

Field Botany in Renfrewshire

Newsletter - Summer 2023

Latest update

The 2023 season is in full swing!

One interesting development is that, across our three networks, there has been a marked upsurge of people wanting to be involved. This may be evidence of growing environmental concern in the population at large, with people wanting to do something practical to make a difference.



Botanists at work: Keith Watson (right) discussing *Viola lutea* (Mountain Pansy) with Kirsty and Martin

The key to positive action is of course learning - and there is no better way to learn than taking part in our field outings. The programme for the second half of the season is being circulated now, so please join us whenever you can. We get to great places and find wonderful things in the company of wonderful people!

The programme also includes information about BSBI Field Meetings and Workshops. One that may be of interest locally is the "Ferns for Complete and Utter Beginners" workshop, to be held in the classroom at the Falls of Clyde Reserve, New Lanark on Saturday 2nd September. Here's your chance to make a start on learning to identify some fern species! As this is an official event in the BSBI calendar, there is a booking process and a fee. It will be staffed by people from within our fellow Lanarkshire network.

For details, go to: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/botanicalsocietyofbritainireland/867094?>

Fieldwork



A visit to Langbank on 14th May recorded a wide range of species.

Above: a lovely display of *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell)

Left: Angus Hannah stops with Dee and Kirsty to examine a *Quercus* (Oak)

Hawkweeds visit

On Monday afternoon, 19th June (sorry for the short notice!) at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre at 2pm, Keith Watson will be hosting a visit by Brian Burrow, the BSBI referee for Hawkweeds.

Hawkweeds (*Hieracium*) are a notoriously difficult plant genus, so we will be examining fresh specimens both to gain some valuable, expertly-determined records and to learn some identification skills.

If you would like to join us you'll be most welcome - especially if you bring some Hawkweed specimens! For full details, please contact Michael:

botany@opus44.co.uk

Zoom Study Groups

Over the winter 2021-22, Peter Wiggins pioneered a series of Winter Study Groups. As reported in our Newsletter, these were very popular and there has been a clamour for more such training.

So a new five-session, monthly Summer Study Group is already underway, offering basic training in plant identification, and there will be a brand new series over the coming winter to challenge the more experienced learner.

Although the Summer Study Group has now formed, there's plenty of time to opt into the Winter series. To register your interest, or for more information, please contact Peter:

pswiggins@gmail.com

BSBI

The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland exists to advance the study and understanding of our wild plants and support their conservation across Britain and Ireland.

It is also home to the national plant distribution database, to which we contribute all our plant records. This nationwide volunteer effort is continuous, providing a detailed picture of the constantly changing distribution of wild plants: most recently and impressively captured in the BSBI publication 'Plant Atlas 2020'.

Many of our readers are already members of the Society: but for those who are not, membership is definitely something to consider. You will be supporting the study and conservation of our flora as well as enjoying many opportunities to get involved personally. And through special rates for various BSBI courses and workshops (and a discount on purchases from Summerfield Books) your subscription can quickly pay for itself!

Through the portal of its busy website, BSBI offers a marvellous array of:

- publications
- photo galleries
- social media groups
- courses
- study grants
- workshops
- field meetings (single day or whole week)
- conferences
- expert advice
- plant identification aids
- a dedicated YouTube channel, full of helpful videos
- local botanical activities
- searchable plant distribution maps
- handbooks on specific plant groups
- the national plant distribution database
- the Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC)
- the Identiplant course
- a nationwide network of local Vice-County Recorders
- reports and consultations
- Plant Atlas 2020 (through a dedicated website)

As in our local experience, there has been a recent surge in membership as people realise it's time to learn about plants and do whatever can be done in their local area to protect plant biodiversity.

Please visit the BSBI website and click your way around to get a flavour of the Society's activity:

<https://bsbi.org/>

Plant Atlas 2020 website: <https://plantatlas2020.org/atlas>

'Live' zoomable species distribution map: <https://bsbi.org/maps>

Recent Renfrewshire finds



Asplenium ceterach (Rustyback) on a mortared wall



Stunning colour combination: *Lotus corniculatus* (Bird's-foot-trefoil) with *Veronica chamaedrys* (Germander Speedwell)



Dactylorhiza purpurella (Northern Marsh Orchid)

Information

Please join in our activities whenever you can. Some people may fear that recording plants will require expertise they don't possess: however the very opposite is true! It's fine just to tag along and be a 'silent' member of the party. You can watch, listen and ask lots of questions - how do you think everyone else learned what they know?

Peter is the person to send plant lists to. These are welcome from anyone, anytime. Do get out and record plants on your own - if you'd like some guidance on the best way to do recording, please get in touch. Records can be in the form of scanned lists or Recording Cards, spreadsheets or Word documents - or even paper lists by post or photos of the scribbles in your notebook!

Photographs, especially views of the Renfrewshire landscape or stunning pictures of plants, are always welcome. Any (but not all!) photos you submit may appear in Newsletters, the webpage or other literature.

You are welcome to email Keith, Peter or Michael at any time. They are also willing to have a go at identifying plants from photographs if you get stuck!

And please visit the Renfrewshire page on the BSBI website: <https://bsbi.org/renfrewshire>
Here you can refer to our Outings Programme and read past issues of the Newsletter - and if we should ever get out of touch, contact details can be found here as well.

Contact details

Keith Watson (Vice-county Recorder)

email: keithjwatson76@gmail.com

Peter Wiggins (receiver of data)

email: pswiggins@gmail.com

Michael Philip (network co-ordinator, photos, inquiries, newsletter)

email: botany@opus44.co.uk

Photo credits*:

Botanists at work	Jim Blackwood, Neilston Pad, 27th May 2023
Langbank photos	Jim Blackwood, Langbank, 14th May 2023
<i>Asplenium ceterach</i>	Jim Blackwood, Langbank, 14th May 2023
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i> & <i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Jim Blackwood, Neilston Pad, 27th May 2023
<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>	Jim Blackwood, Hawkhead, 29th May 2023

* 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!