

Lanarkshire Botany

Spring update, 2017



The programme of botanical outings and events for 2017 is fast taking shape. I can promise the team lots of variety: short training or evening walks for learning and enjoying plants, and whole-day outings in places as diverse as remote hillsides on the Dumfries & Galloway border, and the streets around Glasgow Central station!



Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) on a road verge at the start of February

As the new season begins, here are some things you can do to 'limber up' for the challenges ahead:

Training Pack No.1

The first of our Training Packs has proved popular as a way of keeping in touch with identification skills during the winter. The 'Test' is now available, which further builds confidence in the first 50 species. (There's no requirement to submit the test, but even just doing it will build your skills.) If you'd like the Pack, and/or the Test, please just request it. Training Pack No.2 is currently in preparation.

'Home Monad' project

Many of you have indicated that you intend to keep a list of what grows in your home monad (i.e. the map square in which you live). This is excellent news: now, please could I ask you to let me know which map square that is? Some of you have already sent me that information, but many have yet to do so. This enables me to plot where all these squares are. Thank you.

Resources

Why not treat yourself to some new books or items of equipment to celebrate the start of the season?

One almost indispensable piece of kit is a **hand lens**, or 'loupe'. I would strongly recommend this, as it opens up a whole new appreciation of the differences between similar species (e.g. Forget-me-nots). Go for at least a 10x magnification or, better still, a 15x one.

How old is your **flower book**? Don't worry, I'm not suggesting you discard it! You know your way around it, so it will always be very useful - but why not get another one as well, which might shed fresh light on things? The 'Collins Flower Guide' is a good one and 'Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland' by Blamey, Fitter and Fitter (2nd Edition, 2013) includes helpful distribution maps alongside the text.

For those who want the definitive, academic work, Stace's 'New Flora of the British Isles' (Third Edition) is a more serious investment: few pictures, but highly detailed text. Also, the BSBI publishes a growing series of handbooks on the more 'difficult' plants: their books on Grasses and on Sedges are excellent.



A wide range of botanical books (and items such as hand lenses) is available from **Summerfield Books**.

Other useful items in the field are:

- **Wellies!** Botanising more often than not involves wet or muddy ground
- A really good **waterproof jacket**
- **Maps**
- **GPS device**, for those who want to pinpoint locations to within 5 metres or so
- **Camera** (though many smartphones nowadays are just as good as 'proper' cameras)
- **Binoculars** (surprising how often they can provide an identification, e.g. on an opposite riverbank)
- Carrier bags to take samples home for identification
- A small **rucksack** to carry everything in
- And, although it's not strictly-speaking an 'item', do consider joining BSBI as a member

I'm not suggesting that every member of the team needs to rush out and spend hundreds of pounds on clothing, books and equipment! But you might like to treat yourself to one wee thing that would make a difference. (Or maybe you have a birthday coming up . . .)

Our 2017 programme

Our season of activities will begin with a whole-day outing on Sunday 23rd April (save the date!)

It is our intention to publish a detailed programme each month covering the following two months. So in mid-March, you will receive the programme to the end of May, and in mid-April the programme to the end of June, etc. This 'rolling' approach means that we will have the flexibility to respond to the wider situation, and go where the need or opportunity for fieldwork is greatest.

Our programme will also include mention of botanical activities arranged by other organisations.

There will be short walks on summer evenings, walks geared particularly towards beginners and improvers, and more ambitious, whole-day outings - sometimes in far-flung parts of the vice-county.

The whole aim is to generate a steady stream of data about what's growing in the wild across our area, which in turn forms part of the official national picture of ever-changing plant distribution.

To whet your appetite, here are one or two events you can already be putting in your diary:

Sunday 23rd April Whole-day outing at Carmunnock: join us for the very first outing of 2017.

Thursday 27th April Evening plant-hunt near Lindsayfield, East Kilbride (the first of our evening walks, geared especially towards learners and improvers).

Saturday 20th May Whole day in east Glasgow, trying to re-find as many species as possible from old records.

Saturday 3rd June Whole-day outing at Abington, recording in an area with no previous data!

Sunday 11th June Whole day exploring the former Ravenscraig site in Motherwell (another area with no previous data).

Full details of rendezvous locations and start times will be circulated soon.

Species 'Hit-List'

When you're out and about, even driving through Lanarkshire, we'd particularly like to know if you find any of the following plants (all possibly under-recorded):

- Primrose
- Globeflower
- Orchids of any kind
- Sundews
- Herb Paris
- Poppies



Report anything interesting you find!

Whoever you are, and wherever you explore, please report in what you find. In particular, please let me know if you come across anything unusual: we can come and see it, or have a look at any photographs you send in. If you'd like blank copies of the official BSBI Record Card (in abbreviated Latin!) just ask. Completed cards should come to me as paper copies or scans - or even just photograph and email it.

Guidance on recording

When you identify any plant growing in the wild please:

- note down its precise name (scientific name and, optionally, common name)
- note down its location (which map square is it in?)
- if it's something perhaps a little unusual, note down a 6-figure grid reference, or GPS location
- send the data to me!

If you're not completely certain what it is:

- don't guess: go and look it up - or come back to the plant with book in hand
- don't pick the plant unless there are lots
- note down the type of habitat, together with the names of other plants growing nearby
- take a photo and send it either to me or to someone else who might help identify it
- email me with your thoughts (either I can suggest what it might be, or come and look myself)

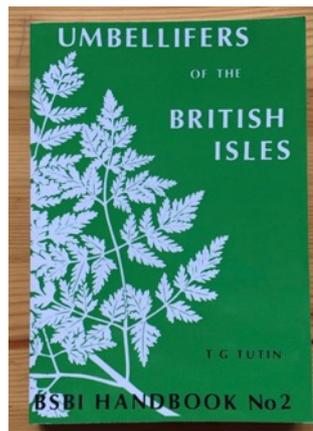
BSBI website

Do have a look around the excellent BSBI website. It is full of helpful resources and information.

www.bsbi.org

Free Offer!

This book is surplus to requirements.
It's the BSBI Handbook on Umbellifers.
If anyone would like it, please email me.
The first to respond will receive it!



Keep in touch

I'm always glad to receive your emails on matters botanical. I may not be able to answer everything myself, but this is a network so there will be an answer!

Our 'Google Group' will carry details of the programme and other news of general interest. If you want to join that, please let me know and I'll send you a clickable invitation. Most of Team 77 are now in that Group, so a single email from me (or you!) will reach almost everyone. Some have elected not to be in the Group: don't worry - you will continue to receive personal emails with all the information.

And our Facebook page will carry news of your most interesting finds, 'Home Monad' lists - and of course the list of events coming up. Please join the Facebook page if you can: so far only four people have, making it less effective as a means of communication. Search on Facebook for Lanarkshire Botany.

It's going to be a busy year, so please feel free to join in as much as you like! And keep the feedback coming in: everyone matters and we can all help each other.

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