

Network Zoom

On Saturday 4th March we held our first ever Zoom get-together across all three of the local botany networks in our wider area (Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire). Many positive comments and ideas were put forward, giving us some new things to look forward to.



A Herbarium is a collection of preserved plant specimens

For example, in our Interview feature, we heard from Keith Watson who, as well as being the BSBI Vice-County Recorder for Renfrewshire, is Curator of Botany at Glasgow Museums. He has proposed a new project to mark the centenary of J.R. Lee's 'Flora of the Clyde Area', published in 1933. (see article below)

Keith has also underlined the value of visiting the Herbarium collections at either Glasgow Museums or the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE). It is hoped that we can arrange a group visit later in the year for those who are interested.

Another thing to come out of the Zoom event was a plea from many to do this more often! As a result, there will be something new on our programme this year: a couple of Zoom events where anyone can share photos of plants they want identified. It is not always possible to arrive at a conclusive determination from photos, but in a forum where people can contribute their own thoughts we should be able to do well.

Those who had taken part a year ago in the Study Groups held on Zoom by Peter Wiggins requested more of this. So planning is now underway for two new opportunities:

Firstly, a repeat of last year's Study Group topics will be run during the coming summer for those who have not taken part before. This is an excellent opportunity to build deeper plant knowledge in a collaborative group setting, with loads of photographs and tips (see the feedback article in the [Spring 2022 Newsletter](#)).

Secondly, a brand new programme of Study Groups is being devised for next winter - aimed at those who have taken part before.



Peter in action with a Study Group



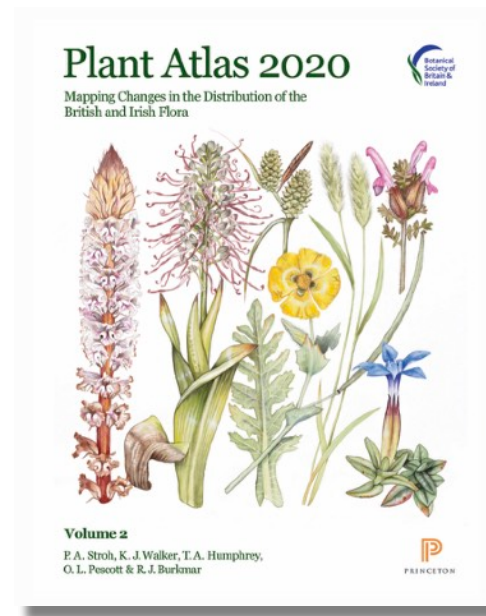
A field outing in progress

Our networks continue to grow (150 people are connected now) and Michael Philip listed a whole variety of things for which practical help is needed. The full list can be found at the end of this Newsletter: please challenge yourself to pick an item! One key to building our capability and running our wide-ranging programme is spreading the burden of leading outings. Several people have kindly offered to do this from time to time and it is very much appreciated. It must be stressed that advanced botanical experience is not a requirement: it's more a question of welcoming people as they arrive, following an outlined route or task, and making sure someone is writing stuff down. The group will record according to their combined skill level - which is all we ever do anyway.

Please contact Michael anytime - especially to indicate your interest in taking part in Study Groups, or with offers of practical help or involvement in other ways.

Plant Atlas 2020

Just a few days ago, in early March 2023, the BSBI published the eagerly-awaited Plant Atlas 2020.



Based on a dataset of some 26 million plant records gathered by 8,500 recorders over 178,000 recording days across the British Isles, this monumental work provides the most detailed picture ever achieved of the distribution of our wild plants.

The resulting printed version, in two large and heavy volumes, is of the very highest quality. In full colour throughout, and printed on heavy, glossy paper, this major work includes species text, trend analysis, dot maps and graphs of phenology and altitude occurrence for each of 2,863 species. Although the price tag is significant at £132, the value is unquestionable.

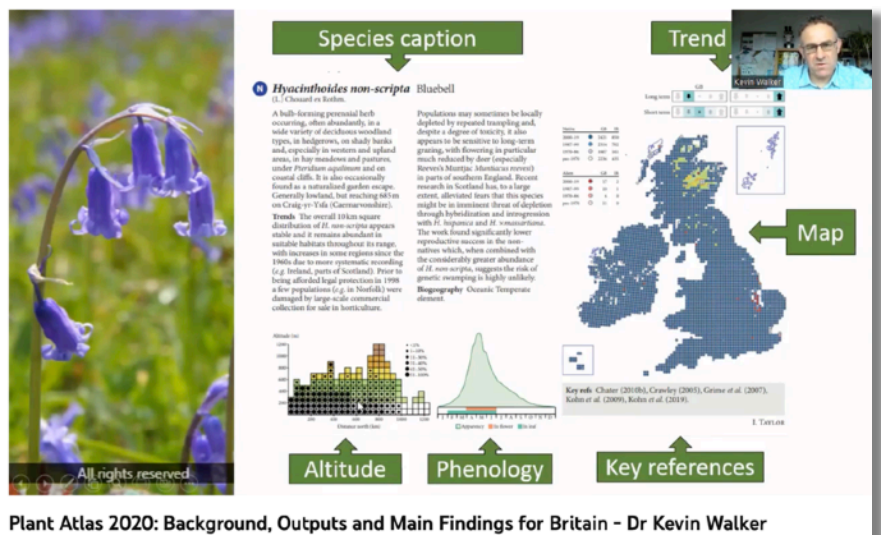
However, BSBI has also made the entire output available as a free-of-charge, public-facing website:

<https://plantatlas2020.org>

This online version has exactly the same data, plus many species photos, and coverage of a further 600+ species not included in the print version. Please visit the website and enjoy exploring! As a starting-point, go to the link above, click on 'Atlas' in the top bar and type in a species name.

Please tell your friends and contacts about this unparalleled resource, and please also do anything you can to bring it to the attention of politicians, NGOs and local officials. In pursuing the increasingly urgent environmental agenda, policy-makers and local decision-makers now have at their disposal a brand new tool to provide the latest evidence base for plant conservation and management.

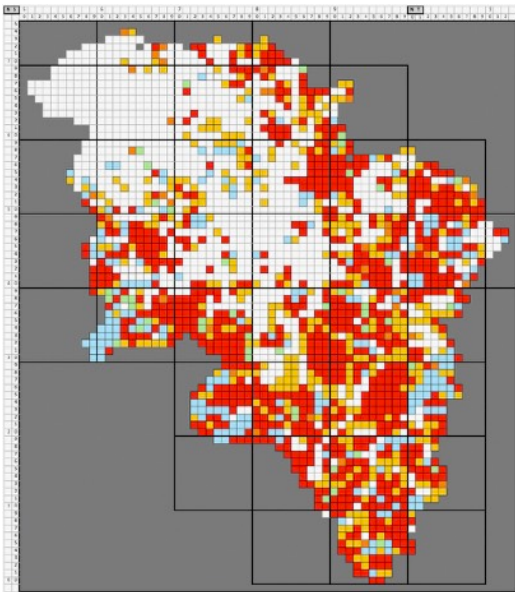
BSBI Head of Science, Dr. Kevin Walker, introducing the content and findings at the launch of Plant Atlas 2020.



Plant Atlas 2020: Background, Outputs and Main Findings for Britain - Dr Kevin Walker

Lanarkshire

Statistics and priorities



Regular readers will be tired of seeing this map!

It's a schematic 'negative map' of Lanarkshire: white squares are well-recorded, while the coloured squares need work.

The aim is to remove all colour by building lists of plant species.

For example, the red squares have no previous records: a decent plant list will remove the red. Yellow squares have fewer than 10 species on record: a decent plant list will remove the yellow - and so on.

Our outings programme will be driven by this process, but we would very much welcome contributions by individuals as well. If you'd like to have a go, and would value some help in the form of some local target areas or species lists of existing records, please get in touch!

Urban Flora Project

2023 is to be the final year of recording activity for the Botanical Society of Scotland (BSS) 'Urban Flora Project'. For several years we have been in an active partnership with BSS, contributing many thousands of records to this study of the wild plants of Scotland's urban areas.

Our programme for the year ahead will include visits to Blantyre, Bellshill, Biggar and New Stevenston. The all-day outing at Biggar, alongside a BSS team from Edinburgh, promises to be especially rewarding.

Falls of Clyde

As previously reported, last year's burst of plant recording within the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Falls of Clyde Reserve produced over 1,000 records. This year we will have at least one further outing to look for some of the known rarities on the site, and a specialist operation involving some elite visiting botanists and rock-climbers is being contemplated!

Midlothian partnership

We are delighted to have been approached by Sue Jury (Vice-County Recorder for Midlothian) with a view to some collaboration in fieldwork along our shared border.

This may result in a joint outing or two later this season.

A personal note (Michael Philip)

"Almost 43 years ago I began my career in schools, teaching 9-18 year-olds to play woodwind instruments. As of the school Easter holiday this year, I'm retiring from Music Education. I'll deeply miss the privilege of working with young people, seeing them develop as people and as musicians, but the time has come to leave behind the challenging environment of schools and the stress of music exams, ensemble rehearsals and concerts (and trying to remember bassoon fingerings!)

The good news is that I'm now embarking on a deeper involvement in field botany: network-building, recording and training, in our own networks and beyond, in both a voluntary and a professional capacity."

Some brief items

Sedge course

Jay Mackinnon, Lecturer in Applied Sciences at Edinburgh Napier University and BSBI Vice-County Recorder for West Lothian, has asked us to mention an online short course in the identification of Sedges:

I wonder if you would please circulate details of this online course to your local botany networks in case anyone is interested? It's about 20 hours of study at one's own pace over the spring to gain skill and confidence with keying out a variety of sedges.

More detail and sign-up at:

<https://www.napier.ac.uk/study-with-us/short-courses/introduction-to-sedges>

Dandelion alert

Following the success of our drive last year for photo-sets of Dandelions to send off to the referee, we invite you to participate again. The very brief window for Dandelion identification runs from mid April until around 10th May.

Please ask Michael to send you our PDF guide on what's required!

Rare Plant Registers

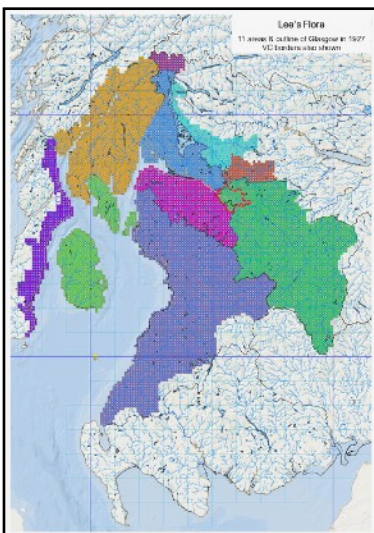
The first-ever Rare Plant Registers for Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire are currently being compiled by Peter Wiggins and Lucy Hollingworth respectively. This project is essentially about the filtering of lots of data to form a list of relevant plants, followed by the writing of material for some form of publication.

If you'd like to assist with this process, please contact Michael in the first instance. We'd be delighted to hear from anyone who can offer skills in data-handling, word-processing, proof-reading, design or photography - and in due course the organisation of some targetted fieldwork to hunt down our more elusive rare plants!

[Now you know what RPR Project stands for on the 'Things you can do' chart below!]

Centenary of Lee's Flora

Keith Watson has proposed a project to celebrate the centenary of J.R. Lee's 'Flora of the Clyde Area'.



Published in 1933, this Flora includes many hundreds of species found within the drainage area of the Clyde river system and estuary, from upper Lanarkshire all the way to eastern Kintyre and even Ailsa Craig.

The aim of the new project will be to account for the presence or absence of each of these species in the period since 2000, county by county.

Initially this will require digitising Lee's data, before making the comparison with current data from the BSBI database. Finally, in due course, there may be a need for some fieldwork to hunt for any species that can't otherwise be accounted for.

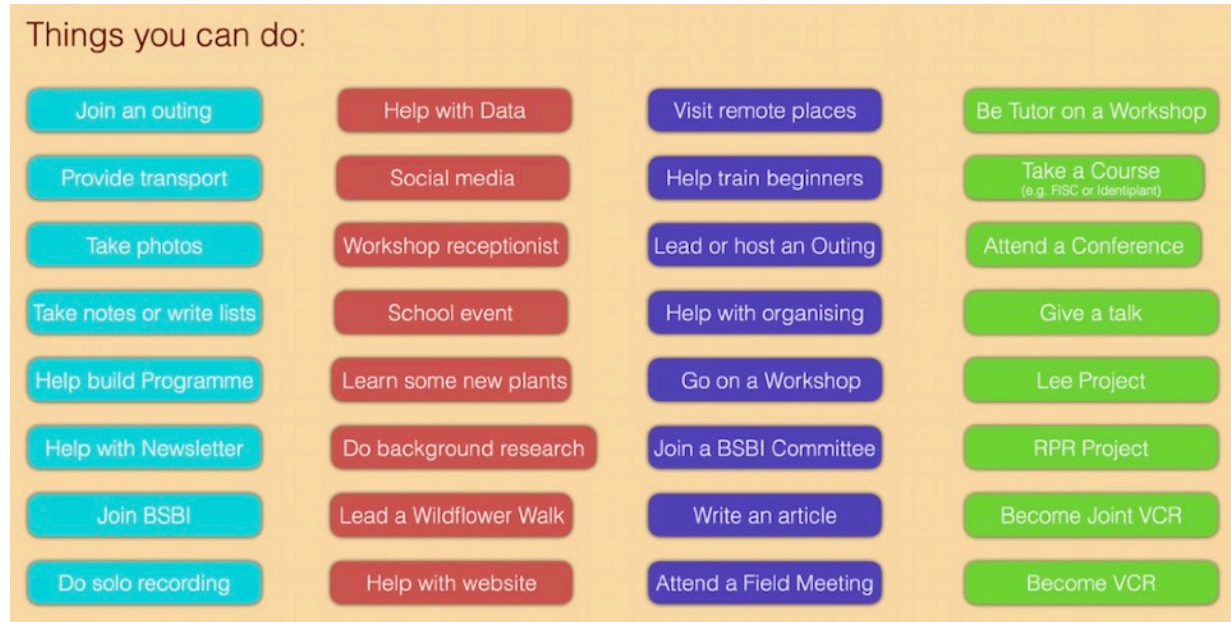
As in the case of the RPR Project, please offer help if you can. Much of it can be done without even leaving the house!

[Peter Wiggins has prepared this map showing the area covered by Lee's Flora]

What you can do to help

Why not treat yourself to a Course or Workshop this year, or attend the Scottish Botanists Conference? Could you give a hand with data or research? Or act as receptionist at our Ferns Workshop in September? Or help on a Wildflower Walk for complete beginners? Or offer your expertise in websites or social media?

If you've not done so before, do come on one of our outings (or one of the BSBI's Field Meetings in other parts of the country) and enjoy new places, plants and people!



The challenge to everyone is to find something on this list that you can do to continue the momentum of our network.

Please contact Michael for more information.

Keep in touch

We appreciate your emails on all sorts of botanical matters - keep them coming!

You can also keep in touch via the Lanarkshire page on the BSBI website, which is updated regularly: that's the place to read past issues of this Newsletter, and our Outings Programme.

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Photo credits*:

Gagea lutea

Jeff Waddell, Cleghorn, near Lanark, 27th March 2022

The Herbarium illustration is from the RBGE website.

The study group and field outing photos have been credited in previous Newsletters.

The Plant Atlas illustrations are taken from BSBI Atlas Launch material.

* Remember you're always welcome to send in photos, either for potential inclusion in the Newsletter or the webpage, or to request help in identifying a plant. Photos of 'people doing botany' are especially wanted!