking
Surrey GU24 0JN

Please ask for RECORDER support and remember that you will need to quote your RECORDER centre number.

Recorder Training

Details of the Recorder Training Programme organised by the Wildlife Trusts is given on the adjacent page.

System Management Training

Turner Automation have developed a series of modular training courses to cover the full range of needs from early users to advanced topics for System Managers. The courses can be given at the user's premises and customised for each user group to provide the required emphasis, or can be given at a central location and of standard content to cater for open attendance by a mix of users. Standard modules include:

- Introduction to Recorder and Data Entry. 1 day.
- Report Generation. 1 day.
- System Manager. ½ day.

Each student uses a computer (which can be provided) to perform many exercises to reinforce the learning process. Training material is handed out as the course progresses. Training courses have been delivered to users including Scottish National Heritage. Enquiries and request for the standard syllabus should be addressed to:

Turner Automation, Littleton Farmhouse, Littleton, Guildford, Surrey GU3 1HW
Telephone / Fax: 0483-304949

Recorder User Group Meeting

The next RUG meeting will be held at the NFBR AGM at Loughborough, 18th & 19th July, 1994

The Wildlife Trusts training programme continues through 1994/95 to give users and managers the skills necessary to run RECORDER efficiently and effectively. The Wildlife Trusts have unparalleled experience in the use and support of RECORDER and have established a record in the delivery of training to local record centres, local authorities, Wildlife Trusts, government agencies and individuals.

The Wildlife Trusts offer two standard courses:

Basic RECORDER Course

A two-day course covering RECORDER's structure and files, entering data and generating basic reports, including an introduction to customised reports. This course is suitable for new users with little computer or database experience.

Cost £220 per attendee ex VAT.

System Manager Course

A one-day course for those with some RECORDER or database experience who will have overall responsibility for running a RECORDER installation. Issues addressed will include system customisation, security, backup and design of custom reports.

Cost £130 per attendee ex VAT.

Costs include lunch, tea and coffee but not accommodation, breakfast or evening meals. Grants towards the cost may be available for Wildlife Trusts from The Wildlife Trusts' national office.

If you require RECORDER training tailored to your special needs The Wildlife Trusts will be pleased to quote for the course you require. For this, or any other queries regarding RECORDER training, contact James Marshall on 0522 544400.

PROGRAMME

Basic Course 15/16 June 1994 Wokingham, Berkshire

Basic Course 6/7 September 1994 Lincoln

Basic Course 11/12 October 1994 Wokingham, Berkshire

System Managers Course 13 October 1994 Wokingham, Berkshire

Basic Course 6/7 December 1994 Lincoln

System Managers Course 8 December 1994 Lincoln

Further courses are planned as below. Details will be circulated at a later date.

Basic Course late January 1995 (a southern venue)

System Managers Course late January 1995 (a southern venue)

Basic Course late March 1995 (a northern venue)

System Managers Course late March 1995 (a northern venue)

Please complete the booking form below. Note that a non-returnable deposit of £20 is required for the Basic Course, £15 for the System Managers course (please make cheques payable to RSNCL). The Wildlife Trusts reserve the right to cancel courses if insufficient clients book within four weeks of the start date. Deposits will then be returned.

Send the form with your deposit to: James Marshall, The Wildlife Trusts, The Green, Witham Park, Waterside South, Lincoln LN2 5JR.

BOOKING FORM

Please reserve place(s) on the Course, on (dates)

at (venue) I enclose a deposit of £

☐ Please send further information about the courses

Name

Organisation

Address

Phone no.

Indicate any special dietary requirements

Publications

English Nature produces a range of regular newsletters. These include:

Nature's Place, circulated to Local Authorities

ENACT, regular news on land management

Earth Heritage, geological news

All are well worth investigating. Details are available from EN Peterborough. 0733 3182246. Subscriptions for ENACT are dealt with by Administration Office, Communication House, Works Rd, Letchworth, Herts SG6 1LB.

English Nature Management Handbooks

Lowland Grassland Management. Includes chapters on grazing, mowing, burning and scrub management. Details from Dr Richard Jefferson on 0733 318328.

The Environmental Effects of Pesticide Drift. £11.00 form Publicity and Marketing Branch EN, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA (quote code A5.4)

Creating New Native Woodlands, Rodwell, J. & Patterson, FC, 1994, £8.95

Spiders, Chinery M., 1993, Whittet Books, ISBN 1 873580 96, £7.99

Recent ITE Atlases

Provisional atlas of the Cryptophagidae-Atomariinae (Coleoptera) of Britain and Ireland, Johnson, C., NERC, 1993, ISBN 1 870393 171

Provisional atlas of the lacewings and allied insects (Neuroptera, Megaloptera, Raphidioptera and Mecoptera) of Britain and Ireland, Plant, C.W., NERC, 1993, ISBN 1 870393 18X

Provisional atlas of the ptychopterid crane flies (Diptera: Ptychopteridae) of Britain and Ireland, Stubbs, A.E., NERC, 1993, ISBN 1 870393 198

The Environment & the Planning System
Bulleid, 1993, British Library, ISBN 0 946655 79 0 £ 25.75

Environmental Policy Omissions in Development Plans: A CPRE Survey, Summary leaflet. Jan 94.
Free on receipt of SAE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The following conference proceedings are also available:

Biological Recording Forum, 1985. Proceedings of the Biological Recording Forum, London, April 1985. 41pp. £5.00. ☐

Biological Recording in a Changing Landscape: Inaugural conference of the NFBR, Cambridge. April 1986. 51pp. £8.00. ☐

Biological Recording: The Products. Proceedings of the annual conference of the NFBR, Bristol. April 1987. 60pp. £6.00. ☐

National Perspectives in Biological Recording in the UK. Proceedings of the annual conference of the NFBR, London, May 1989. 48pp. £3.50. ☐

Biological Recording: Invertebrates in the landscape. NFBR conference proceedings, Sussex. July 1991. (To be published as a supplement to the British Journal of Entomology and Natural History in late 1993).

Biological Recording: Who pays the Piper? Proceedings of the annual conference of the NFBR, Nottingham. September 1992. To be published shortly.

Biological Survey: Need and Network. Report of a Working Party set up by the Linnean Society of London. 1988. 48pp. £3.50. ☐

Please tick those you wish to order and send with a cheque, payable to the NFBR, to Paul Harding at The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. PE17 2LS.

Application for Membership. To Charles Copp, The Membership Secretary, 8 The Paddock, Clevedon, Bristol, Avon, BS21 6JU.

I wish to join the FEDERATION as a Personal/Organisational member and enclose a cheque for £6.00 or enclose a completed standing order. (delete as appropriate)

I wish to join the RECORDER User Group at no extra cost. Please tick if applicable. ☐

Name..... Organisation

Address.....

Post Code..... Tel..... Post Held.....

Standing Order To..... Bank..... Branch.....

Please pay on (date) the sum of £6.00 to Barclays Bank, 40 Corn St., Bristol, Avon. Code 20-13-42 A/C No. 20662046 and make similar payments annually on April 1st or until this order is cancelled in writing, charging such payments to my/our account number

Signature..... Date.....
Note: The annual subscription is due on April 1st each year. However, new subscriptions paid between January 1st and March 31st will carry through to March 31st in the following year.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

NFBR regrets that the 1994 Annual Conference is

CANCELLED

The NFBR Annual General Meeting will proceed but at the **revised time of 11 am** on
Tuesday 19th July

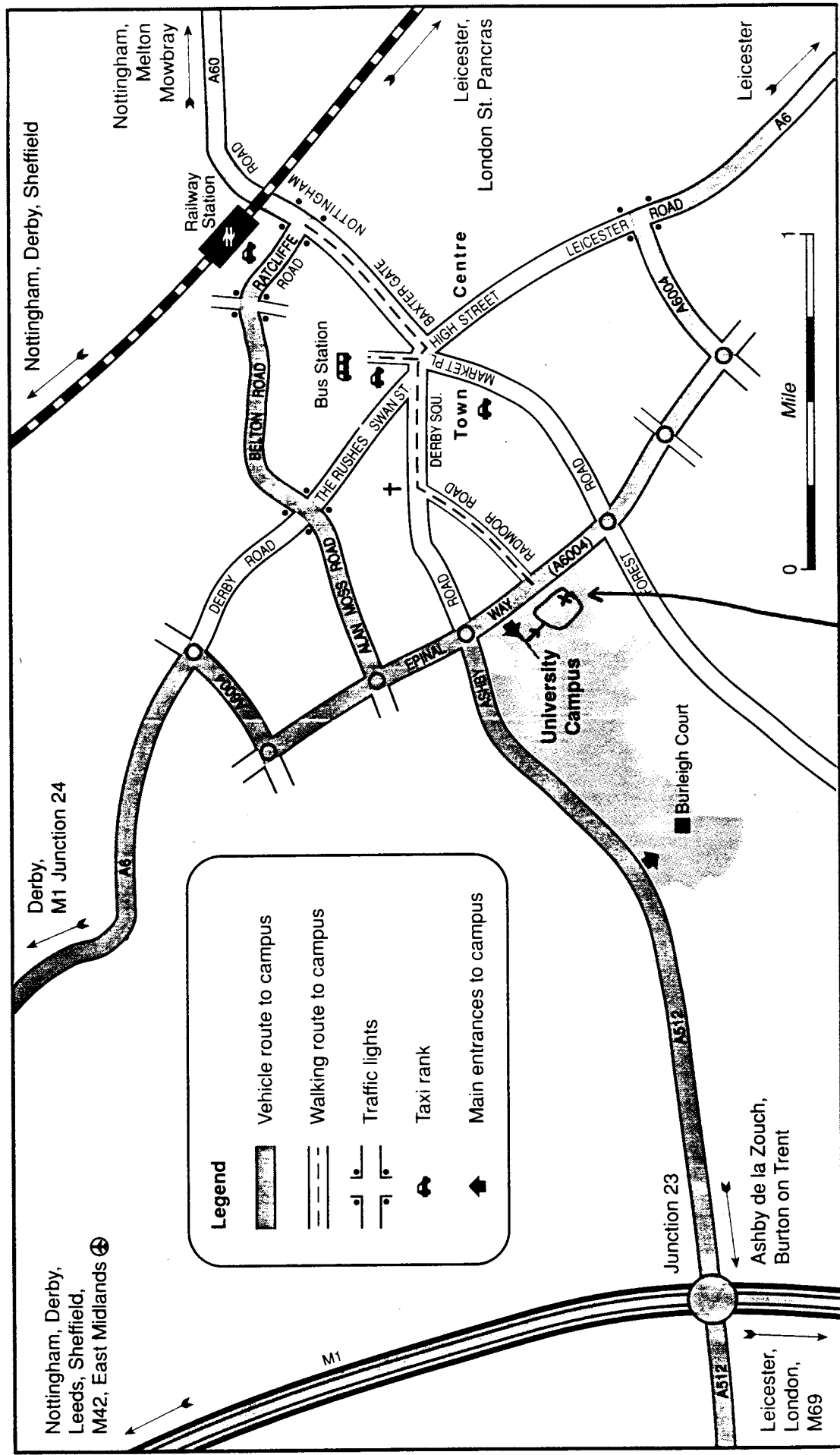
The Recorder User Group meeting will also proceed on 19th July but now immediately
after lunch.

Members wishing to have lunch - at a cost of £6 - on the 19th July should contact:

Jane Hallam
International Centre of Landscape Ecology
Department of Geography
Loughborough University
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3TU
Tel: 0509 223030

Lunch bookings must be made as soon as possible.

LOCATION MAP OVERLEAF



AGM in Room JJO-10, Department of Geography
Access from Epinal Way