

Annual Review 2011



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The year of 2011 proved to be a year full of interesting and memorable events. One of the highlights was the wonderful welcome we received in Galway at our Spring Conference and AGM at the National University of Ireland – a highly enjoyable long weekend!



Very successful meetings were also held in Pembrokeshire, Edinburgh and London as well as a full programme of field meetings – a big thank you to all who helped in any way with these events.

In spite of the economic situation BSBI has continued to be well funded by the Country Agencies which support the Plant Unit and our Scottish and Welsh officers in delivering on a wide range of projects. Of special importance has been the development of the Distribution Database (DDb) as the main repository for all our botanical information, with establishment of a full time data manager post.

The first two issues of the *New Journal of Botany* made their welcome appearance, together with the continued production of issues of BSBI News and the three Country Newsletters – grateful thanks to all the editors, contributors and distributors for their hard work.

It is important to remember that the future of our Society lies with the next generation. We have some exceptional young recorders, referees and authors in our fold and it is a great pleasure for the Society to provide practical and financial support to young and learning botanists.

Looking forward - we have a major conference in Edinburgh in September celebrating 50 years of recording since publication of the first Plant Atlas in 1962, then the four Country AGM/conferences and a bumper programme of field meetings to cater for all levels of expertise and with a pretty good coverage across Britain and Ireland.

We enter the last year of the Threatened Plants Project (TPP) with another fascinating range of plants to be monitored. We are working on a publicity and communications strategy to raise the profile of the Society and as part of this we plan to appoint a BSBI officer for Ireland in 2012. Information on these initiatives and much more is on our excellent and ever expanding website.

My thanks to all the hard working members and supporters for making 2011 a year in which our society blossomed and developed.

Ian Bonner

March 2011



Plant surveillance

One of things we do best as a Society is to provide vital information on the distribution and changing status of British and Irish plants. No other organisation can provide such detailed information and we should be rightly proud of the increasing role we are now playing in helping the Government and its conservation agencies in protecting our flora. Over the past twelve months this has included the development of a new plant surveillance scheme to help us answer such seemingly simple questions as which species are declining or increasing in abundance; which habitats are being most affected by land use change, pollution and other pressures; where in the landscape are these changes taking place, and how is climate change affecting our flora? In 2011 we delivered a detailed report on how such a scheme might work and over the next two years we will be piloting some of these approaches with a view to launching a nationwide scheme in 2015/16, along with Plantlife, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society (BWARS).

Monitoring our threatened flora

The Threatened Plants Project (TPP) is a five-year BSBI initiative to collect basic information on some of our most threatened species. The last year of the project is 2012 and to date our recorders have visited over 3,000 populations of 40 species, and collected detailed information required to help us understand the scale and causes of recent declines and to obtain vital information on their habitat and management requirements. The results for some species are already being used by conservation organisations, such as Natural England and Plantlife, in order to help better protect these species on nature reserves or as part of initiatives to target the restoration of traditional management on sites within agri-environment schemes.



Invasive aliens

Exotic plants are high on the political agenda these days and BSBI has been providing Government agencies with the basic evidence they need to assess the threats they pose to our native flora. In 2011 we provided around 100 species accounts for the Non-native Species Secretariat's online Information Portal as well as information on the distribution, ecology, and invasion pathways of over 2,000 alien species. This work will continue as part of a DEFRA funded project for the next six years and the Society will be publishing a booklet of traits for our most commonly recorded aliens in 2012 as a sister volume to the very popular PlantAtt published a few years ago.

The BSBI's Distribution Database (DDb)

Although databases are not the most exciting of topics they are becoming increasingly important in underpinning the much of the work that we do. 2011 was an important year in this respect as our new online database, the DDb, went 'live' allowing our recorders to view all the records we hold for the first time. We also took on Tom Humphrey to develop the DDb full time. Over the last year Tom has made many improvements to the system, including online registration, more sophisticated query tools, as well as speeding up the importation of our backlog of historic data. There is no doubt that it is already a fantastic resource that increasing numbers of recorders are signing up to use. It also has huge potential as a 'one-stop-shop' for other organisations to access all our records for conservation as well as for recorders to edit and even submit records online.

Training and Education

The Training and Education Committee enables the BSBI to continue spreading awareness and knowledge of plants and habitats by supporting botanical training and improvement of identification skills. An increased number of our own field meetings were designated as ‘Training’, encouraging beginners by advertising the presence of a tutor to help with basic identification skills. Planning during 2011 has resulted in fifteen of the 2012 BSBI meetings (27%; 2011, 23%) having training and education as a main aim; such meetings are held both indoors and outdoors, and throughout the British Isles.

Thirty seven nascent botanists attended the Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) days held in July 2011. Over 150 botanists have now been awarded a certificate, helping to ensure a continuing supply of competent botanical field workers into the future.

In 2011 sixteen small grants and bursaries were awarded as well as two study grants of £1,000 each to PhD students at Cardiff and Edge Hill Universities. As one grant recipient described the training course we paid for, *“It was brilliant to ...see ...plants from the families which I have read about ...but had no concept of the plant and therefore their manner of growth, habitats and the way the seeds ...are formed. I am so grateful that the offer of the training grant allowed me to take part and determined to continue learning more so that I can take part in recording and passing on the botanical knowledge in the future. I am still very aware of the huge amount still to learn and hope that I will be able to keep learning alongside others.”*

Encouraging an Interest in Plants

England

A full programme of 13 field meetings was held during the year beginning in March and running through to September. Three of these meetings were workshops: one was a Plant Anatomy workshop using vegetative keys and held at Edge Hill University, the next was at the Natural History Museum was a particularly helpful opportunity for beginners wishing to understand the arrangement of a flora and to learn how to work through the keys to lead to identification, and the third was a chromosome counting workshop held at Leicester University. We are very grateful to the experts Colin Smith, Roy Vickery and

John Bailey, who gave up their time to teach these courses.

There were two great opportunities to get to grips with Sedges and Grasses. Two sedge-rich sites in Cumbria provided ample opportunity to see a variety of species with plenty of help with identification given by Mike Porter, one of the authors of the BSBI handbook on the subject. The ever-popular Grass Identification weekend in Suffolk was once again led by Arthur Copping and it was again over-subscribed.

Perhaps the highlight of the field meeting calendar this year was a week-long visit to Guernsey led by Charles David and Rachel Rabey. It has been several years since the Society managed to get over to the island so it was particularly good to be able to see so many of the island’s specialities and also to have the added bonus of a day on Herm.

The other field meetings were a well-balanced mixture of recording meetings, such as the ones held in the New Forest and visits to some rather good watery sites in the Somerset Levels, the Ouse Washes and two sites in Leicestershire, Lockington Marshes and Rutland Water all giving opportunities to familiarise participants with the associated aquatic flora. Aliens were not neglected either as a meeting was held on part of the old railway in north Lowestoft where a great variety of *Cotoneaster* species were found.

We wish to thank all the meeting leaders for giving up their time to share their expertise with other members.

Wales

In June 2011 Dr Polly Spencer-Vellacott, with a background in environmental consultancy, was appointed as the first BSBI Welsh Officer, initially on a one-year contract tying in with the co-funding from the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). We are delighted to hear that the grant is confirmed to mid-2013 and is expected to continue for another two years. From



two years. From a base at CCW's offices in North Wales, she has met with all the Vice County Recorders (VCR's), written detailed reports for us with action plans, and started on Site Condition Monitoring (SCM).

Progress continues with the production of Rare Plant Registers (RPR's) in those vice-counties without one, now speeding up thanks to Polly's support. Welsh Recorders and other members have continued to provide data for the Threatened Plants Project and are considering their priorities with respect to the BSBI Recording Strategy.

Two issues (87-88) of the *Welsh Bulletin* including short articles and meeting and exhibition reports were issued in 2011. Earlier editions back to 1982 are freely available online. The Bulletin is sent to the 200 members resident in Wales and, for a small subscription, to botanists living outside the Principality.

About 50 members participated in the Welsh Exhibition Meeting and Annual General Meeting weekend in August 2011, held at Dale Fort Field Studies Centre, Pembrokeshire. Field meetings were spread geographically, including the annual week long Carmarthenshire Recording and Monitoring Meeting at Glynhir Mansion, Llandybie, which was as successful as ever. Thanks to all the field meeting leaders.

Arthur Chater's encyclopaedic *Flora of Cardiganshire* (2010) is of wider than just local interest because of its in-depth treatment of infra-specific variation. Only 500 copies were printed and perhaps unsurprisingly it went out of print in 2011; the Society greatly appreciated Arthur's generosity in making a PDF copy freely available for wider use.

The year closed in a most satisfactory manner with the announcement that Trevor Evans, VCR for Monmouth since 1972 was to receive an MBE in the 2012 New Year's Honours List, for services to conservation and wildlife in his native county.

Scotland

Our Scottish Officer Jim McIntosh departed in August for a sabbatical year recording the flora of Tristan da Cunha, the world's most remote inhabited island. Angus Hannah took over at short notice in an acting capacity. As he is only employed for four days, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) agreed BSBI could spend the balance of co-funding as part of a 'fifth-day programme' of support to the plant recording community. As a result of another agreement with SNH, items including microscopes and grapple nets were procured for Scottish recorders.

As part of our new SNH grant agreement, we will be focusing on Rare Plant Registers, with a target of twelve new ones in the next three years. Chris Metherell has been contracted to help VCR's achieve this. New in 2011 was the *Rare Plant Register for East Perthshire*, vc 89, by Martin Robinson. Andy Amphlett has undertaken to produce a check-list and basic RPR for the entire Cairngorm National Park, which includes parts of nine vice-counties. Martin Rand is writing a new and much enlarged version of the Mapmate handbook, and Martin Harvey is extending the range of videos he produced last year. These works will benefit all Mapmate users, and we are grateful to SNH for agreeing to fund them.

Another season of Site Condition Monitoring covered Cairnwell, Keltneyburn, Ben Chonzie and Rescobie & Balgavies SSSI's. Work was completed on Upper Solway and Sunart SSSI's.

A record number of well-attended field meetings was held in 2011, including four specifically educational meetings, and a similar programme is in place for the coming season. Scottish Recording Week, organised by Jim McIntosh and based at Shinness Lodge in Sutherland, produced many records for new recorder Mick Crawley's online flora of East Sutherland. This year's Recording Week will be based in Kirkcudbrightshire.



Chris Miles retired after six years as chair of the Scottish Committee, and Martin Robinson has taken over this role. A number of new (mostly joint) vice-county recorders were appointed in the course of the year, as we continue to aim at improved coverage. The Scottish Annual Meeting in November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh was again very well attended and a varied programme finished with a fascinating lecture by Richard Gornall on Saxifrage taxonomy.

BSBI Scottish Newsletter no. 33 was published in spring 2011; earlier issues are available online, as is Michael Braithwaite's *A Botanical tour of Berwickshire* (2011).

The Science & Research Committee provides larger grants for botanical field-work, mainly for species studies. One, completed in 2011, enabled the recipients to confirm the occurrence of *Arabidopsis petraea* at several historically recorded sites in Scotland, but they were unable to find further localities for a rare Micromoth, *Plutella haasi*, whose larva they had recently found feeding on this rarity.

Ireland

The highlight of the year in Ireland was undoubtedly the Spring Conference and BSBI AGM and Council meeting in June, which was based at National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG). One hundred and ten members of the Society were welcomed by Professor Charles Spillane (Head of Botany & Plant Science, NUIG). The long weekend was a resounding success, due largely to the efforts and organisation of John Bailey and Micheline Sheehy Skeffington. The meeting was followed by a number of relevant and informative presentations and special thanks go to all of them. Dr Sharon Parr's presentation reassured us as to the progress being made through the LIFE Project (farming for conservation) to help protect the unique plant biodiversity of the Burren.

The associated field meetings to the Burren, Connemara and the Aran Islands were outstanding and greatly enjoyed by the members. Many local specialties were seen such as *Erica mackayana*, Mackay's Heath, in Connemara, *Astragalus damicus*, Purple Milk-vetch, on Inishmaan, and *Potentilla fruticosa*, Shrubby Cinquefoil in the Burren.

The Irish AGM was held at Derrygonnelly Field Centre, Co. Fermanagh during August. The meeting included a series of interesting presentations on the theme of botanical publication, followed by a field meeting the next day.

Seven other field meetings were organised during the year including two with a training element. This is part of an on-going initiative to improve the level and standard of field recording and record keeping. A recording project for Ireland has long been discussed and an *Epipactis palustris*, Marsh Helleborine, survey will be launched in spring 2012 following extensive preliminary work in 2011.

Irish Botanical News no 21, edited by Paul Green, was published in February 2011 with a front-cover colour photograph of *Diphysastrum alpinum*, Alpine Clubmoss, from its new site in the Comeragh Mountains, Co. Waterford. There were also two fine publications co-authored with VC Recorders: *The Wild Flowers of Ireland*, by Carsten Krieger and Declan Doogue; and *The Natural History of Ulster*, by Robert Thompson and John Faulkner.



Journals

Superseding the Society's in-house journal *Watsonia*, the anticipated first two issues (142 pages) of the *New Journal of Botany (NJB)*, subtitled *Journal of the Botanical Society of the British Isles*, were independently published by Maney Publishing in the latter part of 2011. The journal has an A4 format similar to the British Bryological Society's *Journal of Bryology*.

Steered by an international editorial board of respected academics, *NJB* aims to become the premier forum for communicating the results of botanical studies in Northern and Western Europe. Of the 15 papers included in the first two issues, 40% have at least one author based outside the British Isles. We thank the editorial board, particularly Richard Gornall and Louise Marsh, for all their hard work in getting this new journal off to a flying start.

BSBI News continues to be issued three times a year, ably edited by Trevor James and Gwynn Ellis and with eight colour pages per issue. There is no shortage of topical notes to be published by many of our members. A total of 236 pages was published in 2011 as against 254 in 2010. *BSBI News* welcomes articles from new and regular contributors alike so if you have some observations of interest, why not share them with other members? Pre-publication offers for new botanical books of interest to members are mailed with *BSBI News*.



Our annual *Yearbook* has been expanded to match the *BSBI News* size and now includes comprehensive field meeting reports and obituaries as well as the internal Society organisational matters which can also be found on our website.

Books

The Society's 15th handbook was published this year - *British Northern Hawkweeds: A monograph of British Hieracium section Alpestris* by Tim Rich and Walter Scott. This illustrated hardback contains line drawings, silhouettes of herbarium material, detailed photographs and general habitat shots of each species. The monograph acts as a detailed identification guide and summarises what is currently known about these rare species.

On a similar theme, the *Atlas of British and Irish Hawkweeds (Pilosella L. and Hieracium L.)* by David McCosh & Tim Rich was also published by the BSBI in 2011. Over the last 30 years, David McCosh had compiled a database of 19,000 *Hieracium* and *Pilosella* records, representing over 420 species. The updated distribution maps are accompanied by brief notes and a typical silhouette of each species to provide an invaluable reference source for botanists and recorders, supplementing the monograph by Sell & Murrell (2006).

Several new BSBI handbooks are in the pipeline, including a Gentianaceae (Gentians) mini-handbook, a *Viola* (Violets) mini-handbook and an *Oenothera* (Evening Primroses) handbook. We look forward to seeing them in print soon.

Publication grants are awarded by the Society, mainly for local Floras authored or co-authored by members. Grants were approved in 2011 for the *Flora of Fermanagh* edited by Ralph Forbes and Robert Northridge, the *Flora of Bedfordshire* (flowering plants by Chris Boon) and the *Flora of North Lancashire* by Eric Greenwood.

Summerfield Books

Summerfield Books, our appointed sales agents, have been a regular exhibitor at Society events this year selling the latest botanical publications. Paul O'Hara continues to expand his range of natural history titles, as well as field equipment. BSBI members receive a discount on all BSBI handbooks and other selected titles too. Visit www.summerfieldbooks.com for more details.

BSBI Online

Our main web site, www.bsbi.org.uk was visited in January 2012 by 2,006 unique users to produce 477,000 hits. The most popular items are the Rare Plant Registers, justifying the Society's current emphasis in their production: the Berkshire and the Durham RPR's between them were downloaded an astonishing 3,000 times that month. Meanwhile, 1,256 people looked at plant distribution maps that month. Our Facebook page has 498 members, a year after it was established.

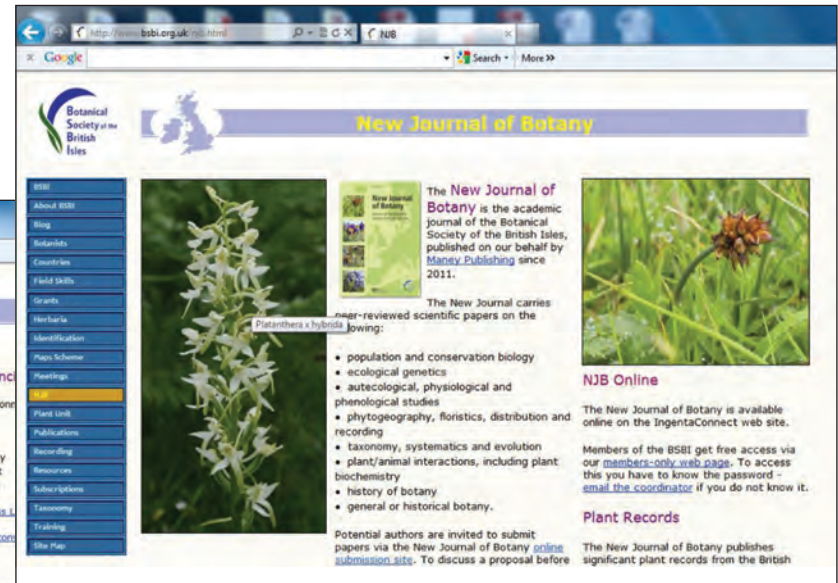
Members can now access *New Journal of Botany* online, via our members' page, www.bsbi.org.uk/NJB. You need a username and password which can be obtained from the BSBI Co-ordinator. There are currently 2,600 scanned items on our digital archive site, which we are continuing to expand with the ultimate aim of having a full set of the Society's publications - since 1836 - online.

An increasing number of VCR's now have websites; some 25 are hosted by us, and half a dozen more have their own sites. Many of these have newsletters or reports, programmes of field meetings, and publications for downloading. Where we have material about a county that we want to publicise, we sometimes have a web page even if the recorder does not take part.

Herbaria @ Home is thriving, with 96,000 plant specimens now

digitised and there is growing interest from institutions (from the smaller local museums to Kew itself) to get their material photographed and online. Chris Liffen's meiosis.org.uk website is developing nicely, with some 50 full biographies of Victorian botanists on it, therefore supporting the botanical collections data on Herbaria @ Home. We have regular enquiries from researchers who may be members of the Society or the public at large.

In mid-December 2011 we established a portal to pay a standard BSBI subscription online. Current traffic is 5-10 a week and about half are new members. BSBI also moved early in 2012 to online payments.



Comparing income with expenditure, there was a surplus for the fourth year in six. The 2011 surplus of £22,426 recouped the 2010 deficit of £11,341. However, without the generosity of three donors, the Society would have again recorded a shortfall of net incoming resources in 2011.

As mentioned by all recent Treasurers, income from the environmental agencies and similar bodies, whether given in support of technical staff, or more closely allied to specific research deliverables, is of increasing importance. In 2011 such income constituted almost 50% of the Society's incoming resources. With this much appreciated financial support the Society is continuing to invest in its intellectual property, particularly through support of its volunteer recorder network and in the development of its Distribution Database and the expansion of website content.

In line with market benchmarks, the Society's investment portfolio, having all but recovered its losses from 2008, suffered a further fall in the last quarter of 2011, resulting in a net valuation deficit for the year of £54,202 (4.7%), an amount exceeding the related investment income. Council has approved that from mid-2012, the Society's new investment managers will be granted discretion to manage investments within the guidelines to be established by Council.

The Society has a rolling budget forecast for 2012 at break-even before investment revaluation. Whilst maintaining a prudent approach, the Treasurer expects to support well-planned initiatives which enhance the Society's standing, outlook, and the delivery of its charitable aims.

Antony Timmins
Honorary Treasurer
21 March 2012

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT ON SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

I have examined the summarised financial statements of Botanical Society of the British Isles for the year ended 31 December 2011.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the Charities SORP. My responsibility is to report to you my opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements, within the Annual Report, with the full annual financial statements.

My report on the charity's full annual financial statements describes the basis of my report on those financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full annual financial statements of Botanical Society of the British Isles for the year ended 31 December 2011.

**E E Irvine FCA
WMT LLP**

Torrington House, 47 Holywell Hill,
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21 March 2012

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31st December 2011

	2011	2010
Incoming Resources	£	£
<i>Voluntary Income</i>		
Subscriptions & Donations	74,746	79,858
Core Grants	99,946	73,376
Legacies and Development Fund Donations	31,782	10,000
Investment Income	45,318	37,789
<i>Charitable Activities Income</i>		
Botanical Survey and Interpretation	79,189	50,490
Botanical Education	8,303	13,221
Botanical Publications and Website	24,059	29,895
Total income resources	363,343	294,629
Resources Expended		
<i>Cost of Generating Funds</i>		
Membership Administration and Publicity	19,134	12,110
<i>Charitable Activities</i>		
Botanical Survey and Interpretation	211,489	193,966
Botanical Education	14,050	26,488
Botanical Publications	74,893	56,112
Governance Costs	21,351	17,294
	340,917	305,970
Net Incoming Resources		
<i>Allocated to</i>		
Endowment Funds	-	-
Restricted Income Funds	(241)	(109)
Unrestricted Funds	22,667	(11,232)
Total Net incoming/(outgoing) resources)	22,426	(11,341)
<i>Other (losses) and gains</i>		
(Losses)/gains on investments	(54,202)	97,133
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(31,776)	85,792

Summary Balance Sheet 31st December 2011

	2011	2010
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Investments - at Market Value	1,153,823	1,162,038
Current Assets		
Stocks	19,556	16,092
Debtors, prepayments and accrued income	84,545	33,447
Cash at Bank and on Deposit	89,734	150,281
Current Liabilities		
Creditors, Accruals & Deferred Income	(53,545)	(35,969)
	1,294,113	1,325,889
Represented By		
Endowment Funds	320,307	335,029
Restricted Income Funds	6,377	6,618
Unrestricted Funds	967,429	984,242
	1,294,113	1,325,889

The summary accounts are extracted from the full Annual Accounts that were approved by Council on 21 March 2012. The full Annual Accounts have been subject to an Independent Examination and this report was unqualified. A copy of the full Annual Report and Accounts will be supplied on request to the Hon. Treasurer. The full Annual Report will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator after the Annual General Meeting.

Thank you

The Society gratefully acknowledges grants from the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage. The Society wishes to thank all those members who have served, both nationally and regionally, as officers, on committees, as editors and indexers, in leading and arranging meetings and as assistant secretaries and as minuting secretaries; also members who have participated in surveys, prepared reports and read papers. BSBI would especially like to thank its network of Vice-County Recorders and Referees which underpins so much of its work. BSBI has Recorders for each of the 153 main units into which naturalists have traditionally divided Britain and Ireland. With subdivisions such as the Isles of Scilly and the individual Channel Islands and with joint recorders for some counties, this encompassed 177 members as at December 2011. To support all members engaged in recording BSBI has a team of 109 referees covering many of the more difficult or critical plants, and subjects such as local names and medicinal uses of British plants. Many of these volunteers have served for very many years, and, whilst these are only a selection, the Society notes the death of Maura Scannell (Cork, 1967) and the retirement of Mary Briggs (W. Sussex, 1975), David McCosh (Peebles, 1961), Peter and Michael Wyse Jackson (N. Kerry, 1982) and Lady Ro FitzGerald (Wexford, 1989).

Without the contribution of all these, the work of the Society would not have been possible. With the exception of those who work for the Society within grant-aided projects, or assisting the Treasurer in financial and related administration every other duty is performed by volunteers. We are particularly grateful to the late Commander Topp for his generous legacy of over £13,000.

BSBI is indebted for the continued support from its many partners:

Biological Records Centre, CEH, Wallingford
Countryside Council for Wales
The Field Studies Council (in particular Kindrogan and Preston Montford Field Centres)
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Linnean Society of London
National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford
National Biodiversity Network Trust
National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin
National University of Ireland Galway
Natural England
Natural History Museum, London
Plantlife International
Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
Royal Welsh Agricultural Society
Scottish Natural Heritage
Society of Antiquaries, London
Summerfield Books
The National Museums and Galleries of Wales
Ulster Museum, Belfast
University of Birmingham
University of Leicester

The Society is also very grateful to its staff and principal contractors who have continued to support its volunteer network and to promote BSBI at all times: Kevin Walker, Alex Lockton, Bob Ellis, Jim McIntosh, Quentin Groom, Tom Humphrey, Alan Hale, Angus Hannah, Polly Spencer-Vellacott and Clive Lovatt. The Society is also very grateful to its staff who have continued to support its volunteer network and to promote BSBI at all times: Kevin Walker, Alex Lockton, Bob Ellis, Jim McIntosh, Quentin Groom, Tom Humphrey and Alan Hale.

The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) is open to anyone who is interested in the flora of Britain and Ireland. From its earliest days (1836) it has welcomed both professional and amateur members. The Society's recording activity is carried on under the direction of the Society's Council and Records Committee through 177 Vice-County Recorders and a panel of Referees distributed across Britain and Ireland. It has 2,759 members and seven full or part-time paid staff aided by others on contracts. The Society maintains, and is in the process of merging, several major databases, covering a total of 9,700 plant species and has over twenty-five million items of data now in its Distribution Database. The Society's notable recent achievements include The New Atlas of the British and Irish flora (2002). Jointly with the Biological Records Centre, it was the data provider underpinning the Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (2005).

BSBI's objects are:

- To promote the study of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora;
- To support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora; and
- To co-operate with Continental and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.



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