**2017 Irish VCR Annual Reports – Round-up**

This document is a collation of the initial paragraph (highlighted as being planned for publication) from Annual Reports submitted by Irish VCRs in Jan/Feb 2018. Most VCRs submitted an annual report, however some did not add text to the initial section. Nonetheless, the notes compiled here provide a lovely snapshot of botanical activity across Ireland in 2017. Thanks to all, and let’s make this an annual round-up.

**H1, H2 – South Kerry, North Kerry – Rory Hodd (joint)**

2017 was a significant year for recording in County Kerry, with much activity taking place in both South (H1) and North (H2) Kerry. A total of 6,097 records were made in H1 and 4,854 records were made in H2 during 2017, with some further records still to be added. The main source of records was the 5-day recording event in early June, based on the Dingle Peninsula, which contributed to filling a large gap in the map. A total of 5,824 records were made during the event, in 17 hectads and 74 monads. Paul Green also undertook recording in both vice counties, targeting under-recorded areas, and found *Atriplex praecox* (early orache) new to Ireland on Valentia Island, alongside many other important records. A 2-day Rough Crew outing to the Great Blasket Island in August added many records to a hectad previously without post-2000 records, including a new site for the gametophyte of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney fern) and refinding *Cerastium arvense* (field mouse-ear) at its only known site in Southwest Ireland. A very positive development for the future of botanical recording in Kerry was the establishment of the BSBI Kerry Group, ably and enthusiastically coordinated by Jessica Hamilton and Therese Higgins. During 2017, this group had four outings, all of which were very well attended, with plans afoot for 2018. The momentum generated in 2017 will now be carried forward into 2018, which promises to be another excellent year for recording in Kerry.

**H3 – West Cork - Clare Heardman**

Steady progress is being made in H3 in relation to Plant Atlas 2020. 20,745 records were added to the DDb in 2017, 6610 of which were collected in 2017. The remainder relate to previous years, with more than 90% derived from data sets held by NBDC. Of the fifty-three 10km squares which are all or partly within H3, all except five hectads, all of which are predominantly open sea, now have records of more than 200 species since 1999.

Some of the interesting species recorded in 2017:

Three firsts for the Vice County –

*Epilobium x rivulare* - thanks to Paul Green, VCR Wexford/Waterford

*Rumex x abortivus* and *Epilobium x limosum* - thanks to Geoffrey Kitchener, who is the BSBI referee for *Rumex* & *Epilobium* and also VCR for Kent.

New sites (and new hectads) for species listed on the Flora Protection Order 2015:

A fantastic new *Simethis mattiazzii* (Kerry Lily) site - thanks to Fionn Moore

A very tiny (but still exciting!) new *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) sporophyte site in Glengarriff - thanks to Rory Hodd (VCR H1/H2).

*Lotus subbiflorus* (Hairy Bird’s-foot) in a new hectad.

BSBI outings:

One national BSBI event took place in H3 in 2017, comprising an enjoyable trip in September to Old Head of Kinsale & Garrylucas strand (14 attendees, 297 records). Several successful local group outings also took place, including a New Year Plant Hunt in Glengarriff Woods and trips to under recorded sites including Barleycove Dunes, Rock Island, Carrigfadda Woods and Clonakilty Estuary.

**H5 – East Cork – Edwina Cole**

17,470 H5 records were added to the DDb in 2017 – of these 7,882 were 2017 records.

A batch of almost 4,500 records made by Megan Morris were digitised in early 2017.

Validation of data is ongoing, including the NBDC data for H5.

Two field meeting were held in H5 – 24th June at Ballymacoda and Knockadoon Head with 18 attendees recording 268 species over 6 monads; 13th August at Power Head with 5 attendees recording 146 species over 4 monads (local event).

I continue to act as the contact point for the local Cork recorders group (72 members), publicising any local meetings or events that may be of interest to the group.

Significant finds in 2017 included – *Lactuca virosa* (Great Lettuce) discovered by Megan Morris in Castlelyons, *Erigeron annuus* (Tall Fleabane) discovered by Kevin Barry on Fota Island and *Kickxia elatine* (Sharp-leaved Fluellen) discovered by Finbarr and myself, again on Fota Island.

I presented the VCR Report for H5 at the BSBI AGM in September.

**H5 – East Cork - Finbarr Wallace**

In 2017:

191 Monads over 118 Tetrads in 21 of 33 Hectads were recorded in.

11 Hectads generated 200-1289 records, 3 over 150, 2 between 100 and 150, 5 less than 100.

c. 8000 records in 2017 from field work

Records are being submitted pretty much as they are received so we have a clear picture of what is to be done.

I retrieved H5 records from post 1999 Irish Botanical News (excluding Rosa species).

**H6 – Waterford – Paul Green**

Very little activity during 2017. Just 532 records collected, the smallest amount since 2000.

The first new native species for the county, *Nitella translucens* (Translucent Stonewort), was found by Cliona Byrne in a drain, on the side of a path in a conifer plantation, at Monameean (X211854) on 7 February. *Trifolium occidentale* (Western Clover) was the next new county record, found by Con Breen, on the side of the coast path descending into Portally Cove (X675990) in July. This is the most westerly site in Ireland.

The first species, believed extinct in the county, to be refound in 2017 was *Lepidium latifolium* (Dittander), found on the shore of Youghal Harbour, at Kinsalebeg (X1259079564), in July by Sam Thomas. The last report from here was by Charles Smith in 1746. I went and took a look at the Dittander, on 25 July, and found abundant *Bromus secalinus* (Rye Brome) as an arable weed, in a field between the church and the estuary at Kinsalebeg (X12867970).

Pink flowering *Calystegia* (Bindweed) at Cheekpoint (S6813), which I mention in the *Flora of County* *Waterford* as having larger flowers than normal *Calystegia sepium* subsp. *roseata,* were checked and these proved, as I half expected, to be *Calystegia* x *howittiorum* (*C. pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed) x (Large Bindweed) *C. silvatica*), a new hybrid for the county list. I also took a look at the only extant site in the county for *Calystegia pulchra* (Hairy Bindweed), in a roadside hedge at Gorteen (X28119574), this also was renamed as *Calystegia* x *howittiorum*.

**H8 – Limerick – Sylvia Reynolds**

Limerick is in good shape in terms of recording for Atlas 2020. Julian Reynolds and I continue to work together and we greatly appreciate the regular recording also done by Mike Quirke, Paul Murphy and Tom Harrington in 2017. We have had some very enjoyable joint outings, from an estate woodland where we recorded the spring flora, including the relict of cultivation *Staphylea pinnata* (Bladdernut), to swampy ground with *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass), a native species new to the county. Between us all we were in the field for some 42 days. Except for late season records, all Limerick records are in the DDb, but none validated yet. A selection of sites and of the more interesting species found is described in my 2017 county report to appear in *Irish Botanical News* (2018).

Julian and I also spent six long days in H24 Longford, making about 3800 records, all now in the DDb.

**H9 – Clare – Stephen Ward**

1.] Progress with Atlas 2020

Total number of records post 2001 – 47,727 of which 6,609 made in 2017.

All data which I have received has been digitised. Good progress with validation.

2.] A feature of field recording in 2017 was the number of visiting Botanical Groups which contributed data, although these groups inevitably perhaps focused on the Burren rather than the VC as a whole:

Bradford Botany Group – led by Neil Barrett; Bruce Brown supplied extra data.

Dr Gary Wallace, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, California & his wife Marianne

British Pteridological Society / Wildflower Society – Roger Golding

Naturetrek Tour Leader Dawn Nelson

University of Aarhus, Denmark, led by PeterWind

University of Aberystwyth – Ray Woods

Wiltshire Botanical Society – led by David Green

3] Most of the data was contributed by Irish botanists living in the County. I am particularly grateful to Amanda Brown (AranLIFE), Donncha O’Cathain, Eamonn Twomey (NPWS Dromore Woods NNR), Eamonn Gaughan, Graham Day & Julia Nunn (CeDAR), Joan Fallows, Hannah Mulcahy & Phoebe O’Brien (Dept Botany, NUIG), Louise Duignan (Aran Islands), Sunniva Hanley (Dublin Naturalists), Maria Long (BSBI), Olivia O’Gorman, Chris Peppiatt, Cathy Seale (Water & Communities Officer Galway), Tanya Slattery, Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington.

4] I directed David Green to a whitebeam tree above Newtown Castle; he identified it as *Sorbus hibernica* and sent a sample to Tim Rich who confirmed the identification.

**H11 – Kilkenny – Roger Goodwillie**

H11 2017 was a bit of a slow year for recording as I was involved in a book project for some of the time and the weather was pretty poor when trying to catch up in the autumn.

I was concentrating on gaps in the coverage and trying to find places to visit in the blank tetrads with a reasonably unagricultural habitat. So a card with 150 species was reckoned to be a good one and it was a complete chance if any interesting species turned up. This was exemplified by *Equisetum* x *trachyodon* (Mackay’s Horsetail) which grows in abundance beside an ordinary bridge near Mullinavat. I will look out for *E.hyemale* (Rough Horsetail) henceforth in this part of the county. New sites too for *Galium* *uliginosum* (Fen Bedstraw), *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern), *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort), *Poa nemoralis* (Wood Meadow-grass) and *P.compressa* (Flattened Meadow-grass). *Lithospermum officinale* (Common Gromwell) was a NCR for me though it has been established for some time.

A few new aliens have reached Kilkenny, a *Galinsoga* which I eventually identified as *G.parviflora* (Gallant-soldier) and *Senecio viscosus* in the railway station. *Barbarea verna* (American Winter-cress) and *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* (Perennial WEall-rocket) are new also but are expected to escape from gardens. *Anemanthele lessoniana* (Pheasant’s -tail) will not be far behind from its behaviour.

**H12 – Wexford – Paul Green, Paula O’Meara**

2017 was another fabulous year for recording in Wexford with over 100,000 records collected. 41 individuals contributed to the recording efforts. 23 new species and hybrids were added to the county list, and if you include subspecies, varieties and cultivars there were 27 new for the county. Of these, 8 were native, and include 4 species, 3 hybrids and 1 variety.

Native species: *Atriplex praecox* (Early Orache), *Carex canescens* (White Sedge), *Parentucellia* *viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) and *Taraxacum ronae*.

Hybrids: *Atriplex glabriuscula* (Babington's Orache) x *A. praecox*, *Juncus* x *diffusus* (*J. effusus* (Soft-rush) x *J. inflexus* (Hard Rush)) and *Ulex* x *breoganii* (*U. europaeus* (Gorse) x *U. gallii* (Western Gorse)).

Variety: Ophrys apifera var. trollii (Bee Orchid).

The Bee Orchid is the 1st record for Ireland. Early Orache was 2nd county for this new species to Ireland in 2017.

In 2018 it is hoped that the last 105 monads in the county with no actual records will be visited.

**H13 – Carlow – Lisa Dowling**

In 2017 I mainly targeted the under-recorded hectads S87 (Tullow area), S75 (south of Bagenalstown) and S77 (Carlow town area) and accrued about 3300 records (including a small number from Paula O Meara). Planning where to survey for each hectad was greatly assisted by the post 2000 species lists available for each hectad on the BSBI website. Some hectads with relatively low record count particularly in the northeast (Rathvilly area (S88)) and east (Ballon area (S86)) of the County remain, and will be the main focus of my recording in the coming year.

All 2017 recording cards have been digitized to date and the majority transferred the BSBI database – a small number of records remain to be digitized from my field notebook. I have yet to begin validation on any data.

Nice to see the rare *Viola lutea* (Mountain Pansy) persisting in numbers on semi-natural acid grassland on an extensively managed farm in the northeast of the County (S97). Not too far from that site, *Carex muricata* (Prickly Sedge) was recorded along the roadside at Acaun Bridge (S87) which was the second post-2000 record in the County for this sedge. A first county record of the casual grass *Phalaris minor (*Lesser Canary-grass) was made in August, in a cereal field at the village of Rathoe (S87), where it was frequent along peripheral areas.

**H14 – Laois – Mark McCorry, Fiona MacGowan**

We made a good start to botanical recording in 2017. One of the early highlights was finally getting to see *Leucojum aestivum* in flower in woodlands along the Nore. The maps showing numbers of records in various hectads were put to good use, and hectads with low coverage towards the west of the county were targeted. Several visits were made to different habitats in different hectads. One survey highlight was a visit to a portion of the previously unknown (to this recorder) Mannin Wetland pNHA, which contains alkaline fen and associated wetland habitats. This proved to be a very diverse site with rare species to Laois such as *Pinguicula vulgaris* and *Epipactis palustris* being recorded. Over 1000 records (estimate) were made during the year. About two thirds of the 2017 records are now in Mapmate. Coverage of common species distribution across Laois is reasonably good now, with only a few gaps left to fill. However, there remains plenty of interesting sites to visit in 2018 and beyond in Laois. Progress has also started on ddb validation in Laois. Of course the biggest highlight of the year was the Laois VCR demonstrating various bog flora to the President Michael D. Higgins at Abbeyleix Bog! We are happy to say that he knew the different bog cotton species but needed help with the sundews!

**H16 – West Galway – John Conaghan**

As a result of the contribution of a large number of records (c. 21,100) from a variety of sources, most notably post-2000 recording by Paul Green, coverage of the vice-county for Atlas 2020 has greatly improved during 2017. Only 4 of the 37 hectads in the vice-county have less than 200 species recorded since 2000 with 25 of the 37 hectads now having greater than 250 species recorded. Survey work in 2018 will mainly target squares which have less than 250 species recorded.

A field meeting in July 2017 was held in the Leenane/Inagh Valley areas of the Maumturk Mountains. During this field meeting a total of 488 records were made. Some of the more interesting finds included *Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint), *Juncus planifolius* (Broad-leaved Rush), *Oreopteris limbosperma* (Lemon-scented fern), *Carex dioica* (Dioecious Sedge) and *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane).

Perhaps the best botanical find of 2017 was the confirmation of a large population of *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) growing on rocky outcrops with dry heath at Lettergesh in the north of the vice-county. This population is now the most northerly known location for the species along the Galway/Mayo coast. The closest populations in the vice-county are to be found at Slyne Head, located approximately 25km to the south-west.

**H17 – North-east Galway – Chris Peppiatt**

All in MapMate. 421 taxa in 2017. 1,675 records in 2017 from 28 sites (from 16 hectads).

**Highlights** (e.g. nice finds; contact with other local botanists; etc.)

* Help from Eamonn Delaney, Ciaran Bruton, Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington and Paula O’Meara.
* Babbington’s Leek
* Bee Orchid
* Common Gromwell
* Fen Violet
* Lesser Clubmoss
* Small Toadflax
* Variegated Horsetail

**Overview:** All data since becoming VCR are in MapMate. 654 taxa so far. 9,057 records so far. Records from 29 hectads (from 35 wholly or partly within H17). Twenty-one hectads with records from three or more tetrads. Records for 85 named sites (some of which cross monad/tetrad boundaries). Records for 157 grid-referenced sites, 98 at the monad level and 59 at the tetrad level.

Have applied to NPWS for national grasslands and woodlands surveys data for H17 from post-2000. Will try to cover every hectad ‘by numbers’ (need to tabulate tetrads done so far and those remaining). Will visit selected sites. Will target species using old H17 records from BSBI database.

**H25 – Roscommon – John Earley**

During 2017 great progress was made in recording flora in county Roscommon H25. There are a total of forty one 10km in county Roscommon –about 20 squares are shared with another vice county. At the beginning of 2017 it was my ambition to have records from each 10km square in the county. All 41 squares in vice county Roscommon H25 now have plant records gathered during 2016 & 2017.

Help arrived in June when a group assembled in Boyle for 4 days to gather plant records mainly in the north Roscommon area. A great effort was made to collect records in some unrecorded 10km squares in north and west Roscommon. Many Thanks to everyone that came to the area and helped with the recording. All records have been entered in the BSBI database.

In 2017 some scarce plants have been recorded at new sites thus increasing the known distribution in county Roscommon e.g. *Lathyrus palustris* (Marsh Pea), *Teucrium scordium* (Water Germander), *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn) and *Rhamus cathartica* (Buckthorn). *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) was rediscovered at an old site in Mote Park near Roscommon town, and *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Heleborine) and *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid ) rediscovered at old sites in south Roscommon.

Plans for 2018 include the following;

Concentrate on a number of 10km squares with low records number.

Explore new areas to record scarce and rare species.

Validation of records has commenced but slowly –I hope to speed up in 2018.

Sadly in August Michael Archer passed away. Michael was a great recorder in county Roscommon. Over the years we visited many places in county Roscommon looking for interesting plants, particularly in north Roscommon. In March we visited Lough Key together to look at a new site for Toothwort. Sadly it was our last get-together. He was unable to join the group gathering in June. Michael will be sorely missed in recording flora in county Roscommon.

May he rest in peace.

**H26 – East Mayo – Eamonn Delaney**

I have been appointed as joint VCR for East Mayo (H26) in November 2017 on a 12 month provisional / trial basis. Over the past two field seasons, I have been visiting parts of East Mayo and compiling species lists for discrete monads at select locations, compiling lists for 10 monads. On the 15th and 16th September 2017, I accompanied Paul Green where we undertook recording at hectads M25 and M26, collating more than 450 records.

The BSBI (Irish branch) main recording event for 2018 will take place across four and a half days in Mayo between August 08th and 12th and will include sites in H26. To assist with this, I will identify suitable sites and habitat complexes that require recording, that are relatively easy to access and will hopefully have a rewarding assortment of plant species.

The most notable finds for the H26 in 2017 included *Viola persicifolia* (fen violet) at Shrule Turlough and a new hectad record (M25) for *Potentilla fruticosa* (shrubby cinquefoil).

**H30 & H33– Cavan & Fermanagh– Robert Northridge**

The aim of recording in these two vice-counties over the last year has been to obtain a high re-recording post-2000 percentage in all hectads of which these counties hold the main proportion. Interestingly, both counties have 19 such hectads and in Cavan just two have less than 65% of species re-recorded since 2000, while in Fermanagh the number is four.

In the hectads in Cavan (a relatively under-recorded county) the average number of species ever recorded in each of the 19 hectads is 442 while the equivalent number for Fermanagh (a relatively well-recorded county) is 210 more at 652. 65% of 662 is a harder target than 65% of 442!

In Cavan the average number of post-2000 species per hectad is 319 while in Fermanagh it is 449.

All records for both counties have been digitised and a start has been made on validation.

**H31 – Louth – John Faulkner (standing in temporarily)**

Very substantial progress was made with Atlas 2020 in Co. Louth, much of it by myself, but with the assistance of members of the Dublin BSBI Group, my wife Gillian, of an *ad hoc* group of *Atriplex* students led by Paul Green after the Irish AGM, and of an influx of 2005 records from the NBDC. As a result there are now more than twice as many records for the Co. Louth as a whole in the DDb as when it was first populated with data in 2010. 25% of all-time records for the VC date from 2017.

Coverage of the hectads which are wholly or partly in the northern half of the VC is good. Including data from neighbouring VCs, at least 65% of all-time taxa in these hectads has been recorded post-2000. Coverage of some of the southern hectads is not quite so thorough, with 5 remaining in the 55%-65% bracket, but the position is enormously improved over last year.

No fewer than 69 taxa are noted in the DDb as having been recorded for the first time in the VC this year. Most of these are aliens which, for whatever reason, were not recorded by earlier recorders, but they do include, for example, 2 *Salicornia* (Glasswort) spp and 4 *Atriplex* (Orache) hybrids.

Validation has been undertaken for most of the “priority” records, but not for the run-of-the-mill ones.

**H34 – East Donegal – Oisín Duffy, Mairéad Crawford**

The highlights of the botanical recording season in East Donegal (H34) was the weekend field-outing in a number of locations throughout the vice-county. This was a great opportunity to record in a number of hectads which were lacking for Atlas 2020. Unfortunately other opportunities for recording within H34 were few and far between, however the schedule for 2018 is looking much better.

Digitisation of all our own records has been completed and verified. There are a number of records sent to us from neighbouring VCR’s which are in the process of being entered into MapMate before being sync’d with the DDb.

As mentioned above, our 2017 field-outing was the highlight of the recording season, in particular Drumboe Woods and Grianan of Aileach. Field-outings have been prepared for the coming field season, with a three day outing in Inishowen and a potential “Rough Crew” island trip. We also hope to team up with the BSBI Ulster Group for some informal recording during the Summer months.

Nice Find: *Neottia cordata* (Lesser Twayblade) at Grianan of Aileach.

**H35 – West Donegal – Ralph Sheppard**

The following totals are for my MapMate – DDb totals are higher.

30,232 records since 2000

2,729 records in 2017

933 species recorded since 2000 – up by 36 in 2017

533 species recorded in 2016 – up from 523 in 2015

One of the main gaps listed last year has been plugged – Slieve Tooey. One partly plugged – Glenveagh. Islands mentioned in my last report were not done.

No Field Meetings listed for 2018, but an informal one is planned for two important islands - Inishirrer and Rutland – with Rough Crew participation.

Digitisation is up to date. Validation has hardly started – big hopes for progress before the spring gets under way.

I led two walks organised by An Taisce but billed as joint. Bad weather suppressed the numbers (15 and 22), but not the enthusiasm.

A walk for Fanad Lighthouse Community Group – about 25 people

I joined an outing of the British Pteridological Society, leading them to several good sites.

New finds:

*Euphrasia foulaensis* (Foula Eyebright) was found on the BTS outing – only other Irish record was by Praeger on Achill Island (H27).

*Euphrasia pseudokerneri* (Chalk Eyebright) would be a new VC record – I hope to re-find it this year and get it determined. There appear to be no post-2000 records in Ireland.

*Carex lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge). Two records are the first post-2000 records for this species in H35, where it was previously widespread.

**H37 – Armagh – John Faulkner**

Co. Armagh (H37) enjoyed a supercharged excitement to effort ratio in 2017! Very little systematic recording was carried out in the VC this year, with only 1172 records in total added to the DDb. The reason for this was that I was concentrating on recording elsewhere in Ireland for Atlas 2020 purposes, H37 being relatively well recorded post 2000 by Irish standards. This very modest total of records derives from a small amount of targeted recording activity, a few casual discoveries, and some observations reported to me by others – this latter category showing a welcome increase over the norm of recent years.

Despite being few in number, this year’s records were disproportionately interesting, with about 20 new taxa recorded in the VC. Some of these were of taxa that may have been long present but either are now recognised as naturalised, eg *Vaccinium corymbosum* (Highbush Blueberry) at Annaghmore) or were previously recorded at only at aggregate level, eg *Dryopteris affinis* agg. (Scaly Maleferns). Others were hybrids, such as *Atriplex x gustafssoniana* (Kattegat Orache) and a gigantic sterile *Verbascum,* which appears to be *x semialbum*, the hybrid between *V. thapsus* and *V. nigrum,* despite the latter being unknown in the area and a scarce casual in Ireland. At least two – *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort) and *Spartina anglica* (Comon Cordgrass) are new arrivals. The *Senecio* was in a classic situation on a bridge over the main Dublin-Belfast railway at Craigavon, whereas the *Spartina* had sought out the tiny stretch of intertidal mud in the county at Victoria Lock, where it ambushed a group of BSBI members looking at *Atriplex* plants.

Another record of interest on the same day was *Salicornia europaea* s.s. (Common Glasswort). This one distinguished itself by occupying a minute patch of saltmarsh beside a rivulet. On the other side of the rivulet, 10 metres away, there was *S. ramosissima* (Purple Glasswort)*.* However, the *ramosissima* did not count as an H37 record as the rivulet comprises what is, in BSBI terms, the boundary between H37 and H31. In another context, it is more significant. Within a year or so, it appears the rivulet is destined to become the outer limit of the European Union. Nature clearly prefers the boundary to be soft (ie muddy) at this point. On the other hand, go a few metres upstream and the rivulet is hard (ie stony). A natural metaphor for a forthcoming political fudge perhaps?

**H38 – Down – Graham Day**

Focus was made on under-recorded hectads and taxa of shorter flowering period. Five monthly meetings were organised at Newry, Dromantine, Mount Stewart (with BNFC), Castlewellan and Ballyquintin. Of the 42 hectads in County Down, 28 were visited in 2017. 215 new hectad records were made, mostly of non-native, sub-species and hybrids. 122 records were date-class upgrades from the previous Atlas.

In May *Crassula tillaea* (Mossy Stonecrop) was spotted growing on roadside gravel near to Kilclief. This species now appears to be expanding through the county.

Also in May, visits to Mount Stewart produced widespread occasional *Anisantha diandra* (Great Brome) plants.

Recording round the south of Donagadee in early June produced copious quantities of highly invasive *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (Floating Pennywort) clogging a stream at the entrance to The Commons car park. This was reported to EHS, but the colony was still present when another visit was made in September.

Ballykilbeg Fen ASSI and adjacent ground was visited in early July. The fen appeared to have significant growth of scrub and be affected by deep drains. *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge) and *Equisetum palustre* (Marsh Horsetail) were re-found. *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed) and *Heracleum sphondylium* x *mantegazzianum* (Hogweed x Giant Hogweed) were new records for the area.

With Paul Green’s new and informative *Atriplex* key to hand, Greyabbey was visited in late September. *Atriplex glabriuscula* (Babington’s Orache), *A. prostrata* (Spear-leaved Orache), *A. prostrata* x *glabriuscula*, *A.* x *tashcereauii* (Taschereau’s Orache) and *A.* x *gustafsoniana* (Kattegat Orache) were recorded.

No progress was made with digitisation of records as VC boundary issues in Mapmate are still unresolved.

**H39 – Antrim – David McNeill**

Almost 17,500 records were uploaded to the BSBI database in 2017. Recent field work has been successfully targeted at underworked hectads. However, slightly more than half of the records digitised last year were from post-2000 field cards and notes gratefully received from Ian McNeill and John Harron.

A year ago, only 6 hectads had post-2000 totals of over 250. Now 29 of the 49 hectads have over 250, of which 18 hectads have greater than 300. There are 9 hectads (all part-hectads) with less than 200. Last year, the post-2000 hectad total was on average only 38% of the historic total. This figure has now risen to 54%.

I am working hard with CEDaR to verify over 40,000 records which they hold for Antrim. These are predominantly common and woodland species, but this data will make a huge difference. I am hopeful that it will be uploaded to the BSBI database soon.

Two major field trips were undertaken with the Ulster BSBI Group to varied sites at Newtown Crommelin, Dungonnell, Ballymena and Broughshane.

A wonderful display of *Minuartia verna* (Spring Sandwort) was seen on the majestic cliffs of Tievebulliagh in May. A visit to Lough Naroon in June confirmed that the sole Northern Ireland population of *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Bearberry) survives, albeit in the shadow of a giant wind turbine. In August, a completely new site for *Orobanche hederae* (Ivy Broomrape) was discovered in a municipal flower bed in Belfast.

**In this document:**

**22 reports, from 23 VCs, by 23 VCRs, and taken from a total of 29 Annual Reports submitted.**