

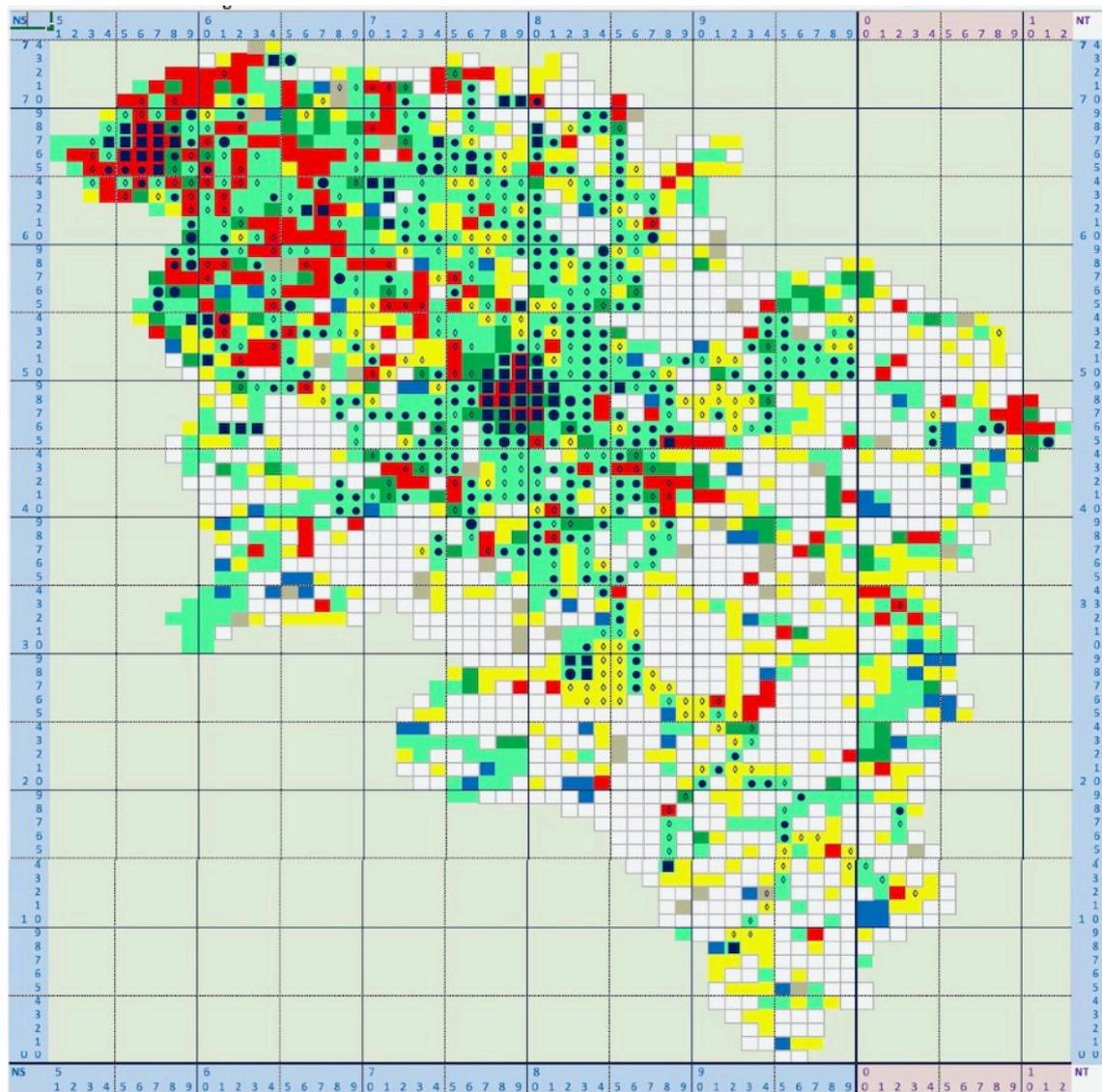


**Recording progress** (an update from Peter Wiggins)

While many of us have been busy in several vice-counties, Lanarkshire continues to make progress.

I have just completed another upload to the BSBI database and we have recorded 4,240 plants in 121 monads so far this year. 29 of these monads had no previous records and we recorded 1,628 records in these monads. There have been 595 different species recorded across the county.

Here is the position across the county. If you are looking to visit unrecorded squares, then the white and yellow ones are available!



- no species recorded
- fewer than 10 species
- records only before 2000
- records only before 2010
- fewer than 50 species 2010-2019
- 50-99 species 2010-2019
- 100 or more species 2010-2019

Black overlay shows recording activity from 2000:

- fewer than 10 species from 2020
- fewer than 50 species from 2020
- 50-99 species from 2020
- 100 or more species from 2020

## Chance conversation

It was a glorious summer's day as I stood on Kilcreggan Pier, awaiting the arrival of the passenger ferry from Greenock. Angus Hannah, my colleague, mentor and friend, was visiting to hunt for as many as possible of the local Bramble microspecies originally recorded by Allan Stirling over thirty years previously.



Panorama of Renfrewshire - from Erskine to the Cloch lighthouse - from Kilcreggan

I fell into conversation with the Piermaster who, it turned out, is very interested in botany - not the recording of plants but foraging for edible species!

He told me of various wonders:

- harvesting *Urtica dioica* (Nettle) seeds to sprinkle over food
- using young seeds of *Impatiens glandulifera* (Himalayan Balsam) as an alternative to pine nuts
- adding fresh *Cytisus scoparius* (Broom) flowers to add subtle flavour to a glass of water
- using *Sambucus nigra* (Elder) berries for homemade Elderberry Mead, with the option of adding a little of that to fizzy Elderflower cordial for a refreshing long drink on a hot day

He explained that he always researches everything thoroughly, to ensure health benefits rather than toxicity, and always picks well away from roads, chemicals and dog-walking areas!

Having lived locally almost all his life ("I'm not a local . . . I moved here when I was two"), following in his father's footsteps as Piermaster, he knows all the best haunts for edible plants.

*Michael Philip*

## Recipe Corner

Arising from chat about the above, it has been suggested that readers should send in their top recipes or tips using locally-available, edible wild plants.

So please send them in! (One qualification, though: heresay or 'googling' is forbidden - you must have direct, personal experience of any item you submit.)

## **Identification by microscope**

(A word from Peter Wiggins)

I'm happy to receive specimens of any of the plants below, so that I can improve my identification skills with a microscope.

### ***Polypodium*** (Polypody fern)

Please send me a couple of pinnae (the 'teeth' on the "comb") which have the round sporing bodies (sori) underneath. They need to be mature, i.e. orange to brown. If the fresh shoots don't have any sori, look around - there are usually some dead leaves below which will be fine.

### ***Montia fontana*** (Blinks)

Blinks can easily be taken down to subspecies by seed. Please send me any plants with closed seed pods.

### ***Callitriche*** (Water-starwort - any species)

These Water Starworts are fruiting now. I need a shoot with fruits. If there is a flower with pollen then wonderful! Pop it in a sealable freezer bag with damp tissue either side and a description of where it was growing (for example muddy pool, lake, stream, ditch, canal).

Please send specimens (as advised above), along with an accurate grid reference and a date for your find, and include your name, address and email.

I will let you know what I think the identification is, and why. If I am sufficiently sure, I can also send details to the relevant Vice-county Recorder to ensure that they are recorded in the BSBI database.

Thank you.

Peter Wiggins, 26 Braidpark Drive, Glasgow G46 6NB



*Polypodium* sori have distinctive patterns when seen under the microscope



This mass of aquatic vegetation is simply a colony of lots of individual *Callitriche* plants.

Specimens can readily be hooked out using a walking pole, placed in a plastic bag or tub - and sent in!

## **Congratulations!**

Big congratulations to our 'Team 77' friend, Hannah Williams and her fiancé, Ade.

They are to be married on 2nd October.



Have a great day when the time comes!

Everyone who knows you in the Lanarkshire Botany network sends loads of virtual hugs, high-fives, elbow-bumps - or whatever works best these crazy days.

Perhaps we'll see you both on some botany outing next year?



Ade and Hannah

## **vc77 Website**

Please take time to visit our Flowers of Lanarkshire website. It offers a spectacular window into our wild plant species, but it has also been designed to assist you in identifying plants.

Here's the link: <https://www.vc77botany.org/>

There are thousands of photos of hundreds of species - all taken in Lanarkshire - clearly indexed, together with helpful notes which highlight some key points for identification.

You are always welcome to contribute to this growing resource, particularly if you would like to share some of your really special images of plants, or close-ups showing detail of stems, leaves, flowers or seeds.

Please contact Peter Wiggins for more information. His email is: [pswiggins@gmail.com](mailto:pswiggins@gmail.com)

## **Brambles**

There are around 40 common Bramble species in Scotland. Two of us attended a Bramble Workshop in early August, learning how to look at these complex plants in order to identify them. Baby steps, certainly, but it has resulted in some fresh Bramble records for Lanarkshire!



Left:

Bramble specimens, identified and exhibited at the Workshop.

Right:

Everyone recognises the familiar fruits of the Bramble, but the fruits are actually the least useful part of the plant for identification purposes!



## **Photographs**

We always like to showcase your best plant photos in this Newsletter. In particular, we want to include some of the highlights of 2021 in our autumn edition - so please send in any pictures you'd like to share in this way.

Photos of the Lanarkshire landscape, or of botanists at work in the field, are also welcome!

## **Keep in touch**

This Newsletter has invited you to respond on numerous different topics! Please feel free to become more active and involved in any way that suits your circumstances. And your emails on any botanical matters are always welcome at any time - including, for example, help with identifying plants from your photos.

If you know anyone else who would be interested in receiving these occasional newsletters, or any future programmes of outings and activities, please ask them to get in touch.

I look forward to seeing you in the field before long - and new readers will be made especially welcome.

Finally, it seems that my long-endured email problems are now resolved. However, should we ever lose contact, please remember that I can be contacted at any time via the BSBI website.

Michael Philip (BSBI Recorder, vc77)

email: [botany@opus44.co.uk](mailto:botany@opus44.co.uk)

### **Picture credits:**

Dunbartonshire Launch photo	Claire Travis, Balloch Country Park, 22nd May 2021
Renfrewshire Launch photo	Liza Downie, Pollok Country Park, 23rd May 2021
Renfrewshire panorama	Michael Philip, Kilcreggan, 15th July 2021
<i>Polypodium</i> under microscope	Peter Wiggins
<i>Callitriche</i>	Peter Wiggins
Hannah and Ade	(photo supplied by Hannah Williams)
Bramble Workshop	Michael Philip, 8th August 2021
Bramble fruits	Michael Philip, Viewpark, Uddingston, 1st September 2021