



# The UK-MAB Urban Forum

## About the UK-MAB Urban Forum

Established in 1987, the Urban Forum of the UK-Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee is a network of managers, planners and researchers involved with the environment and nature conservation in urban areas.

Its mission is to:

- Raise awareness
- Stimulate research
- Influence policy
- Improve the design and management of urban systems
- Push urban nature conservation up the social and political agenda

It achieves this through:

- Publishing discussion papers
- Preparing comments on national issues and policies
- Generating new concepts, guidelines and research
- Organising conferences and seminars and networking with other expert groups

## The UK MAB Urban Forum and the development of the Urban Biosphere Reserve concept

The UK-MAB Urban Forum has been developing and promoting the concept of the urban biosphere reserve since before the Seville strategy.

**1994** - UK MAB Urban Forum organises UNESCO MAB sponsored "European Scientific Consultation on the Influence of Cities, Protected Areas and the Concept and Practice of Biosphere Reserves". (See report at: [www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk))

**2000** - UK re-joins UNESCO and commences Periodic Review of Biosphere Reserves. UK MAB Urban Forum chairman addresses initial consultation meeting. (See the Review at: [www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk))

**2000** - UK MAB Urban Forum makes a formal response to the UK government recommending that the UK should establish an urban Biosphere Reserve (see a summary at: [www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk))

**2002** - UK MAB Urban Forum makes a presentation on their concept for Urban Biosphere Reserves to the joint European Science Foundation/EuroMAB workshop (See presentation at: [www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk))

**2002** - UK MAB makes presentation on the Urban Biosphere Reserve concept to the full Euro MAB meeting in Rome.

The Urban Forum is sponsored by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales



## Recent publications

Recent publications of the Urban Forum include:

All Things to All People - Parks and Semi-Natural Open Spaces in 21st Century Britain. Chris Gordon & Peter Shirley. Published in Landscape Design March 2003

Urban Biosphere Reserves: re-integrating people with the natural environment. Pete Frost. Published in Town and Country Planning July/August 2001

The Changing Relationship Between Cities and Biosphere Reserves. Ian Douglas & John Box, May 2000

Biodiversity, Brownfield Sites and Housing. John Box & Peter Shirley. Town & Country Planning 1999

## Current Work Programme

The work programme topics for year 2003-2004 include, amongst others:

**Climate Change** - reviews and publicising of the current state of knowledge in climate change in urban environments

- Planning for Climate Change in urban environments
- Change in biodiversity in relation to climate change
- Response of urban pest species to climate change

**Planning and Multifunctional Green Networks**

- An assessment of the capacity of Local Authorities to undertake integrated management of greenspace networks
- Review of Social and Community Criteria for selection of Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

**Health and Human Dimensions of Urban Ecosystems** - review and publicising of research into the effects of nature on physical and mental health

**Contribution to other MAB groups** - the UK-MAB Urban Forum contributes to the UK-MAB committee and is affiliated to the MAB Urban Group, contributing internationally to the promotion and exchange of best practice in urban biodiversity

The UK-MAB Urban Forum also maintains a website ([www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk)) for publicising its work.

## The UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence

As a UK contribution towards the international Man and the Biosphere project on urban areas, the UK MAB Urban Forum has been working towards the creation of a network of the best urban nature reserves. Reserves accepted as members of the network will be entitled to use the international MAB logo. The award is a recognition of the valuable contribution the site plays in keeping contact between people and wildlife and in making a real contribution to people's lives. Reserves should have nature conservation in urban areas as a main objective and have aspects of education, community involvement or art.



The Jupiter project, Grangemouth before and after landscaping of derelict railway sidings

Reserves currently holding the award include:

**Saltwells Local Nature Reserve, Dudley** - The site of 445 acres is an important nature reserve in a very extensively built up area, habitats include wooded areas, scrub and marshlands.

**The Jupiter Project, Grangemouth** - A partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust and a local employer has transformed derelict railway sidings into Scotland's largest wildlife garden.

**Shibdon Pond, Gateshead** - This is a wetland site reclaimed from land dominated by collieries for over 100 years. Directly next to the main A1 trunk road, the site is a valuable resource for otters, breeding wildfowl and the local community.

**Sydenham Hill Wood, London** - This site is a rich mosaic of ancient and recent woodland, home to woodpeckers and warblers, bamboo and bluebells, in densely populated South London.



Shibdon Pond, an Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence holder since 1999