



**Botanical Society of the British Isles
Scottish Vice-County Recorder
Workshop Report
April 2006**

Jim McIntosh
April 2006



BSBI Scottish Vice-county Recorder Workshop Report

Held at Kindrogan, Perthshire

31 March – 2 April 2006

If you were one of the twenty five Vice-county Recorders who came to the Scottish VCR Workshop at Kindrogan in April I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. One of the features of the programme was that although the days were pretty packed, the mornings and evenings were much more relaxed, and it was great to meet and chat. We don't seem to do that enough. I asked for audience participation at the outset, and I was not disappointed! I would like to thank everyone for contributing so positively to the debates and discussions. It made it great fun!

Whether you were able to attend the Scottish VCR Workshop or not, I thought you would like to have a brief report of the various sessions, and key points raised. Here it is. I asked the individual contributors to précis their sessions in 250 words and to include pictures and tables wherever possible, in attempt to make the report as short and punchy as possible.

Please do get in touch with me or any of the contributors if you have any queries.

Jim McIntosh
BSBI Scottish Officer

Contents

Full Sessions	Page
1. Site Condition Monitoring Project - Jim McIntosh	3
2. Local Change in Scotland - Michael Braithwaite	4
3. Hybrids Project - Alan Forrest	5
4. Local Walk - Martin Robinson	5
5. Contributing <i>Watsonia</i> Records - Mike Porter	6
6. Rare Plant Registers - Jim McIntosh	7
7. <i>Taraxaca</i> - Richard Pankhurst	7
8. Scottish Computerisation Project - Jim McIntosh	8
9. VCR Forum: a chance to raise & discuss issues - Richard Pankhurst	8
10. MapMate: the Possibilities - Bob Ellis	9
Workshop Sessions	
11. <i>What help do VCRs need and who can best supply it?</i> - Malcolm Ogilvie	10
12. SCM Project Debrief (for those previously involved in SCM) - Lynne Farrell	10
13. Pressing Specimens - Heather McHaffie	11
14. Computerisation Project (for VCRs & Contractors <i>currently</i> involved) - Jim McIntosh	12
15. <i>VC Recording Areas: Are Monads really too small?</i> - Barbara Ballinger	12
16. MapMate Workshops - Andy Amphlett, Bob Ellis & Jim McIntosh	13
Appendices	
17. Further Information	14

BSBI Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) Project
Jim McIntosh, Scottish Officer

BSBI volunteers completed SCM surveys for 20 vascular plant SSSIs in 2005. We were asked to refind populations and note details and take photographs and GPSs for 1-35 'target' species specified for each site. These were Nationally Rare or Scarce species mentioned in the SSSI description or listed in the BRC vascular plant database, with a grid reference in the SSSI.

Summary of BSBI SCM Results	2004	2005
Number of SSSIs surveyed by BSBI Volunteers	7	20
Total number of given 'target' species in all these SSSIs	27	131
Number of target species thought likely to actually occur	25	117
Number of target species actually found (%)	88	78
Number of target species pop's found in 'favourable' condition (%)	56	46
Number of BSBI-surveyed SSSIs with all populations favourable:	0	2

BSBI expertise and local knowledge were invaluable to weed out unsafe records, or records which actually occurred outside the SSSI boundary. Our success rate of finding the target species was good (but not always in the same location as the original record!). However, fewer populations could be classed as 'favourable' using SNH's strict criteria and disappointingly few sites could be classed as favourable overall for vascular plants i.e. for ALL target species.



7 *Carex atrofusca* spikes were recorded on Ben Heasgarnich in 2005. Previously 107 were recorded in 1995, and 1000+ in the 1970/80s © A. Godfrey, 2005

Some notable results were presented, including a number of cases where major population fluctuations were detected. These serve to warn of the shortcomings of such surveys which can only ever be 'snapshots'.

Copies of all 27 SCM reports are on the Information CD. These should not go outside the BSBI.



A new altitudinal record for *Hammarbya paludosa* in the British Isles of 550 metres on Ben Lui © J. McIntosh, 2005



A large percentage of the *Saxifraga rivularis* found on Liathach, Torridon in 2005 © S. Bungard, 2005

<i>Saxifraga rivularis</i> population on Liathach, Torridon	
Population Recorded	Recorder(s)
5	Bungard, S. 2005
124	Dixon, C. and Dixon & Milne 1996
44	Rothero, G. 1995
105	Shepherd & Gillespie 1991
20	Farrell, L. 1986

The project was particularly successful in encouraging volunteers to participate:

Breakdown of days spent on SCM	Preparation	Fieldwork	Reporting	Total
12 Lead Volunteers (14 reports)	7	45	47	99
Scottish Officer (6 reports)	3	18	24	45
26 Other Volunteers		46	2	48
Additional time spent by BSBI SO				<u>42</u>
Total Time spent on Project by BSBI				234

The Scottish Officer is very grateful to all those volunteers who did participate and to SNH for their help, support and funding. Copies of all 27 SCM reports are on the Information CD. These should not go outside the BSBI.

Change in the British Flora 1987-2004, a Scottish Perspective **Michael Braithwaite**

Bob Ellis and I gave presentations at Kindrogan to give a flavour of the book reporting on the *Local Change* project.

Much more change had been found in the English flora than the Scottish, though this is not a specific finding of the report as it is not separated regionally. The losses of native species have been mainly at the edges of their distributions, so many of the losses of typical Scottish plants like *Alchemilla glabra* have been in England. However the marked declines in *Platanthera bifolia* and *Viola lutea* are examples that have particular relevance to northern Britain. Similarly species showing gains include a predominance of readily-dispersed species, including weedy species of ruderal habitats such as *Sagina apetala* and *Vulpia bromoides*, which have as yet made only limited inroads into Scotland. Arable weeds have stopped declining as much in Scotland as in England, with setaside being a positive factor at least in the east.



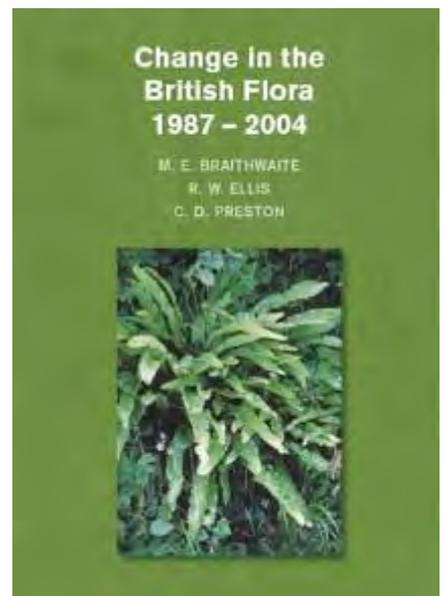
Platanthera bifolia © B. Ellis



Viola lutea © J. McIntosh, 2006

The report shows that a tetrad sample is not a good way to monitor montane plants: the sample of montane habitats was rather small and there are just too many variables in a day on the hill for the results to be robust unless there had been very marked change, which seemed not to be the case. This might be a little different in the future now that GPS localities are routine but, even so, more thought was needed on how to monitor our typical montane plants, rather than just a few of the rarities under SCM.

The authors expressed deep gratitude to VCRs and members who had helped with fieldwork, and to the HLF for financial support.



Change in the British Flora 1987-2004 was published in April 2006.

Hybridization and the Flora of the British Isles, Alan Forrest, Project Herbarium Co-ordinator

The project to produce a new edition of Stace's *Hybridization and the Flora of the British Isles* was introduced, and the format and layout of the text presented. The fact that 30 years have passed since the first edition, means that with the vast amount of new data and records available, a far more comprehensive assessment of hybrids in the British Flora can now be made.

The key difference between the first and second editions of the book will be the inclusion of maps for the second edition. These will map occurrences of hybrids superimposed upon the New Atlas maps for both parental species.

Statistics relating the occurrence of hybrids compared to the distribution of both parents will also be presented, and examples were shown of a range of hybrids from the common and widespread to those that are rare or occur in the absence of one or both parents.



Dark blue squares: rarer parent only (*G. rivale*)
Pale blue squares: commoner parent only (*G. urbanum*)
Red squares: both parents
Red squares, central dot: both parents plus hybrid



An outline of the acquisition of hybrid records was given. This involves collating hybrid records from VCRs (including over 20,000 new records to date) and new location records located through herbarium searches of a subset of genera. These genera were selected based upon the likelihood that new records might be uncovered due to rarity compared to both parents, or due to geographically biased distribution maps suggesting uneven coverage. Preliminary data suggests that up to 25% of herbarium sheets might be new location records, though the percentage varies from genus to genus.

Geum x intermedium © J.McIntosh, 2004

After-lunch Walk Martin Robinson

Botanising at Kindrogan at this time of year for anything other than lower plants was always going to be a challenge. As the local VCR it fell to me to entertain the troops, who I knew would be thoroughly understanding and undemanding. I was quietly confident that nobody would discover anything good on 'my patch'. In any case, the after-lunch walk was billed as more of an opportunity to get out and get some fresh air. We started off with a team photo in front of the moth trap, tossing digital cameras around until we found one that actually worked. Setting off downstream along the river, we passed the spot where Queen Victoria had sat, by which time it was clear that



Scottish VCR Workshop - team photograph, Kindrogan © M. Ogilvie, 2006

On our return to Kindrogan, just before the entrance, however, my eye was drawn to a patch of *Leucojum* in the woodland. A fine patch of *Leucojum vernum* on closer inspection - clearly well established and some considerable distance away from the Kindrogan herbaceous borders. I thought little of it until I checked and found it was a new VC record! I don't know how many times I've walked past it previously. Fortunately I spotted it before anyone else did, so avoided too much opprobrium (I hope). The point is that others in the group knew it was there so it wasn't a completely new discovery, but no-one had forwarded the record to the Vice-county Recorder!

Contributing Records to *Watsonia* Mike Porter

Many VCRs feel apologetic about submitting records which they think are dull or refer to everyday plants. However, *Plant Records* is intended to be a way of updating the VCCC and any appropriate plants which are not listed there and which do occur in the relevant vice-county are suitable records. The pictures which follow in this summary illustrate the wide diversity of plants which are legitimate records, from common to scarce and from native to neophyte.



Dryopteris affinis © M. Porter



Dianthus deltoides © M. Porter

At the moment there is no single list of the plants which qualify for inclusion in *Plant Records* under the heading of **New Hectad Records**. Definitive information can be found in the lists in *BSBI News* no.95 pages 36-43 but the aim is to produce a single, more user-friendly, list. The new "Red List" concentrates on vulnerability and does not help here.

It is remarkably easy to make mistakes when compiling entries for *Plant Records* so any help that VCRs can give is much appreciated! This includes giving the plant's Kent Number wherever possible, its vice-county status (the VCR is the expert on this), habitat details and whether the plant was **determined** or **confirmed** by the referee. If no details are given it is assumed that the plant was **determined** which may do the finder an injustice. Additional comments, when necessary, are also appreciated and are included in *Plant Records* wherever possible.



Viola x contempta (*V. tricolour* x *arvensis*) © M. Porter

It is important that details provided by VCRs but not always used in *Plant Records*, such as altitude and the precise date of finding of the plant, are transmitted as soon as possible to the BSBI Co-ordinator.

A Record Submission table is included on the Information CD.



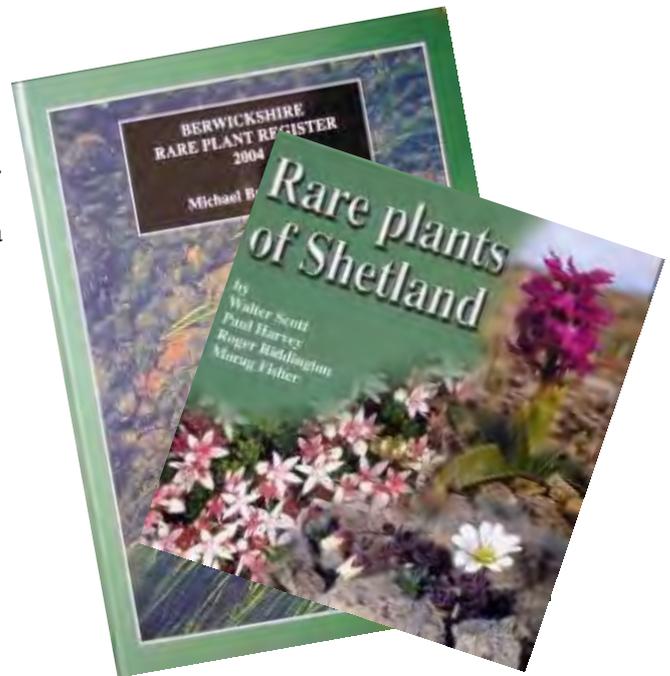
Lysichiton americanus © M. Porter

Rare Plant Registers (RPRs)

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer

RPRs are really local red lists which detail populations of all nationally and locally rare and scarce species in a vice-county. They are a good intermediate step between a checklist and a full flora, and can be hard copy or just electronic. RPRs are a good way of getting details of our most significant records to planners, developers, SNH staff and land-managers whose day to day decisions can affect plant populations.

There is a variety of guidance and help on offer. If you do not already have a copy of the 2005 BSBI RPR Guidance ask the Scottish Officer. The computerisation project should help, as once your records are in MapMate a draft RPR can be produced at the touch of a button. The BSBI Volunteers Officer can supply a list of RPR records based on an extract of the BRC database - a so-called RPR 'skeleton'. BSBI members can help with fieldwork.



So far only two have been published in Scotland – Shetland and Berwickshire. However drafts exist for VC90 and VC110 and work is underway in VC108 and VC109, amongst others. RPRs are ambitious long-term projects – particularly in large remote Scottish VCs – and they will always be *draft* with work in progress. VCRs should not let their struggle for perfection delay issuing a first draft. Even a rough draft will help stimulate local botanical activity and will help gather the more detailed records that one might wish. Now is the time to start work on an RPR!

The RPR Guidance, example RPRs and an example RPR skeleton are included on the Information CD.

Taraxaca

Richard Pankhurst

Dandelions (genus *Taraxacum*) in Britain are described in BSBI Handbook 9. There are over 200 microspecies divided into 9 sections. Many species on dunes and alpine cliffs and gullies are special to Scotland. The common large 'lettucey' ones are in Section *Ruderalia*.

In spite of having typical bee-flowers, usually with abundant pollen, there is no sexual recombination and the progeny are all identical to the mother. Even so, dandelions vary enormously according to how and where they have grown; by soil, moisture, long grass, shade, manuring, grazing, mowing and trampling, even if the genetics are the same. They grow in grassland *sensu lato*, from your garden to dunes and alpine cliffs. Also, the typical characters only show in the spring, during the first flush of growth and flowering. After the end of May (July in the Highlands) the plants are mostly unrecognizable.

So to collect a dandelion, you need to choose a well-grown and undamaged specimen, which simplifies things greatly. Take a series of (digital) photos of the whole plant, its leaves, buds and flowers, especially the outer bracts. You may have to thin out the rosette before pressing. Keep a range of inner and outer leaves, but don't detach them. Open the press after an hour to straighten out the leaves. Keep a head in water until it clocks out, and keep the achenes in a packet. For naming, try the book, a herbarium, the computer key, or the Danish CD of pictures, and send your specimens to an expert. You can easily make new county records, or even find new species!



© Daniel Boudist, www.boudist.com, 2002



© David Fenwick, www.aphotoflora.com, 2004

BSBI Computerisation Project Jim McIntosh

It was reported that the current project to computerise 100,000 paper records was 95% complete, and first dataset had been handed over to a very grateful VCR, Rod Corner. This had been synched using MapMate to the BSBI Hub. Once the data entry and checking work is completed the final step will be to ensure that the records are made available on the NBN Gateway by March 2007. Public access will be controlled by the BSBI-issued passwords.

VCRs were thanked for their questionnaire responses which were used to devise a new computerisation project. They show that 20 Scottish VCRs would like help to computerise their paper records. Ten of whom would like further help to prepare and check their records. The proposed project would aim to computerise circa 600,000 records over three years using a team of contractors, possibly lead by a project manager.

Unfortunately SNH had recently said there was no funding available for work in 2006/7, but that funding may become available in 2007/8. However, the Workshop thought it was important that momentum should be maintained and alternative funding sources were suggested such as HLF and Esmée Fairbairn, which the Scottish Officer agreed to investigate.

Meantime, interested VCRs were asked, if possible, to begin to prepare their records for computerisation now. Funding can sometimes suddenly become available, and we must be ready! The guidance on preparing for computerisation will be revised and re-issued. (A copy is on the Information CD.) The Scottish Officer thanked VCRs, contractors and SNH for their support.



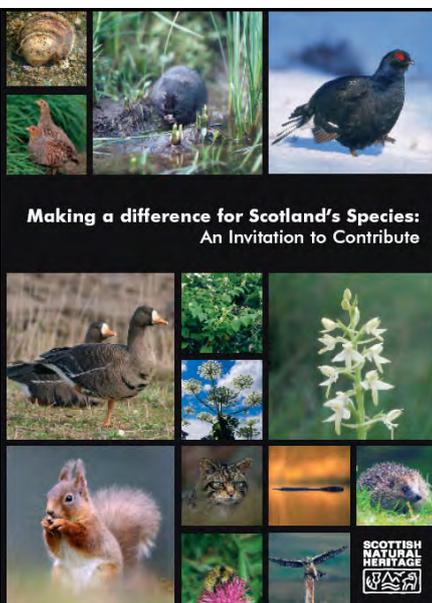
Scottish Vice-county Recorder's Forum Chaired by Jim McIntosh

Jim McIntosh reported that the Scottish Annual Meeting would be at RBG Edinburgh on the 4 November this year and not in Glasgow as originally planned. This was due to problems securing our usual accommodation at Glasgow University. He mentioned that the Scottish Committee were considering making changes to the meeting's timing and running order in response to feedback from members.

Paul Smith asked whether there would be further species survey work in 2006, like that done on *Carex maritima* in 2005. Jim said that he would like volunteers to undertake a small programme of survey work on a limited number of species, including further work on *Carex maritima*. Lynne Farrell had proposed a shortlist, and it was suggested that lead volunteers would be asked to choose from such a list and co-ordinate work with other interested VCRs and members. Jim agreed to circulate proposals and a shortlist to all VCRs.



Carex maritima © E. Everiss, 2005



Ian Evans asked about BSBI's policy on VCRs collecting voucher specimens. Jim pointed out that Appendix 2 of the *Guidelines for Vice-County Recorders (2002)* covers this issue in detail. A copy of this guidance is on the Information CD. In short it states that first and second VC records ought to be vouchered, subject to there being a large enough population or populations to allow sustainable collection of course. The voucher specimens should be deposited in a herbarium.

Lynne Farrell drew our attention to the recently launched *Making a Difference for Scotland's Species* SNH consultation document which only contains three vascular plant species out of a total 23 animal and plant species: *Melampyrum sylvaticum*, *Platanthera bifolia* & *Salix lanata*. It was agreed that the Scottish Committee should discuss and respond. Paper copies of the consultation are available from Anne Griffith, SNH on 0131 447 4784. An electronic copy is on the Information CD. Responses are invited by 30 June 2006.

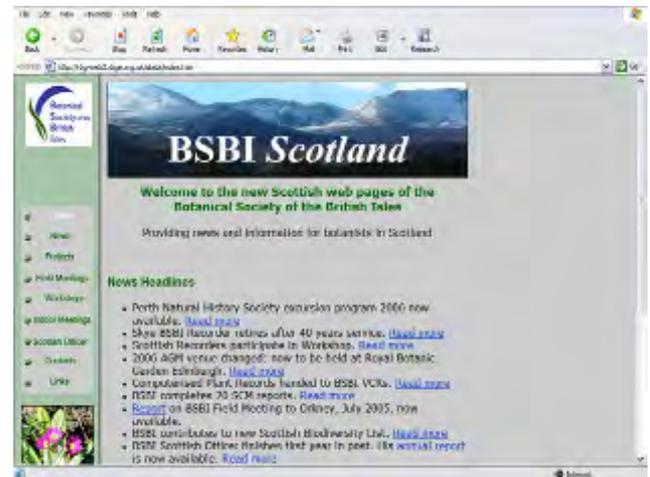
Ken Butler demonstrated his VC Recorder Management System. It was agreed that having a systematic approach to processing records, and other key elements of VCR work was important, and several VCRs expressed interest in Ken's system. A copy is on the enclosed Information CD. Ken would welcome feedback.

Ian Bonner suggested that the *Scottish Newsletter*, like the *Welsh Newsletter*, should feature a list of records which although significant do not qualify for inclusion in *Watsonia*. The criterion for inclusion seems to be records considered significant by the recorder. It was agreed that the Scottish Committee should discuss and consult Peter Macpherson, the *Scottish Newsletter* receiving editor. Jim welcomed the initiative, but reminded recorders that the first priority must be to contribute records to *Watsonia*.

Jim McIntosh pointed out that the BSBI/BRC Vascular Plant Database was available to all Recorders, and they could obtain extracts of the database for their respective VCs on application to Alex Lockton. The database was last updated with the New Atlas data, and therefore includes records up to 2000.

Jim McIntosh briefly demonstrated the new Scottish Web-pages on the BSBI website. Check them out for yourself on www.BSBI.org.uk

Alternatively if you are not on-line but have a computer you may like to view an off-line copy of the website on the Information CD.

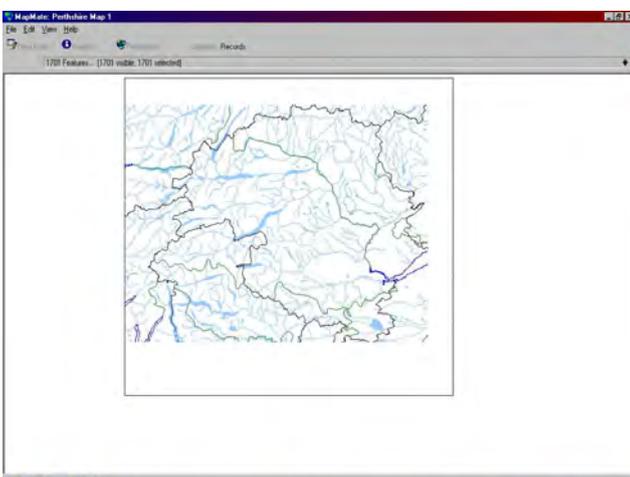


MapMate – The Possibilities Bob Ellis, Volunteers Officer

It was stressed that BSBI will continue to supply and support MapMate, including annual license renewal, but there is no obligation on recorders to change to it if they are happy with other recording software; it would be a function of the proposed Plant Unit to facilitate the transfer of data from these other systems.

Subsequent to a meeting with Teknica, it was reported that new versions of MapMate were in the pipeline. Version 3 is planned for 2007 and several major improvements are envisaged at this stage. In particular, there is the possibility of customised data entry fields. This means that BSBI would be able to introduce a field for herbarium codes, for example.

In MapMate, it is already possible to trace records within a polygon drawn on a map, or within polygons already present in a base map. For England, the polygons for SSSIs can be downloaded from the English Nature website and imported to MapMate. Such a polygon can then used to produce lists of those records that have grid references within the boundaries of a particular SSSI. This polygon feature will be extended in version 3 and should help to improve the concept of a site within MapMate.



The creation of base maps using hydrology as a background was demonstrated. Maps of river, canals, streams, lochs and lakes are available for the whole of Britain on the latest Update CD. Relief maps are “in the pipeline”.

(The Update CD which, will bring your MapMate right up to date with the latest software version, together with this background hydrology map and all patches, is available for £10 from the Shop on the MapMate Website. This will save lengthy downloads if you are on dial-up internet access. Please note the BSBI pays your annual MapMate users' licence, therefore you do not need the licence extension.)

Workshop Session - What help do VCRs need and who can best supply it? Reported by Dave Batty

General help

Where possible, VCRs should consider recruiting and training an assistant. They can help with VCR tasks, and would provide a natural successor to the VCR on retirement. At the very minimum, there should be a transition period, when the incoming VCR works with the retiring VCR.

Help with Computers

Computing advice can be obtained from a variety of sources, such as family (especially younger members!), work colleagues, fellow VCRs and the Scottish Officer. Help with recording systems (like MapMate), can be obtained from a variety of sources, such as Bob Ellis (for MapMate), the Scottish Officer, fellow VCRs, and on-line help pages. The use of the Yahoo MapMate user group was suggested.

Help with Fieldwork

Remember that BSBI local (and more distant) members are not the only source of volunteers! It may be possible to use students, local natural history society and Wildflower Society members and SNH local officers (as part of their training), etc.

Financial Help

It was agreed that the cost to fully equip as a VCR can now be quite considerable. VCRs require a range of technology, such as a computer with anti-virus software and preferably word and excel, an internet connection (preferably broadband), GPS, digital camera, etc. All of which requires maintenance and periodic updates. Even a full set of the new 1:25,000 maps covering a large VC can be quite costly.

[If you need financial help for essential VCR equipment please speak to the Scottish Officer.]

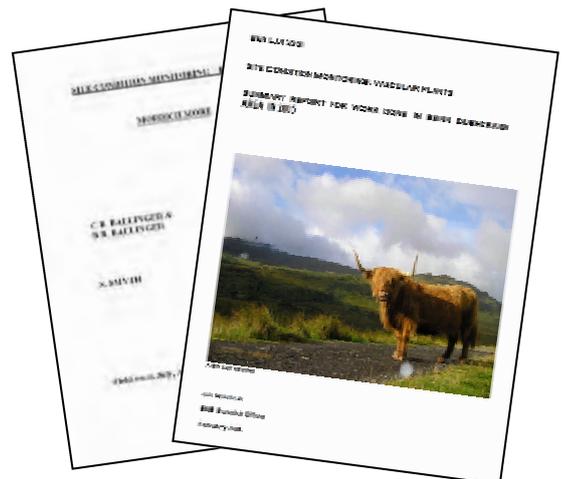
Site Condition Monitoring feedback session Lynne Farrell, SNH Species Advisor & BSBI VCR

Almost all of the BSBI SCM volunteers were present. Everybody had enjoyed the project, and many would be happy to participate in further survey work. There was universal agreement that the most enjoyable bit was the fieldwork. The paperwork was less popular and could take as long - if not longer than the fieldwork.

The importance of being well-prepared before going into the field was discussed. Making contact with the local SNH office and BSBI VCR was particularly important. Generally, surveyors were more successful when more detailed grid references were provided.

Some target species records and grid references were clearly inaccurate as no suitable ground could be found on some sites, and need to be checked before SCM is repeated.

Despite the usefulness of photographs to illustrate population location and layout, some surveyors had not taken many, due to a variety of reasons such as difficult terrain, poor weather or lack of a digital camera.



Potentilla crantzii, SCM target species Cairnwell
© J. McIntosh, 2005

It was noted that a film camera could be used and Lloyds or Boots chemists can put the shots on to a CD, from where they can be copied into the report. Alternatively, the local SNH office can help scan-in prints.

Everyone agreed that it would be better if the Annex D format was replaced by free text under a series of headings which would be more informative and easier to write. This would allow the surveyor the opportunity to use their botanical expertise to interpret what they found on the site. (Revised forms are on the Information CD.)

Lynne, on behalf of SNH thanked all the BSBI volunteers involved in the SCM project.

Veronica alpina, *Dryas octopetala*, *Astragalus alpinus* SCM target species Cairnwell © J. McIntosh, 2005



Pressing specimens Heather McHaffie

Unless a plant is extremely rare it is usual to place first and second VC records in one of the national herbaria. If the plant is kept in a polythene bag for too long it might start to rot, change colour, produce etiolated growth, or dry out to give a contorted sample. Specimens are best pressed into newspaper as soon as possible after collecting. It is essential to include a label or write in pencil (ink can run) on the paper itself. The best results are produced with the maximum application of weight and the straps on a plant press can be tightened by standing on it! A press with slats provides a free flow of air but if pressing in cooler or more enclosed conditions the newspaper should be changed, several times if necessary, to avoid mould. Opening up the specimen after one day allows for repositioning of bent leaves with forceps. Consistent standards of pressing will provide specimens that retain some colour and show the habit, which can be valuable features for identification.

Specimens must fit on a standard herbarium sheet 27 x 42 cm (slightly narrower than a tabloid newspaper) leaving room for a label and a small packet containing loose pieces of the specimen for closer examination. Plan for the specimen to fit the sheet when pressing and avoid selecting a conveniently small plant. If a single plant in a population looks different it is helpful to collect others to show the range of variation. More than one plant might be necessary (within reason), especially with small specimens. Folding taller specimens, concertina-wise if necessary, will allow both sides of the leaves to be visible at once.



If specimens are to be mounted professionally, acid-free glue and paper will be used for long-term safe-keeping. Unless for personal use it is preferable not to stick specimens down or use strips of a water-based tape.

You are very welcome to inspect the expertly named reference collection in the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, although it is always advisable to phone the herbarium office before visiting: 0131 552 7171.

The Computerisation Project Reported by Jackie Muscott

The various steps in the Computerisation Project were discussed by this workshop, attended by nearly everybody involved in the project. Here are some of the key points:

It was extremely difficult to estimate the time (and therefore cost) required to input records as the four datasets were so different – ranging from Species Card Indices containing a lot of detail per record to BSBI Record Cards with little additional information. Despite the difficulty of estimating, contractors were generally happy with their remuneration, although future quotes should include travel costs.

The amount of dataset preparation varied considerably depending on need and circumstance. The aim should be to make the contractor's job as easy as possible. Some were handed over personally, others posted. Some in an initial single batch and others by regular instalment – the latter was probably preferable as it gave the VCR more time to prepare batches. Ideally both parties should meet at the outset to discuss any problems, but distances sometimes precluded that. And ideally the VCR should retain a copy of the data (particularly if it is posted), but photocopying would entail considerable work. It was noted how much easier it was to computerise individual record cards rather than master cards.

Despite the very low error rate, it was still thought important for the VCR to check the computerised records against the *original* paperwork. The main error was omission - which simple counts would detect. However more subtle errors require a detailed and thorough inspection to pick up. Checking is made easier by using print-outs with records in the same order as the original cards.

Discussion Group - VC recording areas: Are monads really too small? Barbara Ballinger

The addition of the National Grid to OS maps in 1936, allowed the adoption of *hectads* as recording units at national level, and *quadrants*, *tetrads* and *monads* at local level. Increasing subdivision allows increasing resolution and better cover, but obviously increases the work involved in surveying a given area.

Unit	Area	Grid Reference (GR)	Number in Hectad
Hectad	10 x 10 km	2 figure	1
Quadrant	5 x 5 km	2 figure + NE/SE/SW/NW	4
Tetrads	2 x 2 km	2 figure + A-Z (DINTY)	25
Monads	1 x 1 km	4 figure	100

In Scotland, where VCs are large, the terrain and access difficult and botanists are thin on the ground it can take a long time to cover a VC using small recording units. For maps and analysis, data can be converted from monad to tetrad, or monad, tetrad or quadrant to hectad. But the reverse is impossible. However, you can record at one

Flora	Number of Tetrads	Number of Surveyors	Survey Period
Cumbrian Flora	1781	30	22
Flora of Assynt	164	2	10
East Ross?	>1000	2	?

level of detail, and map at a coarser level, if the survey is incomplete, for example. On balance, the group preferred *tetrad* recording, even if complete VC coverage was not feasible.

General recommendations:

- Record at the maximum level of detail with which you are comfortable and which suits local circumstances - but preferably not in areas greater than tetrad, even if you record just one or two per hectad. You can also just add the 'extra' species to recording cards for second and subsequent tetrads traversed.
- If recording out of your VC, ask the local VCR about the recording unit they prefer. Some VCRs use customised recording cards which only list locally common species – and require details for other locally significant species.
- Regardless of recording unit, GPS readings should *always* be used for all significant species.

MapMate Experienced Users Workshop Facilitator – Andy Amphlett

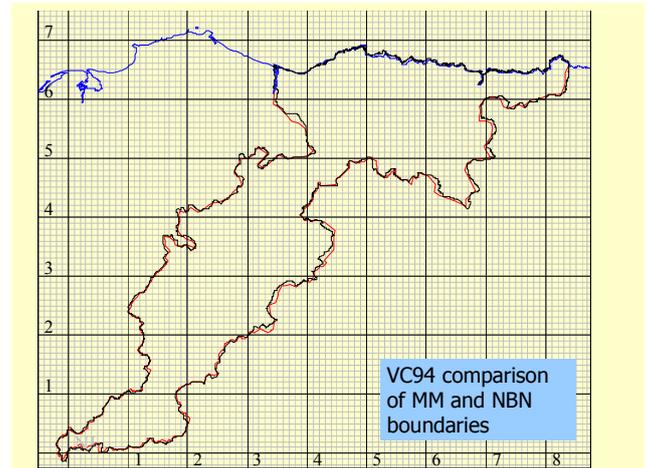
The group discussed the following topics:

Sites Using an appropriate Site Name can narrow down where the record was actually made, e.g. *West side of River Avon (NJ1526)* or perhaps better *River Avon, west bank (NJ1526)*

Replication Experience shows this data exchange facility, is >99% reliable, but that small differences can develop between copies of MapMate that regularly synchronise data. MapMate has a *re-set synch record* function, which sets the synch record back to square one, and will resend all data to another MapMate user, and which should eliminate discrepancies.

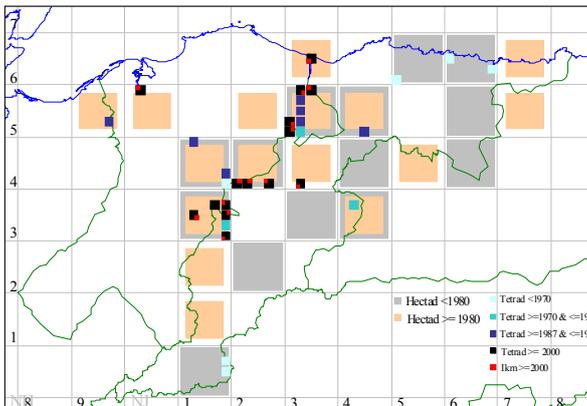
Backup Use *Backup* via the *Replication- Special* menu and make a copy of the whole MapMate folder to ensure that you have copies of Atlases and Custom Queries, filters etc.

Boundaries Always check that sites near the VC boundary have the correct VC associated with them. Monad or Tetrad sites that overlap the county boundary will, on average, 50% of the time be automatically allocated to the wrong VC. MapMate boundaries were digitised at 1:200,000, and show up to 1km differences cf. the super-accurate 1:10,000 digitised boundaries available by the NBN.



Demo topics:

Adoxa moschatellina (Moschatel / Town-hall Clock)



- Importing VC boundary map files into MapMate in .mif format.
- Date banded Atlas with hectad & tetrad resolution (ideal for displaying data with different spatial precision in one Atlas).
- Inserting a Key into an Atlas.
- Querying records within user defined polygons. See MapMate Newsletter 45.
- Manipulating records in Excel. Records can be copied and pasted (slow on old computers), or by saving as tab text file (quicker).

We also looked at Filtering lists and VLOOKUP (a function that allows you to combine data from different spreadsheets). This can be used to check taxa spellings, prior to importing records into MapMate, and to add Plant Attributes (CEH website) to a site species list.

Beginners' & Intermediates' MapMate Workshops Jim McIntosh & Bob Ellis

Unfortunately due to a lack of space full reports from these workshops have not been included.

One key point to remember is that synchronisation is a two stage process. First create a synch file (Replication > Sync > Synchronise now) **then** send your synch file (Sync > Send Sync File > To Web). Also, remember to backup your database periodically (Replication > Special > Backup your Database).

Beginners' MapMate Workshop
© Lynne Farrell, 2006



Useful information for Scottish VCRs (points arising from VCR Workshop)

BSBI Scottish Webpages

Check out the BSBI Scottish Webpages now – use the link from the BSBI home page or if you are not on-line, look at the copy on the Information CD. Please contribute articles such as Field Meeting Reports with photos, or major news items of interest to botanists in Scotland. Send contributions to Jane Squirrell, the receiving editor, at j.squirrell@rbge.ac.uk If your Annual Exhibition Meeting abstract is a shortened version of a longer article, send in both, and the long version can be included on the website as well.

Recording Cards

Recording Cards are available free of charge from CEH Monks Wood (at least until they move) – Just phone up 01487 772400 and say you are a BSBI VCR and ask for Vascular Plant Recording Cards Code RP24 (Scotland South) or RP25 (Scotland North)

SSSI Descriptions ('Citations') and Site Management Statements

Available for all Scottish SSSIs on the following website: <http://gateway.snh.gov.uk/>

Maps showing SSSI (and other) boundaries

<http://www.searchnbn.net/> and click on “» Find a site report by [name](#) or [map](#)”

Either option will work and both give access to maps – just in slightly different formats. Lists of Records for particular areas can also be obtained from this website, at 10km square accuracy, or if you register and apply for a password, at greater accuracy.

The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (2005)

Can be downloaded from link on <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3354> Also on the Information CD.

The Small British Herbaria Project

The Small British Herbaria Project (SBHP) is a joint venture between the BSBI and the University of Hull, Department of Geography. It aims to bring together information about specimens of British plants held in various collections and make it available from a single internet source. <http://www.herb.hull.ac.uk/SBHP/index.htm>

Keith Watson's e-mail address – to request extracts of the Glasgow University & Glasgow Museums Herbaria Catalogue for your VC: keith.watson@cls.glasgow.gov.uk

Perthshire Herbarium Catalogue

The link to this searchable catalogue is <http://www.scran.ac.uk/cgi-bin/herbarium/view.pl>

