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Author(s): Cooter, J.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:-

Dear Sir,

With all the activity at present taking place in Museums and elsewhere regarding Biological Recording I find it rather odd that most people while content to use 10km grid squares or tetrads seem to be carrying on oblivious to the recent, often drastic, changes in many County boundaries. This is especially so in Scotland as we now have no administrative Counties at all!

While at the present time recorders may well realise that (for example) West Sussex used to be a Watsonian vice-county but is now a full administrative county in its own right, with part of the old "west Sussex" now in Surrey, I wonder how recorders of the future will cope?

To me this question of what County boundary is retained for recording purposes should be settled and the results published - ideally with a map of each boundary suitably marked or grid referenced so as to make things crystal clear. Could not the BCG set up such a scheme - perhaps a Museum from each county (or pre Local Government Reorganisation county) could work in cooperation with their neighbours and publish a mutually agreed boundary map. Local Authority Museums will presumably have access to the Council Planning Department or what ever body holds boundary records.

Perhaps many biological recorders will say that there is nowadays no need for the County or Vice-County unit, the 10km square having taken its place. That may be so in certain cases or for certain Orders. However I think most people will agree a set of basic Counties should be decided upon now before the dust of time fogs up our memories of the old County system.

Yours sincerely,

John Cooter
Glasgow

Stephen Flood (St. Albans Museum) replies

In answering this letter I wish to quote extensively from a chapter by Frank Perring of the Biological Records Centre in the Handbook for Local Records Centres, jointly produced by B. C. G. and B. R. C. which is due out very soon.