

2015 Scottish Vice-County Reports

Dumfriesshire (vc72) Chris Miles

Surveys continued to fill gaps in coverage for Atlas 2020. A total of 18 tetrads and 7 monads were covered during the season. This generated 3246 new records.

According to the analysis in DDb 27 tetrads remain to be covered to achieve a well recorded Hectads coverage (high threshold) by 2020. This is well within the normal coverage of two field seasons. A field meeting is being held in 2016 in the Moffat Hills to focus on mapping *Carex vaginata* (sheathed sedge) and undertake further monad recording.

I completed the first draft of the Rare Plant Register which should be completed in early 2016.

In the Moffat Hills confirmed the population of *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Bearberry) remains healthy and that *Vaccinium uliginosum* (Northern Blaeberry) still survives where Derek Ratcliffe recorded it on the Mid Craig in 1956.

Led a Plantlife wildflower walk at Drumlanrig in July where we saw *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater Spearwort), *Apium nodiflorum* (Fool's-water-cress) and a colourful display on riverside rocks including *Galium boreale* (Northern Bedstraw), *Trollius europaeus* (Globeflower) and *Salix phylicifolia* (Tea-leaved Willow).

Took part in the Bioblitz at Caerlaverock East Park WWT centre in June, generating 170 higher plant records for the monad, including *Veronica catenata* (Pink Water-speedwell).

Collected specimens for the *Euphrasia* study from 2 populations.

Kirkcudbrightshire (vc73) David Hawker

Despite the poor weather, this has been a reasonable season for recording. A BSBI weekend field meeting in early June to a series of wetlands (Carrick Ponds SSSI and Colvend Lochs LWS) made over 500 records including *Stellaria neglecta* (Greater Stitchwort), *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge) and *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid). Report in 2016 Yearbook.

The Kirkcudbright Botany Group (KBG), in its second season, held 10 meetings between March and October with only one curtailed due to very inclement conditions. Altogether 1500 records were produced by this group, with meetings held from sea-level to the highest hilltop in the Southern Uplands. Reports are available from the VCR. Highlights were re-discovering *Althaea officinalis* (Marsh Mallow) at its only VC site, after 172 years, re-finding *Persicaria vivipara* (Alpine Bistort) after 56 years at its only VC73 spot and new locations for *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage), *Sedum rosea* (Rose-root) and *Saussurea alpina* (Alpine Saw-wort), all very restricted species in VC73.

Progress with Atlas 2020 has been reasonable, with a total of 7,500 records for 2015 entered to MapMate, with 7 new county records: *Polypogon monspeliensis* (Annual Beard-grass), *Stellaria neglecta* (Greater Chickweed), *Imperatoria ostruthium* (Masterwort), *Sasa palmatum* (a Bamboo), obviously long established, *Fallopia baldschuanica* (Russian-vine), although known for several years previously, *Lemna minuta* (Least Duckweed) and *Saxifraga cymbalaria* (Celandine Saxifrage), although it was noted & sketched from local material in my predecessor's notebooks, without location or date (but pre-1998).

Seed from three widespread species were collected in the VC, cleaned and sent to the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew – *Iris pseudacorus*, *Campanula latifolia*, *Allium ursinum*.

I continued to serve on the MOD Kirkcudbright Range Conservation Group and have recently up-dated the Rare & Scarce Plants of the Range Register for their files. Cooperation with and submission of the KBG records to the Dumfries & Galloway Environmental Records Centre (DGERC) continues, as does the mutual exchange of records with FCS on their estate.

Wigtownshire (vc74) Alan Silverside

While I have been able to do useful recording in 2015, it is not as much as I hoped or planned. A number of monads have been visited in under-recorded (post-2000) hectads, raising hectad totals and filling many "silly" gaps. Even some better-recorded hectads have had their totals significantly improved; late-season urban recording has been particularly successful. A drier year is awaited for visiting or updating several loch and wetland sites.

No major native finds have been made, but additions of adventives (non-native in Wigtownshire) have been made. Early in the year, *Stellaria pallida* (Lesser Chickweed) was found along lawn edges outside a community centre. *Helminthotheca echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue), a rather surprising previous absentee, was found well established where there had been some roadworks. A hill square, expected to be unexciting, had a weedy area along a reservoir walkway, *Apera spica-venti* (Loose Silky-bent) being a particular surprise. Perhaps the oddest record was the single plant of *Lactuca serriola* (Prickly Lettuce) on a heap at an isolated farm on the west coast.

Ayrshire (vc75) Dave Lang

The year of the Great Leap Forward, more or less! Throughout my entire tenure as Joint VCR, we have never had more than three or four people actively recording in Ayrshire, most or all of them with full-time jobs or family commitments limiting them to a handful of weekend recording days each year. I was therefore grateful for the support of the Scottish Officer and others in organising an "Ayrshire Recording Week" in July 2015, and equally to those participating. The effect on our coverage has been significant, but achieving the target level for Atlas 2020 is still going to be a challenge. At least this event has made it seem possible.

I have been working for years on an RPR and am on the brink of completing a draft. It has proved very likely that at least some Ayrshire dots in the last Atlas were based on what the previous recorders knew from experience, but I inherited only hectad tick-lists along with piles of notebooks from which they were derived. Since so many skilled botanists were coming to visit poorly recorded areas during the recording week I moved the cut-off point forward to end of 2015, hoping to update notable species records from decades ago. The draft RPR should soon be published on the webpage and can be revisited – perhaps even updated to a Flora – once Atlas 2020 is done.

My Joint-VCR (Gill Smart) is the local SWT Reserves Officer and I work for SNH (though not in the VC), so there is some flow of records to BSBI. Colleagues have also been involved in local Bioblitzes etc. We have run beginners days and a 'Flower Finders' group to enthuse more people and give them skill and

confidence to contribute, but without success in terms of new botanists becoming regularly active in the VC.

Notable vice county firsts from 2015 included:

Stellaria neglecta (Greater Chickweed) in riverside woodland in the north of the VC. Possibly under-recorded, this is one we will be looking out for.

Anacamptis pyramidalis (Pyramidal Orchid) on the beach in southern Ayrshire. The latest of several orchid VC firsts. We suspect the prevailing winds bring seed across from Ireland. Perhaps climate change is making it easier for them to gain a foothold.

Nitella flexilis s.l. (Smooth Stonewort) in a quarry pond to the east of the VC. First post 2000 record of any charophyte in Ayrshire.

Glyceria notata (Plicate Sweet-grass) during the Atlas 2020 week in unassuming East Ayrshire farmland, and a few days later a few kilometres away in similar habitat.

Peebles-shire (vc78) *Luke Gaskell*

2015 has been a productive season with 7250 new records all now digitised from some 67 sites. A selection of the more interesting plants was exhibited at the November meeting.

I am still familiarising myself with the vc and am trying to record monads across as many habitats as possible rather than concentrating on the more interesting areas. Peeblesshire is not particularly large or inaccessible by Scottish standards, but it will take a long time to visit all 900 or so monads.

Graham Pyat, Manor Valley, has undertaken to record every monad in the catchment and I have accompanied him on a number of occasions. He has drawn up a target list of plants and revisits the monads at different times of year until he is satisfied with the coverage. I intend to use his data as a benchmark for recording monads in the surrounding countryside. It is obvious that the more time one can spend recording a particular spot the more complete the final list, but that will mean that other areas may not be recorded at all. Hence at present I usually limit myself to one visit per monad and will then target apparently recorded areas.

I led a field meeting in a neighbouring vice county and have taken a number of volunteers out with me to encourage new recorders. I am still doing botany training for Edinburgh Napier University, which students' reports suggest is a much valued part of their education.

Selkirk and Roxburgh (vcc79/80) *Rod Corner and Jeff Waddell*

Another productive year for botanical recording with around 9,000 records of over 600 taxa collected and digitised in the year for the two counties.

The majority of **Roxburgh** records (5,184 records of 470 taxa) were collected by Michael Braithwaite during field work for the resurvey of the Railway Flora of Teviotdale. This updated many records for lowland grassland axiophytes, now rare elsewhere in the county, including *Bromus erectus* (Upright Brome), *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Chalk Fragrant Orchid), *Gymnadenia densiflora* (Marsh Fragrant

Orchid), *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade), *Sanguisorba officinalis* (Great Burnet), *Scabiosa columbaria* (Small Scabious), *Silaum silaus* (Pepper-saxifrage) and *Trollius europaeus* (Globe Flower).

An early April visit to the Newcastleton Hills found a small colony of *Andromeda polifolia* (Bog-rosemary) on Roan Fell; only previously known in three tetrads in the county. Some other interesting finds were exhibited at SAM (see page 17 of the [2016 BSBI Scottish Newsletter](#)).

Eleven poorly recorded tetrads with promising habitats were targeted for recording, some of which was undertaken by an informal group of beginner and improver botanists, led by Jeff Waddell. This produced several new sites for plants uncommon in the county:

Trachystemon orientalis (Abraham-Isaac-Jacob) was found well naturalised on a landslip on the banks of the Jed Water at Camptown, along with new colonies of Toothwort. *Silaum silaus* (Pepper-saxifrage) and *Sanguisorba officinalis* (Great Burnet) were found at new sites on the Hassendean Burn.

Dactylorhiza incarnata s.s. (Early Marsh-orchid) was found in a base-rich hill flush with *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass) at the Well Strand, Plenderleith. The orchid only has one other known site in hills in the east of the county, being more common in basin mires in the west. A colony of *Sedum villosum* (Hairy Stonecrop) was found on Penchrise Pen, south of Hawick, the first time it has been recorded in the NT40 hectad for 151 years!

Crassula helmsii (New-Zealand Pygmyweed) was found (unfortunately!) at its third tetrad and hectad in the county at Wooden House. And the nationally rare *Chara rudis* (Rugged Stonewort) was collected from a new pond, in which it was dominant, at Todshaw Hill. This is the first time it has been seen in a pond in the county, as opposed to its usual habitat of larger waterbodies, such as lochs and reservoirs.

Probably the best find of the year was made in early September when only the second colony of *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb Paris) in the Scottish Borders was found in a small native woodland on the Borthwick Water at Todshaw.

In **Selkirkshire**, (vc79) two poorly recorded tetrads with promising habitats were targeted for recording. The Rankle Burn/Kingside Loch tetrad, produced *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass) in a flush on Muckle Bleak Law and *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) in rich fen at Kingside Loch. The last remaining colony of *Imperatorium ostruthium* (Masterwort) in the vice-county by the Ettrick was refound. It has never been known to flower here and the habitat dominated by *Aegopodium podagraria* (Ground-elder) tends to mask it. The fine colony of *Gentianella amarella* (Autumn Gentian) near Whitmuir Loch was doing well, and *Eleogiton fluitans* (Floating Club-rush) in one of only two vc79 sites and almost unknown elsewhere in south east Scotland, was abundant nearby. *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort) still survives in a mire above Selkirk in one of three known sites in the vc.

118 fruiting stems (more than expected) of *Carex magellanica* (Tall Bog-sedge) were counted in the colony at Kingside Loch, its only known site in the Borders. *Carex vaginata* (Sheathed Sedge) was also revisited on Bught Hill and the population found to be stable, but not fruiting.

Sadly the *Calamagrostis stricta* (Narrow Small-reed) colony on the Rankle burn wasn't refound. Nor was *Corallorhiza trifida* (Coralroot Orchid) at Loch of the Lowes, its only vc79 site. It hasn't been seen here since 1977.

East Lothian (vc82) Helen Jackson

Records have been gratefully received from other people, including a list of roses from Roger Maskew, a CD from The Wildlife Information Centre (TWIC)'s database, a huge batch of spring records from Katherine White (who has also digitised them) and a surprise contribution from Susan Bowden who recorded here while on holiday. Overall about 9,000 digitised records are on their way into the East Lothian MapMate database (contact: records@lastdragon.org).

Midlothian (vc83) Barbara Sumner

Over 10,200 records were collected in 2015, entered into MapMate and sync'd to Bob Ellis. Many thanks to all contributors.

New VC records of the following in 2015 were sent to Mike Porter for the NJB: *Muscari latifolium* (a Grape-hyacinth), *Pilosella flagellaris* subsp. *flagellaris* (Spreading Mouse-ear-hawkweed), *Pseudosasa japonica* (Arrow Bamboo), *Rhus typhina* (Stag's-horn Sumach), *Rumex hydrolapathum* (Water Dock).

Rare Plant Register: Contributions this year to the next Midlothian edition include records for the following species: *Gagea lutea* (Yellow Star-of-Bethlehem), *Meum athamanticum* (Spignel), *Valeriana dioica* (Marsh Valerian), *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail), *Cichorium intybus* (Chicory) and *Lathyrus nissolia* (Grass Vetchling).

Atlas 2020: Thirteen volunteers have kindly offered to record squares. Four tetrads and 17 monads have been agreed and some records have already been added to the MapMate database. The method and a records submission form can be viewed and downloaded from the [Midlothian](#) web page. The gaps in recording are in the more remote parts of the vice-county. Please contact me if you are interested in recording in these areas.

***Digitisation:* Some historical records still need digitised. Some have outdated plant names that would need interpretation. Please would anyone with the time to do this please get in touch.**

West Lothian (vc84) Jackie Muscott

Mopping up for the Atlas I have continued to target monads with relatively few post-2000 records, or which have not been visited recently, or where changes are underway. There have also been 'random' visits to the VC with various societies to which I belong, and Jill Williams of Plantlife who has recently moved to the area has started recording squares near her home.

As a member of the Edinburgh Natural History Society I take part in most of their weekly excursions and have led two excursions in the last year. I am also involved with the local recording centre (TWIC), sending them records and attending the Biodiversity Steering Groups of Edinburgh and West Lothian Councils.

The most interesting find this year was *Scirpus sylvaticus* (Wood Clubrush) in a pond near the River Almond and much further east than previous records in VC84.

Fife (vc85) Sandy Edwards

According to the DDb analysis, there are 76 well recorded tetrads with about 20 to do. However, some of these are just farmland and areas of low interest. There are two hectads which need 6 tetrads in all to be done to ensure there are at least 5 well recorded tetrads in each hectad.

Two botanists send in very good records. Another three send occasional records and I meet with them now and again. They all have a list of localities of rare plants, which helps in their plant hunting.

The list of BSBI members in vc85 is very useful. I will contact them and see who would like an occasional bulletin on recording progress etc.

I led a BSBI field meeting at Cleish Lochs, information is in the 2016 Yearbook, and helped with the Wildflower Workshop in St.Andrews.

We had another field meeting with the NTS workers at Shell Bay which was very successful.

A Facebook page ([Fifeandkinross Plants](#)) was set up, and a list and photos of rare plants is kept up to date on the [Flickr link](#) from the [vc85 web page](#).

Interesting finds:

Senecio inaequidens (Narrow leaved Ragwort) An increasing colony at Inverkeithing, possibly due to ground disturbance from the bridge roadworks

**Valerianella carinata* (Keeled Corn Salad)

Centaurea cyanus (Cornflower) A regular occurrence in the usual area but a big increase in numbers this year

Lathyrus japonicus (Sea Pea) This is spreading rapidly at its only location in vc85.

Neottia cordata (Lesser Tayblade) A good colony at Tentsmuir this year

Poa chaixii (Broad-leaved meadow Grass)

**Oxalis articulata* (Pink Sorrel)

Sisymbrium altissimum (Tall Rocket)

**Trifolium striatum* & *T. scabrum* (Knotted & Rough Clover)

**Onopordon acanthium* (Cotton Thistle)

**Gentanella campestris* (Field Gentian) A new, large colony at Tentsmuir

(* Plants found by other people and checked)

Stirlingshire (vc86) Philip Sansum and Ruth McGuire

Approximately 2300 records of just over 400 taxa were digitised and added to the database in 2015 (mostly collected in 2015) and are now on DDb. They represent visits to 66 monads in 14 hectads, but reasonably full lists were only provided for surveys in 7 of these hectads.

Although the VCRs were hampered personally by non BSBI work, a welcome increase to 40% of the new records was submitted by other members. This was facilitated by the circulation of PS's data-entry script (running on the free 'Autohotkey' programme) to local recorders which helps them compile fuller, 'MapMate-ready' lists of plants, as opposed to only submitting more notable finds. Sarah Longrigg supplied several hundred records from NS49 and NS57, substantially boosting Atlas progress in these two important squares.

Based on the DDb automated analysis, 25-30 tetrads still need to be surveyed. I have been trying to redress the post-2000 bias toward sites in the west of the county (mainly Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park) but more surveys from central and east Stirlingshire are especially needed.

Some progress has been made on a digital transcription of Stirling & Kidston's late Victorian Flora of Stirlingshire. When complete this will provide a baseline for further study of the county's flora.

Examples of 2015's few botanical highlights are:

Jane Jones found *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) at Callendar, the first record for NS97 of a scarcely reported plant in vc86.

Lysimachia thysiflora (Tufted Loosestrife) was re-found in the Forth & Clyde Canal, the first vc86 canal record since before 2000; it was frequently recorded in this habitat for the last Atlas period but is apparently in severe decline or going unreported.

A possible 2015 find of *Nitella mucronata* (a charophyte) by Sarah Longrigg, is awaiting confirmation from the referee.

West Perth (vc87) Jane Jones (JJ) and Liz Lavery (LL)

JJ: Visited 45 tetrads and 2 monads either on my own or with others, collecting just over 4500 records. Basically targeting tetrads with no or few records where possible. Also trying to get into areas which are difficult due to landownership, using local contacts to get access where I can. I helped with two field meetings organised by PSNS. Had hoped that the rough squad would manage to get into some of the Glen Falloch area but unfortunately this didn't happen in 2015. Plant Families day in Stirling was cancelled.

RPR completed and on the BSBI website, but continuing to extract records for inclusion from the plant records collected each year.

LL: Visited about 20 tetrads and collected well over 2000 records, not all entered into MapMate yet. I targeted some tetrads with very few records near to home, Carnbo, usually on the VC boundary. I have been involved in resurveying potential Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) in Clackmannanshire; these were surveyed by SWT in the late 1990s. Once adopted these LNCS sites are to be recognised by Clackmannanshire Council planners when considering applications. SWT surveyed potential LNCS sites all over Scotland in the late 1990s and these files are a valuable source of records with 6 figure grid references. You have to go to Edinburgh to get them and ask SWT to retrieve them from storage first.

My most unusual find was a few tiny plants of *Ranunculus sardous* (Hairy Buttercup) in a dark mixed conifer/grey alder plantation beside Glenochil Prison. It has not been recorded in the VC since 1970.

I have enjoyed recording with other botanists, especially some very good days out with my co-recorder Jane. I have been welcomed by local landowners into areas where access is difficult without driving on private roads. This is much appreciated as parking is often a major problem beside busy roads.

I strayed into VC85 with Jim to carry out Vascular Plant Site Condition Monitoring around Loch Leven NNR for SNH. We were able to re-find *Corallorhiza trifida* (Coralroot Orchid) first found by Lynne Farrell in 2005. Populations of *Hierochloa odorata* (Holy-grass), *Juncus filiformis* (Thread Rush) and *Ranunculus x levenensis* (R. flammula x reptans) are all doing well.

Mid-Perthshire (vc88) Jim McIntosh & Alistair Godfrey

Jim McIntosh: My main aim in 2015 was to improve the hectad re-recording rate (taxa recorded post 2000/ taxa recorded all years) to $\geq 75\%$. I collected a total of 4,800 records – virtually all of which were monad or better resolution. More than 100 taxa were recorded in 20 monads. I targeted remote squares mainly in the west of the VC, including Ben Challuim, Beinn Mhanach, in the west end of Glen Lyon, Rannoch Moor, around Loch Earn, and in Glen Artney. One monad was surveyed as part of the Cairngorm National Park funded project near Blair Atholl. A survey method was also trialled on Meall nan Tarmachan to record species within 10 m (vertically) of summits with the help of Dan Watson, NTS.

We now have 26 hectads where the re-recording rate exceeds 75% and 27 where it exceeds 60% (and one remote sliver where there are no post 2000 records!) which in a VC that has been well recorded previously, is a significant achievement.

Notable finds in 2015 include a field of *Lithospermum arvense* (Field Gromwell) near Kinkell Bridge, Strathallan (first record in 30 years), *Carex muricata subsp. pairae* (Small-fruited Prickly-sedge) near Blair Atholl, *Tragopogon pratensis* (Goat's Beard), near Perth, and a new site for *Potamogeton praelongus* (Long-stalked Pondweed) at Loch na Mna, above Loch Earn.

East Perthshire (vc89) Martin Robinson

3125 records were made in 2015, including some level of coverage in 18 tetrads and also casual and targeted records. Les Tucker and I reached 7 tetrads in remote and largely under-recorded acidic areas of Atholl Forest, finding unexpected calcareous patches containing such things as *Carex capillaris* (Hair Sedge), *C. vaginata* (Loose-sheathed Sedge) and *Sibbaldia procumbens* (Sibbaldia), as well as the expected *Cornus suecica* (Dwarf Cornel) and *Lycopodium annotinum* (Interrupted Clubmoss) and sad little remnants of *Salix lapponum* (Downy Willow). These records all contributed to Andy Amphlett's Cairngorms National Park recording project.

Three recording visits were made by the PSNS and two by Brian Ballinger and the Dundee Naturalists' Society, one of them jointly with the PSNS for the Urban Recording Project.

There was a concentration of effort on dandelions, mainly in April and May, and four new ones (*T. acutifrons*, *T. angulare*, *T. coartatum* and *T. xanthostigma*) were added. The first two were both second records for Scotland and the third one was the third.

In March I met four members of the British Pteridological Society to check out our two *Asplenium septentrionale* (Forked Spleenwort) sites near Dunkeld. One site had 35 plants and the other 133. Also the latter had a good candidate for *A. x murbeckii* (= *A. ruta-muraria* x *A. septentrionale*) but access was difficult and another visit with ladders is required.

Site Condition Monitoring was finished off at Craighall Gorge SSSI, as Jim McIntosh and I were too late in 2014 for *Silene viscaria* (Sticky Catchfly). The species looked in very good nick, with >286 clumps at 9 sites. In July SCM was carried out for Glas Tulaichean SSSI, where the late snow patches had only just cleared and we were a bit early for two of the target species.

In March the Rare Plant Register was updated, with 22 updates and 80 new records, including three new species: *Callitriche palustris* (Narrow-fruited Water-starwort), *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Pugsley's Marsh Orchid) and *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil).

Kincardineshire (vc91) and North Aberdeenshire (vc93) David Welch

Taxonomic problems and difficult species took up more time than usual this year.

First I relocated a colony of a strange dewberry I had found in 1985 in dunes at Fraserburgh. Then a summer visit showed no fruit was formed, hence an article in *BSBI News* suggesting the bushes were *Rubus caesius x saxatilis*, a hybrid never recorded in Britain.

In spring Andy Amphlett triggered checks on crack willows, which led to sightings of the native *Salix euxina* in both my vcc, besides some planted *Salix fragilis*.

Next I was asked to confirm the identity of several fine elms in a mansion policy, this for a painter commissioned to produce portraits for the Royal Horticultural Society Art Show. Amongst these elms I found one with small leaves, and though Max Coleman (elm referee) said just a variety of *Ulmus glabra* I went back to sites elsewhere at which years ago I had recorded small-leaved elms as *Ulmus procera*. Despite deaths and disease, some surviving trees turned out to be *Ulmus minor*, extending north its known British range.

Other identity checks arose from Richard Marriott finding giant inflorescences of *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* (Common Spotted-orchid) near Stonehaven, and my worry about having the only dot of *Pyrus pyraster* (Wild Pear) in Scotland. An autumn visit to the hedgerow in countryside near Memsie showed the tree had the round pears with reddish bloom that characterise this species. But no further pear trees were found in neighbouring farmland which could explain its origin.

Conservation work included doing an SCM for SNH on the Hill of Towanreef SAC. Diplomacy was needed about access and balancing good news on some species with reporting unfavourable status for others, plus damage from water voles. I was also called to assess the value of some small fields with orchid colonies in two coastal areas otherwise botanically barren. These visits led to spotting *Persicaria alpina* (Alpine Knotweed), a rare alien, near Johnshaven.

I led my usual one-day SWT field meeting, this year to Fourman Hill and then a cattle-grazed semi-natural grassland at Cairnie. Our combined force recorded there many more spikes of *Pseudorchis albida* (Small White-orchid) than I had seen when surveying for the Threatened Plants scheme.

Balancing these excursions to rich sites, I did much general recording in my botanically poor lowlands, and Eric Meek assisted on his RSPB rounds.

South Aberdeenshire (vc92) Ian Francis

Good progress was made with the atlas this year. Just over 12,000 records from 2015 were added to the DDb, plus several thousand earlier records, bringing the vc total in the database for the atlas period to over 50,000. Their spread shows some clearly under-recorded areas in terms of any level of coverage, and the concentrations of intensive recording are also clear. Field work for the remaining seasons will target the less recorded areas.

A weekend field meeting was held in the Ballater area which attracted 22 participants. In total, almost 2,000 records of 380 taxa were accumulated during the weekend from 19 monads, all areas with no or very few post-2000 records. This represents a major addition to coverage in mid-Deeside and also contributes towards the ongoing accumulation of records for the Cairngorms National Park co-ordinated by Andy Amphlett. Highlights included several scarce or rare plants in the vice-county, such as *Drosera*

anglica (Great Sundew), *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) (found at two sites), *Linnaea borealis* (Twinflower), *Lobelia dortmanna* (Water Lobelia), *Lycopodium annotinum* (Interrupted Clubmoss), *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated Wintergreen) and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage).

Around 12 local botanists contributed to recording this year, with considerable assistance from Andy Amphlett and Eric & Aileen Meek. A vc newsletter was produced, to try to stimulate further recording.

Banffshire (vc94) Andy Amphlett

Fairly good coverage of vc94 had been achieved by 2011; at least as good, and by some measures much better, than for the last Atlas. Therefore my attention turned to recording in other areas, mainly the Cairngorms National Park, in vc95 and (especially) vc96. A very high level of recording was achieved in 2015, following my early retirement, 78% from vc96.

Nevertheless more recording could usefully be done in vc94, and some visits are planned for 2016. The big upland blocks in NJ00 and NJ01 have had rather few recent recording visits, and there remain several areas of contiguous tetrads across the vc that have few records.

A Checklist and RPR taxon list for vc94 are on the BSBI website. I have not updated these. I may update the RPR taxon list, so as to update the list available on the DDb, but do not currently plan to write a full RPR.

The main initiative in 2015 was a second year of a collaborative project to records plants within the Cairngorms National Park. CNPA granted £2200 to cover T&S costs. Report submitted to CNPA, and all records on the DDb.

Five taxa new to vc94 were recorded in 2015. The most notable were two uncommon aliens: a 3rd Scottish record for *Allium subhirsutum* (Hairy Garlic) and the first mainland Scotland records of *Iris latifolia* (English Iris).

I have more or less completed validation of vc94 records, and keep up to date with validating records as they arrive on the DDb. I send MM sync files every one to two weeks.

Considerable time was spent on non-vc94 work in support of BSBI, through my role as 'Voluntary Support Officer'.

Moray (vc95) Ian Green

A good amount of recording in 2015, so far 15,067 records have been uploaded to the DDb, the highest total since 2000 by some way. There are still several thousand records to be computerised. Only 4 hectads NJ00, NJ23, NJ34 and NJ45 had no recording done in 2015; these only have very small areas in vc95. Otherwise recording is going very well, but still surprising how much work is needed in each hectad. The plan for 2016 is to try and visit as many tetrads as possible with no post-2000 records, as well as trying to re-locate species in hectads where they have not been recorded since 2000. I have recently been recording the vc on a monad basis towards producing an atlas flora of the county. A few other people have also been helping.

Led two botany walks in vc95 for local botanists plus two in vc94 and one in vc96. The meetings aim either to check-up on a species, re-locate a rare species or do general plant recording in an unrecorded area. The first meeting in vc95 was to check on the population of *Equisetum hyemale* (Rough Horsetail) in woodland between the Black Burn and the B9010 at NJ09965428. The *E. hyemale* was looking very good at this site. The second meeting in vc95 was to have a look at *Epipactis phyllanthes* (Green-flowered Helleborine) by the river Findhorn NJ02686105 that had just been found new for Scotland. [See article on page 15 and photos inside back cover in [2016 BSBI Scottish News](#)]. All meetings were well attended with an average of around 10 people.

2015 was a very good year for new species, with several natives being found in the vc. The best was *Epipactis phyllanthes* (Green-flowered Helleborine) also new for Scotland, another was *Ranunculus auricomus* (Goldilocks Buttercup). The best non-native was *Cotoneaster qungbixiensis*, the first record of this plant naturalised in the UK. A first for Scotland was the very invasive *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* (Floating Pennywort). *Euphorbia stricta* (Upright Spurge) was only the second record for Scotland. Another non-native (but native in other parts of the UK) was *Draba muralis* (Wall Whitlowgrass).

Westernness (vc97) Ian Strachan & Ian Bonner

An Atlas recording week at Kingairloch and Strontian by IB (20-29 June), focused on poorly recorded hectads in Morvern (NM85 & 95), also Ardnamurchan, Sunart and Moidart. With help from Richard Marriott, Liz MacDonald and IS. c.2500 records were made and entered into MapMate by IB. Star find was the Nationally Scarce *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder's-tongue) near Corran, a new VC record.

Atlas recording by IS in various remote and/or under-recorded areas, including Murlaggan, Garbh Shlios, Loch Aline, Beasdale, Morar, Grey Corries, Glen Loy, Spean Bridge, Leanachan, Mucomir. Ca 2,700 records collected in 15 hectads (mostly still to be entered).

Various records collected by other botanists, including c 1000 records for Locheil Estate (Adam Fraser).

Rare plant monitoring (non-SCM) - *Diapensia lapponica* (Diapensia), Glenfinnan, *Corynephorus canescens* (Grey Hair-grass), Morar.

Ben Nevis North Face project (year 2) in August. Highlights include large new populations of *Luzula arcuata* (Curved Woodrush) and *Carex lachenalii* (Hare's-foot Sedge) as well as new sites for 7 NS species and several GB altitude records. Help from Jim McIntosh and Dan Watson.

NPMS square 'adopted' near Moy (Glen Spean).

Work started by IS on combined RPR (>50 spp drafted), axiophyte list and checklist, also DDb checking/validation.

Botanical walk with LNHS at Cuil Bay for Lochaber Wildlife Festival (May). Talk given on Ben Nevis flora to Scottish Rock Gardening Club (Oct). Short talk on recent NVC surveys given at BSBI Kindrogan workshop. VC97 exhibit at SAM (Nov).

Main Argyll (vc98) Carl Farmer

2952 records added during year; there may be more not yet MapMated. Did not do much recording owing to other commitments but plan to do more in 2016.

Monthly field trips with Lorne Natural History Group include botanical recording, and some have this as their main activity. We had a trip to look at "Lismore's Limestone Flora" and another to look for Bog Orchid (*Hammarbya paludosa*) at Ardmaddy, of which one spike was eventually found after an extensive search.

No really interesting new finds but some good re-finds including Carline Thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*) in its only VC98 site on limestone cliffs on Kerrera, together with a prostrate form of Yew (*Taxus baccata*) which may well be native there. Christine Loudon re-found Marsh St John's Wort (*Hypericum elodes*) at Portavadie, and Spring Quillwort (*Isoetes echinospora*) was re-found at Lochan Urr. Escapes and casuals included Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) found by Peter Wiggins at 2 sites in Oban, and Ivy-leaved Bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*) new to VC98, presumably introduced, at the Sea Life Centre, Barcaldine, during their Bioblitz.

Dunbartonshire (vc99) Pam Murdoch

Despite the constant need to re-schedule or change plans because of the weather in 2015, another 42 monads in vc99 were covered with additional recording in other sites as well. The most interesting find was a chance discovery of *Carex elongata* (Elongated Sedge) which I later found to have been recorded in the past!

Progress for Atlas 2020 remains slow but steady. I would hope to cover the southern half of the vice-county in the next few years with at least one monad per tetrad recorded, omitting about 15 tetrads.

Headway in the northern mountainous section will be difficult and unlikely. I look forward to recording the lower and loch-side sites on the same basis, but this will only cover one-third of the total area.

Thanks go to Malcolm Ogilvie for digitising and adding a large set of older records.

Clyde Isles (vc100) Angus Hannah

3984 records were made in the vc, all at monad resolution. A further 103 records of uncommon species with 8-10 fig grid-refs were added to Mapmate.

Hectads: On average, in Bute and Cumbrae post-2000 records comprise 92% of all-time hectad/species records, and on Arran 83%. However, 4 hectads on Arran still have more than 100 taxa not refound post-2000, and these will be targeted in remaining years of the decade.

Tetrads: the average per tetrad is 324 in Bute and 326 in Cumbrae (almost none pre-2000). Arran averages 164 post-2000 (190 all dates). A significant proportion of north Arran tetrads have fewer than 50 species growing in them.

Monads: It is impractical to record Arran comprehensively in monads. Around 40% have a significant number of records, and these average 114 post-2000, 142 all dates. Bute and Cumbrae monads average 225 taxa post-2000.

Flora of Bute: over 500 maps of distribution and abundance were prepared. Some progress has been made with brambles and roses, but much work remains to be done on some other critical groups.

The most interesting find on Bute was a colony of *Pyrola minor* (Common Wintergreen) in Mountstuart policy woodland, the first record from the island and vice-county since 1930.

On Arran, Tony Church continues to work on *Dryopteris affinis* agg. (Scaly Male ferns) and is jointly engaged in producing a new guide to these difficult taxa.

I taught two courses at FSC Millport and led on vascular plants at the Cumbrae Bioblitz, recording 309 species including a first Cumbrae record for *Beta maritima* (Sea Beet).

Outside vc100, I organised and participated in a recording week in vc75 Ayrshire and spent a week recording on Jura (vc102) with Simon Smart.

Kintyre (vc101) Dave and Pat Batty

A combination of awful weather and family commitments meant that we carried out much less recording than we had anticipated in 2015. However the Kintyre Botany Group (KBG) managed several trips in south Kintyre and helped fill in some gaps. There are only two remote coastal 10 km squares where we have no records as yet but we intend to visit these sites in 2016. Otherwise we have tetrad records for the rest and now will be looking at gaps in habitats, e.g. upland and freshwater, and in species previously recorded. There were few notable finds in 2015. The KBG found *Geranium nodosum* (Knotted Crane's-bill), a first record for the VC, at Ugadale. A large area, >50m in length along the strandline, of *Lepidium didymum* (Lesser Swine-cress) was found on the east coast of Kintyre.

South EbuDES (vc 102) Malcolm Ogilvie

Recording for Atlas 2020 took two large steps forward.

I was absolutely delighted when, in response to a published appeal, Simon Smart volunteered to help me by taking on the considerable challenge of recording Jura for Atlas 2020. He paid two week-long visits, accompanied in late May by Jim McIntosh and in early September by Angus Hannah, contributing in total 2926 records for 417 species from 46 monads.

Oli Pescott came on the first of an intended series of annual visits, contributing over 1700 records from 10 monads, mainly in the Rinns. Taxa apparently new for Islay included the hybrids *Epilobium x rivulare* (conf. G. Kitchener), *Euphrasia arctica x confusa* and *Euphrasia confusa x micrantha* (both det. C. Metherell), and *Salix x multinervis* (conf. I. Belyaeva). New aliens for the island included *Triticum aestivum* (Bread Wheat), *Zea mays* (Maize), *Crocsmia paniculata x pottsii*, *Solanum lycopersicum* (Tomato), *Campanula poscharskyana* (Trailing Bellflower), *Fallopia baldschuanica* (Russian-vine), and *Matthiola incana* (Hoary Stock).

A dataset of c.1500 records from 23 monads (including several remote ones) from 2012 has just been received from a butterfly surveyor and I am in the process of converting it to a suitable format for adding to MapMate.

Four BSBI stalwarts, Pete Stroh, Kevin Walker, David Pearman and Owen Mountford, paid the second of their planned annual visits to Colonsay and are currently undertaking the digitising of their 10,000+ records from 2014 and 2015.

Nick Stewart is bringing his 20+-year-old list of Jura wildflowers up to date, and I have been helping him chase up Atlas cards and past surveys.

A new species for the VC was *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid) found by visitors in a dune area already rich in orchids. Apart from their original find of about 15 flowering spikes, a search revealed a further 30–40 scattered plants in another area a few hundred metres away.

Annual orchid monitoring took place.

Mid Ebudes (vc103) Lynne Farrell

The Mid Ebudes Rare Plant Register was updated Sept 2015; waiting for my technical assistant to update on her database and then re-issue on BSBI website.

Tiree tetrads survey almost completed for post 2000 - a few small bits of land to record 2016 onwards. Still need a boatman to get me out to smaller islets - none found on Tiree yet. Met Kew botanist and his wife, who worked on *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's Tresses) whilst on Tiree. Found new site for *S. romanzoffiana* on the island.

One tetrad surveyed on Mull in its own 10km square to update records to post 2000. Several species sites checked. Also visited croft owner and re-engaged him in botany on Ross of Mull. We recorded a tetrad together and he has since visited again and sent specimens.

Euphrasia collected from Tiree and Mull and sent to Chris Metherell who has identified them. *Hieracia* specimens taken to David McCosh and he has identified. Other critical groups sent off to referees—some still to hear back from. Tidy up of specimens in my press and most sent off to referees. All other records from 2015 field season entered in MapMate and synched to hub.

Action plan made for 2016 field season, but this might be delayed as I am still waiting for a hip operation. Week booked for 13-20 August for Coll tetrad recording. Alistair Godfrey and Ro Scott helping, which is very welcome.

Participated in New Year Plant Hunt in Northants with friends, and members of BSBI, on 4 Jan and sent in report – 31 species flowering.

Set up Ash Splash plots in remote area and also an extra site on East coast of Mull with 2 locals I am encouraging.

Agreed to help set up and record NPMS squares on Coll and arranged for John Bowler RSPB to do one on Tiree.

Helped with identification of old plant collection in Tobermory Museum.

North Ebudes (vc104) Stephen Bungard

Over 13,000 records were made in VC104 in 2015. Recording for Atlas 2020 continues apace with all hectads already adequately covered but much more to be done before the VCR will be content.

Saxifraga tridactylites (Rue-leaved Saxifrage) was recorded on Rum, a first for VC104.

Raphanus raphanistrum subsp. *maritimus* (Sea Radish) on Eigg was the first record in the vice-county since 1893 or 1895 – and in the same location! It was also found at Waternish, the first record for Skye.

A list of plants native to Skye was produced. With many caveats it includes just short of 600 species.

The Skye Botany Group met five times in 2015.

Andrew Currie's Herbarium was catalogued by two volunteers and the sheets were then transferred to RBGE to become part of the general herbarium. There are about 1800 sheets of which approximately 75% were from the UK (63% from Scotland). Only six are from vc104.

A collaboration with artist Frances Priest, "Patterns of Flora – Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats" resulted in maps of botanical walks, ceramic furnishings for Raasay House, Parian ware vases and adult colouring books, all featuring plants from the seven selected habitats. The project has been shortlisted in the Placemaking category of the prestigious Arts & Business Scotland Awards 2015. [See article on page 12 and photo on inside back cover of the [2016 BSBI Scottish Newsletter](#).]

Fuller reports for January-June and July-December are available on the [VC webpage](#).

West Ross (vc105) Duncan Donald

The highlight was the weekend Field Meeting based on Glen Carron, reported elsewhere, but I am again indebted to many visitors who have helped contribute other invaluable records. In June, Ro FitzGerald, Liz McDonnell and Janet Macpherson helped me re-record Upper Loch Broom [NH18] (with *Ruppia maritima* (Beaked Tasselweed) a first since 1952) and Corrieshalloch Gorge [NH27] (including *Festuca altissima* (Wood Fescue) last recorded in 1982). In July, Coigach Community Heritage Group invited me to lead a foray around Polglass [NC00]. In August, Inverness Botany Group joined me recording along Little Gruinard River [NG98]; Debbie Wallace visited Plockton airfield [NG73] (*Polygonum boreale* (Northern Knotgrass) would be a new vc record; her specimen is with the referee); Stephen Bungard found *Poa nemoralis* (Wood Meadow-grass) near Lochcarron [NG84] ... then in September re-found *Eupatorium cannabinum* (Hemp-agrimony), very local hereabouts, north of Applecross [NG74].

Also in September, Jim McIntosh found lots of good things at North Keanchulish [NC10]; Ian Francis re-recorded near Upper Loch Torridon [NG75 & NG85]; and Peter Wortham re-found *Sibbaldia procumbens* (Sibbaldia) on the eastern flank of vc105 in NH04. At Christmas-time, my daughter Flora helped me re-survey the lower reaches of the Abhainn Alligin, finding *Dryopteris aemula* (Hay-scented Buckler-fern) last noted in NG85 in 1965. Nor should I overlook finds made by interested locals: a new *Zostera marina* (Eelgrass) site in NG99 found by Peter Cunningham; and *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil) reported from NG97 by Jeremy Fenton.

Meanwhile, I have done a lot of work prioritizing under-worked tetrads and the plants that need to be re-recorded in the next few years for the Atlas ... and, all being well, my planned Flora.

East Ross (vc106) Brian Ballinger

Atlas work has continued this year with visits to many places in VC106. There are recent records for the majority of tetrads but a lot of work remains to be done. Once more I am very grateful to Peter Wortham for his major contribution, especially in the more remote areas. Others have also contributed including individuals and various societies such as the Inverness Botany Group.

This year Mary Dean, Peter Wortham and I undertook the Site Condition Monitoring of the Kyle of Sutherland marshes SSSI. *Carex recta* (Estuarine Sedge) is doing well in many places, but *Pilularia*

globulifera (Pillwort) proved a major challenge, because of very high water levels and quantities of mud. Some sites were not refound until October when the water level had finally fallen.

In the autumn another new population of *Linnaea borealis* (Twinflower) was found at Cnoc Navie whilst on a routine recording outing. This is the third site for this species, previously thought to be extinct in East Ross, to be found in the last 10 years. A few plants of *Galium sternerii* (Limestone Bedstraw), for which there were no recent or localised records, were found in Benmore forest. On the negative side no plants of *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) were to be seen at its only site in the Vice-county at Hilton, perhaps a victim of winter storms.

In 2016 recording work continues and a joint outing with the Botanical Society of Scotland is planned at Dingwall.

East Sutherland (vc107) *Mick Crawley*

The lowlands are finished and the uplands reasonably well sampled, but there is still a huge amount to do in the remote featureless parts, especially on the border with West Sutherland. Volunteers for wild camping trip welcome.

The 2016 version of the Flora of 107 is ready to go up on the BSBI website, containing all the 2015 records. Training on site is now available

West Sutherland (vc108) *Ian Evans*

Atlas 2020: the 'summer' of 2015 was nearly a month late arriving in the North-West Highlands, so fieldwork did not start until the end of June. Some 16 sites were surveyed between then and the beginning of November; 11 were previously un-visited tetrads, five of them on the Cape Wrath peninsula (NC27, 36).

About half of West Sutherland has never been surveyed at tetrad level (450+ tetrads). This area includes most of the land between Loch Eriboll in the west and Strath Halladale in the east, and some montane areas elsewhere.

A start will be made in the summer of 2016 in the area around Tongue and up Strath Naver (NC53-56, 63-66, 73-75). To this end, self-catering accommodation at Tongue has been booked for three weeks in June, July and August, and help recruited from local and other Highland botanists. We shall also be revisiting the Cape Wrath peninsula.

An interesting record, confirmed late in the year, was *Brassica nigra* (Black Mustard), found by Gwen Richards on a croft near Lochinver (NC0824); it had not been deliberately introduced and is a NCR. A large population of *Arabidopsis petraea* (Northern Rock-cress) was located at a 'new' low-altitude site on the River Dionard (NC3458) on 3rd November.

Outer Hebrides (vc110) Paul Smith

6000 records added in 2015, mainly in 35 tetrads.

There were two main recording visits involving the VCR in 2015. A group of visitors spent two weeks on North Uist, unusually (for group visits) in May, making useful records of spring ephemerals (including find of the year *Mibora minima* (Early sand grass)) and *Taraxacum* (dandelions) – including several NCRs. A summer visit to Harris covered montane areas, particularly increasing recording in NB11 and NB21 which were under-recorded for Atlas2020. Atlas coverage is pretty good for most inhabited islands (with plans for mopping up on Lewis in 2016); some outliers still need visits, probably not all will be done by 2020.

The Uist botany group had multiple meetings, and sent in a useful batch of records, covering some under-recorded parts of the Uists. Two UBG meetings were held when the VCR was present, including a visit to Wiay, an island off Benbecula unrecorded for around 70 years. UBG will move under the auspices of Currag, the Western Isles Natural History Society from 2016.

After persistent hinting (some may say nagging!) visitors are getting in touch before they go to vc110, and sending back records. Some have taken on tetrads and gaps, and there has been a significant contribution from several sources in 2015. Machair site condition monitoring records from SNH (Uists) were received too. A big thanks to all contributors.

2014 and 2015 records were sent to the DDb in Jan 2016. Sporadic efforts were put into updating the vc110 scarce plant register (now 10 years and a lot of recording out of date), but this requires some significant effort for completion.

Orkney (vc111) John Crossley

This year I recorded good lists from nearly 35 monads and tetrads and further, shorter ones from miscellaneous site visits. I spent several days recording tetrads on the outer islands, wanting to ensure that nearing the end of Atlas 2020 I am not left with only the most remote places to visit. Other local botanists and Field Club members were involved in most of these island visits. I received some help with costs from the Wildflower Society. A short account will appear in the Society's magazine. There will be more to do in 2016: visiting BSBI members are most welcome to join in these or other outings, though the island trips are done at short notice to make the best of forecast weather.

Following some analysis of the post-2000 record set I changed course slightly in my recording strategy this year. There is good geographical distribution of tetrad records for the VC, but many of the tetrad lists are much shorter than they should be, so after some analysis I made targeted visits to some poorly recorded tetrads. Also I have been chasing up pre-2000 VC rarity records with considerable success, some dating from the early 20th century.

Eric Meek and I produced an RPR for vc111 in March. It was a lengthier task than we had expected.

There were some new VC records, mostly sub-species not previously attended to. Find of the year was undoubtedly *Hieracium sowadeense* (awaiting final confirmation), a VC endemic found at the spot where it was last recorded in 1925. Fewer than 10 plants remain. Seeds were collected and seedlings are being reared.