



Autumn 2024 Sample Issue
See inside for a selection of articles from *BSBI News* no. 157 and details of how to join the BSBI. Members receive three issues of *BSBI News* each year as part of the package of membership benefits.



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Contributions for future issues should be sent to the Editor, John Norton (bsbinews@bsbi.org)

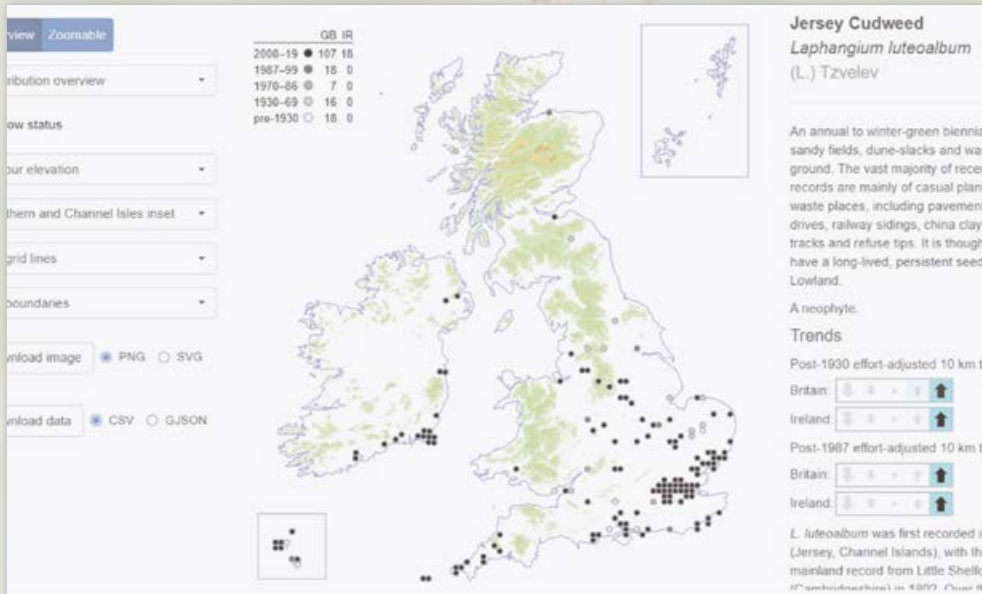
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BSBI News keeps you updated on the latest technology for plant recording



The new BSBI Recording App
SARAH WOODS

Following two years of development and testing by BSBI staff and recorders, the BSBI is happy to announce the availability of a new recording application that allows for easier submission of botanical records to the BSBI's central database (the Distribution Database or 'DDb'). The app is available to BSBI recorders and members – see the end of this article for details on how to access it. So far over 210 individuals have used the app, sending over 100,000 records. About 12% of records submitted so far this year came via this route.

The app allows for the rapid entry of records on a smartphone or tablet in the field, with locations being recorded automatically and accurately using the device's inbuilt GPS. Records can also be input or amended on a desktop computer at home. The app is mobile-friendly, and we will be making it freely available for Android and iOS from Google Play and the Apple App Store (we will notify all members when they can download it).

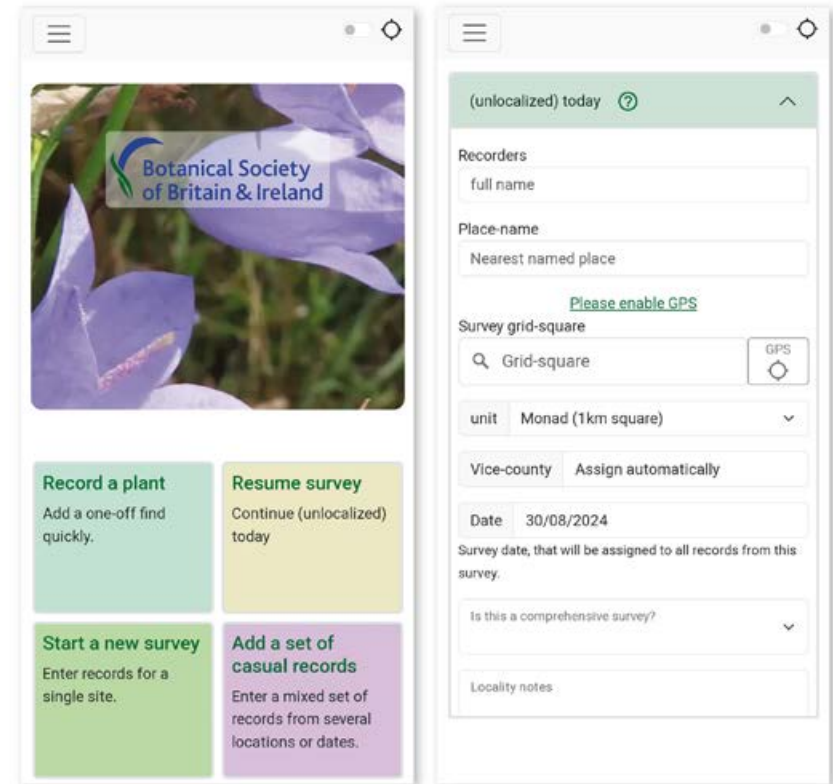
The app can be used for 'square-bashing' at monad or tetrad level or for recording site lists, as

well as for one-off (casual) records. If you have yet to take a look at it, we would encourage you to do so. You will also find support, an FAQ and options for providing feedback via the links below.

One of the benefits of using the app is its location capabilities. With the GPS enabled, it will automatically detect your location including the grid square you are in and provide audio warnings when you leave the square. In this mode the app will also create a new 'survey' when you enter a different square. If you re-enter a previous monad then the survey should switch back automatically. When used in the field, if the GPS is active, most records will be assigned a GPS location automatically (provided that the survey uses the current date). A GPS fix is assigned when a record is added and if a photograph is taken. The given GPS-derived grid reference can be manually overridden. If no location fix is possible then occurrences default to the survey grid square.

An additional benefit of the app is the ability to submit photographs alongside records which should make verification of records much more

The new BSBI Recording App



The app start-up screen.

A new blank survey before any data has been added.

straightforward. Various additional information can be added to each record from standard lists of fields such as the status (e.g. whether introduced intentionally or accidentally), the number of individuals and abundance, growth stage and habitat as well as more general comments. You can also add null records by choosing 'absent' from the abundance field menu. Context help screens provide easily accessible information to assist with using the app.

The data that you submit via the app will synchronise automatically between devices that you

are logged in to (e.g. between PC web browser and mobile use of the app), meaning that you can record in the field and then review and edit your records once you are home, as well as adding additional records as necessary, including null records. If using the app without a network connection, you will need to be sure to open it again once you have internet access. That should trigger a data sync automatically (but it won't happen until the app is opened).

Initially, records from the app go into a separate workspace in the DDb, where they will await validation by the Vice-county Recorder, who has



Surveying Yarrow Broomrape (*Orobanche purpurea*) in Norfolk

MIKE CREWE

Yarrow Broomrape (*Orobanche purpurea* Jacq.¹) is an obligate holoparasite² of Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.) occurring throughout much of the Western Palearctic region, from the Canary Islands to the Caucasus (Tutin et al., 1973) and eastwards to the western Himalayan region (POWO, 2024). Despite this wide distribution, it appears to be relatively uncommon throughout its range, which seems to be at odds with the fact that its host is an abundant species. In the UK small populations occasionally appear at seemingly random locations and are largely considered to have been accidentally introduced. Such populations are often short-lived, but can occasionally be more permanent, such as in Cumbria (Stroh et al., 2023; Preston et al., 2002).

Colony of Yarrow Broomrape (*Orobanche purpurea*) in cliff-top grassland, Sidestrand, Norfolk (v.c.27), June, 2024. All photographs by the author.

Rumsey & Jury (1991) also give a useful overview of these occurrences and discuss the possibility of misidentifications for some reports.

Populations considered to be native occur quite widely in the Channel Islands (v.c. 113), on the Isle of Wight (v.c. 10) (mostly on the east coast) and in East Norfolk (v.c. 27). Presumed native, remnant populations are also known from Dorset (v.c. 9), North Hampshire (v.c. 12), East Kent (v.c. 15), West Suffolk (v.c. 26), Pembrokeshire (v.c. 45) and North Lincolnshire (v.c. 54).

- 1 Some recent publications follow Soják (1972) in placing Yarrow Broomrape in the genus *Phelipanche*. Species in this genus are recognised as different from *Orobanche* in having mostly purplish flowers and stems and having two bracteoles (as well as the usual bracts) at the base of each flower.
- 2 A holoparasite is a fully parasitic species that has no chlorophyll in any of its parts and therefore needs to obtain sugars and important minerals from other species, typically by tapping into their vascular system. An obligate holoparasite is one which has no choice but to pursue this lifestyle.

Hammarbya paludosa (Bog Orchid) in rich fen on Hoy, Orkney (v.c. 111)

Hammarbya paludosa (Bog Orchid) in rich fen on Hoy, Orkney (v.c. 111)

JOHN CROSSLEY

Hammarbya paludosa (Bog Orchid) is known in Britain and Ireland as an inhabitant of acidic mires, where it usually emerges from a carpet of *Sphagnum* moss. It is often found on the edge of a runnel through peat, though there is some variation in habitat. A full account of the species is given in the 'Biological Flora' series (Tatarenko et al., 2022), where it is noted that in other parts of its wide geographical range the species is not limited to acidic conditions; the substrate may be neutral or even

of small, drier 'islands' within the fen and of the surrounding heathland.

We had two eight-figure grid references, recorded by Eric Meek in 2004. At the first we drew a blank, then searched more widely along the edges of runnels laced through peat with a cover of dry *Calluna* heath. The runnels held *M. trifoliata*, *C. rostrata* and patches of *C. limosa* and were edged with *Sphagnum*: perfect habitat, we thought. This too was unsuccessful but at the second reference we immediately came on

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A second British site for *Crepis praemorsa* (Leafless Hawk's-beard)

GARY LAWRENCE & JEREMY ROBERTS

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Crepis praemorsa (Leafless Hawk's-beard), in species rich mire at Tarn Moor, Cumbria (v.c. 69). Gary Lawrence

Serendipity is often invoked in the field of botany as some explanation for an unexpected find. There was more than a whiff of this on 18 June 2024 as, prostrate on the damp ground at Tarn Moor, Cumbria, GL attempted to capture images of *Koeleria macrantha* (Crested Hair-grass). Just before him, and at eye-level, was a composite with a tall erect leafless scape and some yellow capitula in a compact head.

On regaining the vertical, four stems were soon found, two fruiting with silvery-white pappus – certainly this was no *Hieracium* with buff pappus. There were scattered loose rosettes over an area of a few square metres, and little else to go on. If not *Hieracium* the plants did look temptingly *Crepis*-like... but which?

By coincidence GL had in recent days been reading up about the Cumbrian speciality *Crepis praemorsa* (Leafless Hawk's-beard), and it could scarcely be doubted that this plant matched that

the colony was relocated and identity confirmed. (There is that familiar experience where vertical plant-stems are easier to spot when looked across at, rather than down upon.)

Twelve stems were eventually located, in all stages from flowering to fruiting to bitten-off, the tallest to 25–30 cm, typically with four or five capitula arising close to the apex on short peduncles with linear-lanceolate bracts. Stems were leafless, sparsely hairy, more densely towards the base. Involucral bracts were in two rows in usual *Crepis*-fashion, and very sparsely hairy on the midribs only. Basal rosettes carried few leaves (1–4) of a plain 'boat-shape', some rather concave, again in boat-fashion, with a distinctly broad base and faint reticulate veining, unlobed but the margin undulate with a few blunt teeth, more pronounced in the lower half.

A popular section is the county-by-county round-up of noteworthy 'alien' plants



little branched perennial (Apiaceae) to c. 100 cm. The simple convex umbels are 1.5–5 cm across and surrounded by 12–20 conspicuous, lanceolate bracteoles. The latter are whitish, green- or pink-tinted, and with obvious cross-veins. The individual flowers are tiny and carried on distinct wiry pedicels. The long-petiolate basal leaves are circular in outline and deeply cut into three, five or seven sharply toothed segments. Five subspecies are recognised, two of which have been recorded 'wild' in Britain and Ireland, the majority of records perhaps being referable to subsp. *carinthiaca*. *A. maxima* might also occur. It has ternate, finely serrate basal leaves (also long-petiolate) and fewer (9–12), larger (1–3 cm vs 1–2 cm) bracteoles with obscure cross-veins. Stace (2019): 848.

ADVENTIVES & ALIENS: Adventives & Aliens News 33

Bupleurum
Hampshire

V.c. 12
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where it was growing; present here for several years. New to v.c. 95. A native perennial herb (Geraniaceae) of the west Balkans and a garden/rockery plant in Britain and Ireland. It is, crudely speaking, like a smaller, more compact *G. macrorrhizum* (Rock Crane's-bill). The leaves of *G. dalmaticum* are smaller (up to 4 cm wide vs greater than 4 cm), more deeply divided (virtually to base vs four-fifths to base or less) into fewer lobes (5 vs 7) and odourless (vs strongly scented). The leaves of the seed-sterile hybrid, *G. × cantabrigiae*, are intermediate for all these characters. Stace (2019): 371.



Geranium dalmaticum, Grantown-on-Spey, Moray (v.c. 95). Andy Amphlett



Cardamine pentaphylla, Newtonmore, Easternness (v.c. 96). Sue Thomas

Allium paradoxum var. *normale* Stearn (Few-flowered Garlic). Rait Castle (NH889529), 7/5/2024. A. Amphlett (conf. P.R. Green); clump in patch of waste ground between garden and farm buildings. This is the form of *A. paradoxum* that has inflorescences lacking bulbils. It is very rarely seen outside cultivation and for the obvious reason is much less invasive than the form with bulbils. It looks like a rather feeble *A. triquetrum* but its tepals lack the bold green median vein of that species. New to Scotland.

V.c. 96 (Easternness)

Cardamine pentaphylla (L.) Crantz (Five-leaflet Bitter-

ADVENTIVES & ALIENS: *Orobanche alba* on *Thymus vulgaris* in Caernarvonshire (v.c. 49)

Orobanche alba (Thyme Broomrape) on *Thymus vulgaris* (Garden Thyme) in Caernarvonshire (v.c. 49): a first record for Wales

MIKE FAY, CHRIS THOROGOOD, FRED RUMSEY, MARK CHASE & MAARTEN CHRISTENHUSZ

Here we report the first sighting of *Orobanche alba* Stephan ex Willd. in Wales. In 2022, we (MFF, MWC and MJMC) planted *Thymus vulgaris* L. (bought at a local garden centre) in our herb garden in v.c. 49 (Trefor, Gwynedd). In June 2024, we were surprised to find four shoots of a reddish broomrape emerging in this plant.

Given the colour and host plant, our putative identification was *O. alba* (Thyme Broomrape), and this was confirmed based on the cylindrical-campanulate corolla with dark glands, reddish stigma and the faint clove-like scent, following discussions with CJT and EJR. According to the account for this species in the BSBI online Plant Atlas 2020 (Foley & Rumsey, 2020) and BSBI Handbook No. 22 (Thorogood & Rumsey, 2021), this species has not previously been recorded in Wales, although it occurs elsewhere in western Britain and Ireland.

Orobanche alba is a monocarpic biennial or perennial. It occurs on a wider range of Lamiaceae in other parts of its range (Thorogood & Rumsey, 2021). It is a European Temperate element of the British and Irish flora, and its range extends to North Africa and the Himalayas (POWO, 2024). It mostly grows on base-rich rocky coastal slopes, but it is also found locally on vegetated scree below limestone outcrops in northern England (Foley & Rumsey, 2020; Thorogood & Rumsey, 2021). In Britain, this plant is almost always strongly red-tinted [*O. alba* forma *rubra* (Sm.) Beck, originally described as *O. rubra* Sm.] and it occurs on *Thymus drucei* (Wild Thyme) in rocky habitats, especially sea cliffs (Thorogood & Rumsey, 2021).

Elsewhere in Britain, there have been three discoveries of *O. alba* in gardens since the 1970s.

In 1977 it was found in a garden in Lower Clent, Worcestershire (v.c. 37). It was thought that it must have arrived with its host, plants of which had been transplanted from the Burren (Co. Clare) some years previously, a known hotspot for this species (Maskew,

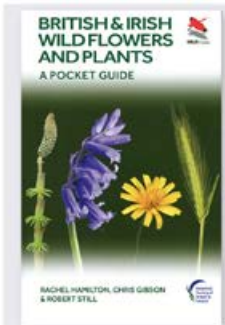


Orobanche alba (Thyme Broomrape) growing on planted *Thymus vulgaris* (Garden Thyme), Trefor, Caernarvonshire (v.c. 49). Mike Fay

Other regular sections include book reviews; news and announcements from BSBI; and a round-up of plant records from across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

REVIEWS

Compiled by Clive Stace, Book Reviews Editor
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British & Irish Wild Flowers and Plants, A Pocket Guide
 Rachel Hamilton, Chris Gibson & Robert Still

Princeton University Press, 2024. Pp. 320, with 1000+ coloured photos. £12.99. ISBN 978-0-691-23456-7

British & Irish Wild Flowers and Plants, a well-known visual Wildflower Guide series, is an ambitious attempt (500g) to bring you beyond the picture book, avoiding dichotomous keys, still organised by lead author who has been teaching botany and the book is by someone interested in sort of things being challenging.

This field guide is to be comprehensive with no mention of what were selected, the

the book covers, or the taxonomy and nomenclature followed. A selection of grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns is included. Each species entry has an extremely brief description, and a (tiny) distribution map constructed from data provided by BSBI. There are a few odd choices for a guide aiming at beginners, e.g. why attempt some *Alchemillas* when perhaps the key thing a beginner needs to do is distinguish *A. mollis* from native taxa?

So what does this book offer, beyond portability? A strength is the introductory section on botany covering essential information usually omitted from field guides. Core botanical terminology is introduced pictorially with a series

of 'spokes' join the stem. The photographs do not show the key information required. Assuming I knew that my plant was not valerian, I reached the carrot family quickly, but got confused about how the keys work within a plant family. A coloured banner grouped species as 'erect and at least shortly hairy' versus 'erect and hairless'; the first group with cow parsley distinguished by flowering time from Rough Chervil (*Chaerophyllum temulum*), and Upright Hedge-parsley (*Torilis japonica*) – but what about Hogweed (*Hieracium sphondylium*)? I did not understand how the coloured banners operate to key out the plants, and this is not explained in

course in Scotland – a great opportunity to put their budding botanical skills to use for plant conservation!

From Roxburghshire (v.c. 80), the discovery of *Equisetum hyemale* (Rough Horsetail) by Chris Gray at a third extant location for the vice-county last year was significant, with a small population found in a basic flush system on Berry Fell Hill, Shankend. Rod Corner and Luke Gaskell revisited the site this

(Goat Willow) near Millbank House, by Old Emily Pit. This is of particular significance as the only other vice-county site at Monktonhall is now under development and the plant's future there uncertain. Second vice-county sites for *Peucedanum ostruthium* (Masterwort) and *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch) were also discovered, by Sue Jury and Douglas McKean and by Sue respectively.



Peucedanum ostruthium (Masterwort), v.c. 83. Sue Jury

Moving north, in upper Deeside, whilst checking access routes for a peatland restoration scheme Simon Thomas made a fantastic discovery of 126 flowering spikes of *Saxifraga hirculus* (Marsh Saxifrage) in a 30m stretch of basic flush at 880m altitude – both an altitudinal record for this nationally rare species and a first South Aberdeenshire (v.c. 92) record since 1979! Another major find was the discovery by Andy Amphlett of a *Vulpia fasciculata*



Lychnis viscaria (Sticky Catchfly) being admired by Lewis Donaghy from NTS (left) with Identiplant students and TCV Scotland staff. Matt Harding

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