



## **Micheline Sheehy Skeffington elected only second Irish President of the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland**

The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland<sup>1</sup> (BSBI) is the foremost society for the study, recording and conservation of the flora of Britain and Ireland. It was founded in 1836 (as the Botanical Society of London) and since then, many eminent botanists have been made the President. Dr Micheline Sheehy Skeffington has just been voted in as the Society's new President - she is only the second Irish botanist to be so honoured, after Professor David A. Webb of Trinity College, Dublin. She is also only the third woman ever to hold the post.

Micheline said "I was really surprised when they asked me, and I was reluctant to say yes because of all the work involved. But then I realised I couldn't really say no as I'd complained, eleven years ago, that at that time they'd had only one woman as a President! Now that I'm in post, though, I'm looking forward to the possibilities. I'd like to use the opportunity for example to raise awareness of our wonderful wild habitats in Ireland and help protect them. My first act has been to contact Minister Malcolm Noonan, to request a meeting".

Micheline lectured in Plant Ecology at Galway University for over 30 years. With her retirement she has been able to give more time to her first love, recording and studying plants in the wild. She is particularly interested in the habitats of the west of Ireland and has been the BSBI's County Recorder for South East Galway since 1981.

Micheline will serve as President for two years. Her first duty was to attend and chair the Society's annual British & Irish Botanical Conference at the Natural History Museum in London. The Conference brought together botanists from all over Britain and Ireland in the run-up to the launch in Spring 2023 of the BSBI's third plant distribution atlas<sup>2</sup>.

Micheline is now back in Ireland and is available for interview.

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1. The Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI) is the leading society promoting the study, understanding and enjoyment of wild plants in Britain and Ireland. Founded in 1836, we are now one of the world's largest contributors of biological records, many collected by our volunteer members,

both amateur and professional botanists, who benefit from our research, training and outreach programmes.

2. About the Atlas project: [\*\*https://bsbi.org/atlas-2020\*\*](https://bsbi.org/atlas-2020)
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