



Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Scottish Recorder Newsletter, Winter 2016

VCR News

Recorder vacancies were advertised for Berwickshire, Lanarkshire, Caithness and Shetland in last January's BSBI News. We are very pleased to announce that the vacancies in Lanarkshire, Caithness & Shetland have just been filled. You will want to join me in congratulating the new recorders and wishing them well for the future!

Lanarkshire

The new Recorder for Lanarkshire is Michael Philip who has had a long interest in botany and worked with Peter Macpherson. He lives in the vice-county at Larkhall and is very keen to encourage local members to help him with Atlas 2020 recording. Peter's Flora of Lanarkshire will be a great starting point for him. We helped Peter capture many of the records underlying his flora at monad resolution and they are now in the DDb and in Michael's copy of MapMate.

Caithness

Many of you will have already met the new Recorders for Caithness - Margaret & Francis Higgins. They participated in the Recorders' Workshop in Strathpeffer in April and the Shetland Recording Week in July. Francis is the retired head gardener at Langwell House, Berriedale (and so is particularly good with garden escapes)! I visited Caithness during the autumn and enjoyed time in the field with the Higgins, and then showed them how to use MapMate to enter the records. I also visited Ken Butler, the retired BSBI Recorder, and took the opportunity to arrange for him to send his MapMate data to his successors.

Shetland

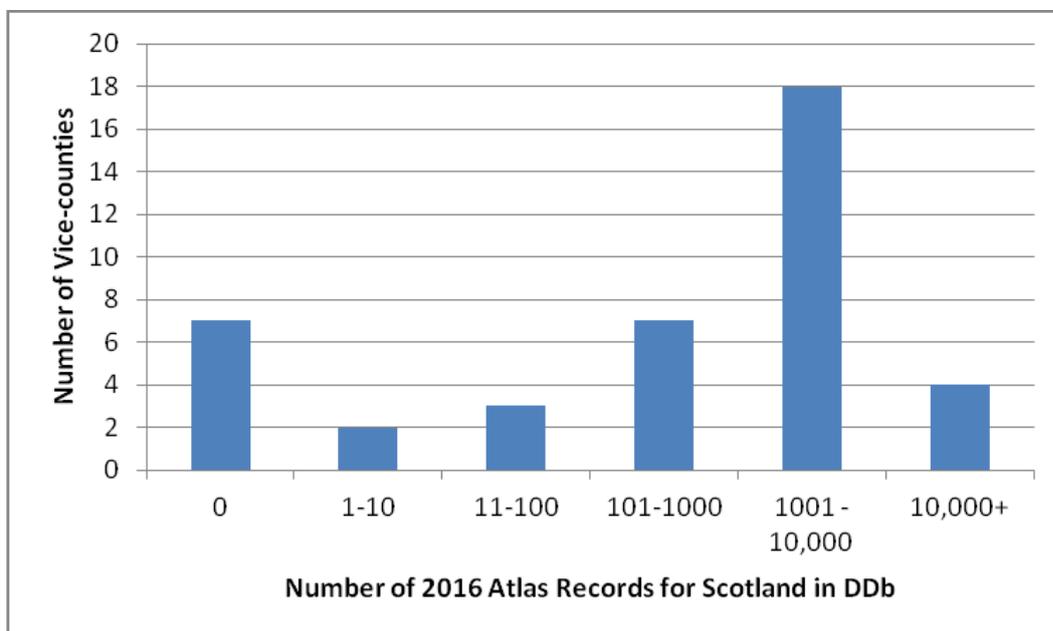
Many will also know the new Joint Recorders on Shetland – local man Paul Harvey & remote man Alex Prendergast (from Norwich). Both helped organise the 2015 and 2016 Recording Weeks on Shetland and Paul participated in the Recording Workshop at Kindrogan last year. Paul is the manager of the Shetland record centre, and has worked closely with Walter Scott, the retired BSBI Recorder, for many years. He has digitised all the records from both weeks – a total of 18,000 records – which will make a great contribution to Atlas 2020 recording in the vice-county.

Berwickshire & West Lothian

And no sooner than we fill three vacancies, another one arises! I'm sad to announce that Jackie Muscott, Recorder for West Lothian has just tendered her resignation. We will advertise the vacancy in the forthcoming BSBI News along with that of Berwickshire where Michael Braithwaite, the retired Recorder, is proving to be irreplaceable! If you know of any potentially suitable, interested botanists, please encourage them to apply.

Atlas 2020 – Taking Stock

So far 132,000 Atlas records have been added to the BSBI DataBase by 34 Scottish vice-counties for 2016. Amazing! Well done! I included a chart showing progress across the BSBI in the most recent [BSBI eNews](#). Here is the corresponding chart for just Scotland.



However, it shows that 5 VCs forwarded fewer than 100 records. And another 7 have yet to forward *any* records! I know that there are particular reasons for some 'nil returns' and am working to help Recorders in various ways with some of these. However if you are sitting on a backlog - it really would be great if you could get up to date with data entry and sent them to the BSBI Database - by the end of January if possible.

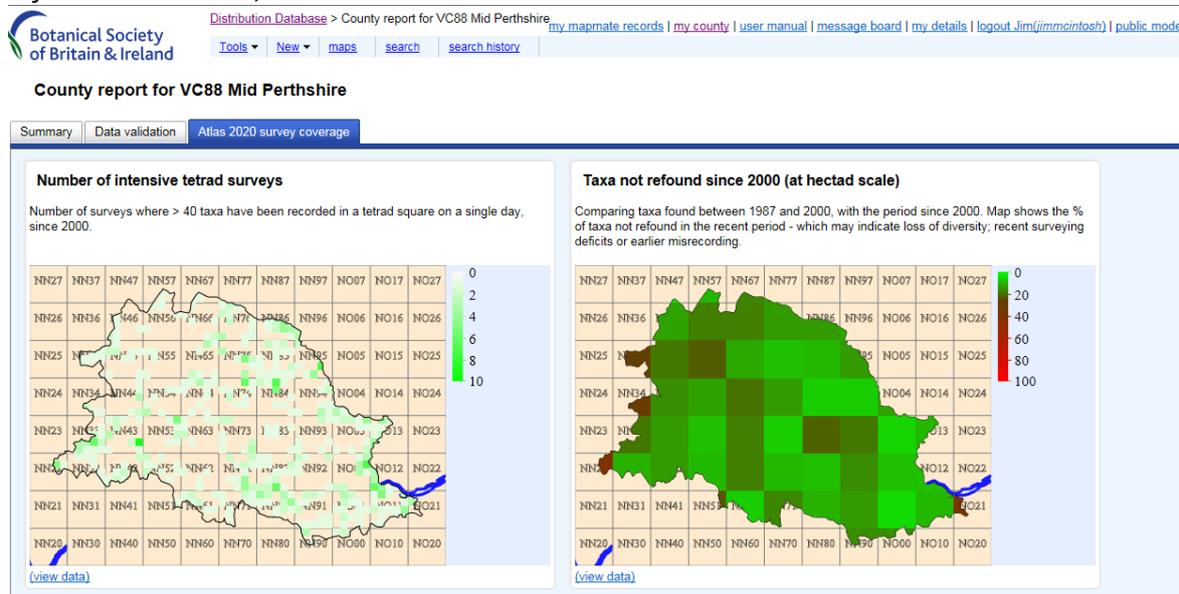
As I've said before, it is always better to enter and synch data little and often - as you go along. If you are struggling and need help please let me know. As soon as the data is in, you can use the DDb to take stock of where you are with Atlas 2020 and start planning ahead! I outline three different ways you can check your Atlas 2020 coverage over page.

Atlas 2020 – Using the BSBI Distribution DataBase (DDb)

Amazingly there are still some folk not using the DDb. It is a fantastic tool and everyone should register, logon and explore it! I can remind you what your username if need be. Login and take a look at the DDb feature called *my county* which helps identify gaps in Atlas 2020 coverage - assuming all your data is in the DDb! This menu option should appear to the left of *message board* when Recorders login, along with *my mapmate records* – if you are a MapMate user. The *my county* option has three tabs: *Summary* which includes a year-by-year breakdown of recording since 2000, *Data validation* and *Atlas 2020 survey coverage*. This last tab displays colour-density maps of your VC showing the *Number of intensive tetrad surveys* and another showing *Taxa not refund since 2000 (at hectad scale)*.

Check your Vice-county Atlas 2020 coverage I

The maps in the DDb's *my county > Atlas 2020 survey coverage* are a simple way to assess coverage for Atlas 2020. Generally, the more intensive tetrad surveys per hectad the better. Any full hectads with fewer than five tetrad surveys probably need a closer look. And generally, the more very light green hectads on the VC map entitled *Taxa not refund since 2000*, the better.



However both maps need careful interpretation. For example, if the hectad was poorly or very well recorded pre 2000 then the shading on the *Taxa not refund since 2000* map will be misleading.

Check your Vice-county Atlas 2020 coverage II

If you scroll down below the maps, you can see analyses of hectad and tetrad recording coverage in your vice-county. These are summaries of recording-coverage based on pre/post-2000 re-recording rate and the number of visits to a tetrad. You should set your own criteria as the default settings for a *Well recorded tetrad* are Any tetrad where 100 or more species have been recorded all time AND 75% or more of them have been recorded post 2000 – which will not suit every vice-county.

Check your Vice-county Atlas 2020 coverage III

Here is a fascinating way to assess your Atlas 2020 coverage. First login to the [DDb](#), then click [this link](#), change the “county/region” to your Vice-county and click *display results*. The query lists the number of hectads each taxon has been recorded in for 1987 - 1999 and post 2000. It is fascinating comparing numbers of hectad records in these two date classes for each taxon. Differing taxonomy explains some apparent changes, but others might reflect an increase in recording effort or a lack of recording.

It is interesting to click the column header “1987-1999” once and you will see taxa that have only been recorded post 2000 at the top of the list. (Mostly neophytes and any newly found natives). And if you click the column header “2000-” once you will see taxa that were recorded 1987-1999 but not subsequently at the top.

Check Atlas 2020 coverage in a hectad

This is a very simple check which anyone can do (even without a login): Just type the hectad grid reference in the [Grid Reference Lookup](#) tool.

Click the [View Taxon list for hectad...](#) link.

Taxon list for **NO02** within VC88 only.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Alchemilla alpina</i> (1997) 4 0 | <i>Elymus caninus</i> (2011) 4 2 | <i>Pinus jeffreyi</i> (2011) 0 1 |
| <i>Alchemilla vulgaris</i> agg. (1991) 1 0 | <i>Elytrigia repens</i> agg. (2015) 3 7 | <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> (2016) 10 14 |
| <i>Anisantha sterilis</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Epilobium ciliatum</i> (2011) 3 5 | <i>Pinus wallichiana</i> (2011) 0 1 |
| <i>Arenaria balearica</i> (1997) 7 0 | <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> (2016) 6 6 | <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> (2015) 12 16 |
| <i>Campynula trachelium</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Epilobium montanum</i> (2016) 9 7 | <i>Plantago major</i> (2015) 8 12 |
| <i>Cardamine impatiens</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Epilobium palustre</i> (2016) 6 5 | <i>Plantago maritima</i> (2011) 0 1 |
| <i>Carduus crispus</i> (1991) 1 0 | <i>Epipactis helleborine</i> (2011) 3 3 | <i>Platanus × hispanica</i> (2016) 0 2 |
| <i>Carex acutiformis</i> (1987) 3 0 | <i>Equisetum arvense</i> (2016) 6 14 | <i>Poa annua</i> (2015) 9 20 |
| <i>Carex diandra</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Equisetum × litorale</i> (2005) 0 1 | <i>Poa humilis</i> (2016) 0 2 |
| <i>Carpinus betulus</i> (1987) 2 0 | <i>Equisetum fluviatile</i> (2011) 4 2 | <i>Poa nemoralis</i> (2016) 8 10 |
| <i>Cicuta virosa</i> (1991) 4 0 | <i>Equisetum palustre</i> (2011) 4 3 | <i>Poa pratensis</i> s.l. (2015) 5 7 |
| <i>Climopodium vulgare</i> (1990) 2 0 | <i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i> (2011) 0 1 | <i>Poa trivialis</i> (2016) 6 12 |
| <i>Crocus biflorus</i> (1987) 2 0 | <i>Eranthis hyemalis</i> (2013) 0 3 | <i>Polygala vulgaris</i> (2007) 0 1 |
| <i>Cymbalaria muralis</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Erica cinerea</i> (2006) 0 1 | <i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i> (2016) 2 2 |
| <i>Epilobium brunnescens</i> (1997) 5 0 | <i>Erica tetralix</i> (2011) 6 6 | <i>Polygonatum × hybridum</i> (2011) 2 3 |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> agg. (1987) 1 0 | <i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i> (2011) 5 6 | <i>Polygonum aviculare</i> agg. (2011) 1 8 |
| <i>Euphrasia officinalis</i> agg. (1995) 3 0 | <i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i> (2011) 3 3 | <i>Polypodium vulgare</i> s.l. (2011) 8 3 |
| <i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i> (1991) 3 0 | <i>Erophila glabrescens</i> (2016) 0 1 | <i>Polystichum aculeatum</i> (2015) 8 9 |
| <i>Glebionis segetum</i> (1987) 1 0 | <i>Erophila verna</i> s.l. (2015) 0 6 | <i>Populus alba</i> (2010) 3 2 |
| <i>Hieracium vulgatum</i> (1991) 1 0 | <i>Euonymus europaeus</i> (2011) 0 1 | <i>Populus × canadensis</i> (2010) 0 2 |
| <i>Hordeum jubatum</i> (1998) 7 0 | <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> (2007) 0 1 | <i>Populus tremula</i> (2011) 8 4 |

Tick *sort recent records separately* and click *show taxon list*. Et voilà! All the taxa that haven't been re-recorded since 2000 are in faint at the top of the list. And all the taxa that have been recorded post 1999 are in bold further down. The date is that of the most recent record, the first number is the number of records in the 1987-1999 date class and the second is the number of post 1999 records.

Some of the taxa in faint may be common whilst others rare. All would be interesting refinds! You can then drill down to see the actual records of these taxa and plan fieldwork to re-record.

Atlas 2020 – Validating your data

We hope that by 2020, or shortly afterwards, everyone will have validated their own VC dataset using the BSBI DDb. So far only the brave have attempted it! Some made a start last winter with help from Andy Amphlett. However we have just published a couple of short easy-to-follow guidance documents. One on [Validating your records in the DDb](#) and another on [Editing your records in the DDb](#). It would be great if everyone would read through the guidance, have a look at the DDb *my county* > *Data validation* page - then make a stab at following it. If you get stuck, then don't worry we'll cover that point during our Data Validation sessions at the Recording Working at Kindrogan in March. But at least you won't be starting from absolute scratch!

Atlas 2020 - Guidance for Vice-County Recorders

With three years to go and the Christmas and New Year holiday approaching, this is an opportune moment to review and reread the Atlas 2020 guidance, for useful snippets that perhaps you've previously overlooked. The guidance is all on the [Atlas 2020](#) page of the BSBI website. The most important is the [Atlas 2020 Guidance for Vice-county Recorders](#) and [Where and what do we record?](#) Many of you will remember the series of green Atlas 2000 guidance booklets which were distributed during the Atlas 2000 project. These guidance booklets have been comprehensively updated and revised and are now available online. I recommend that all Atlas 2020 recorders read [Notes on identification works and difficult and under-recorded taxa](#) very carefully. The other booklets in the series include [Collecting and Pressing Specimens](#), [Atlas 2020 Instruction Booklet](#) and [A Beginner's Guide to Recording](#).

VC Annual Reports

One of the most avidly read and much enjoyed articles in the [2016 Scottish Newsletter](#) was the collation of Scottish Vice-county Annual Reports that folk sent me last year. It was also published on the [BSBI Scotland](#) webpage. It is a fascinating account of botanical endeavour by BSBI Recorders and members across Scotland. So let's repeat the exercise! I'll include detailed guidance of what to include with my call for Annual Reports at New Year. Please read it carefully. The main thing to note is that there will be a strict word limit of 200-250 words which is slightly shorter than in previous years.

Recording Conference & Workshop in 2017

After the two [Recorder workshops](#) in Strathpeffer and RBGE in 2016, we are back at FSC Kindrogan for a weekend residential event over the weekend of the 10-12 March in 2017. We will start at lunch time on Friday and aim to finish mid-afternoon on Sunday.

There will be major sessions on Atlas 2020 progress and plans, identifying gaps and validation followed by a discussion of any issues. Then there also be sessions on Rare Plant Registers, MapMate and Memory Map. And I would also like to include some mini-workshops, a round-up of reports from the vice-counties and a BSBI Q&A session.

VC Recorders and anyone contributing to the BSBI Atlas 2020 fieldwork are very welcome! Feel free to invite anyone who helps out in your VC.

Northern Scottish Recording Week in 2017

We are going to base the northern 2017 Scottish Recording Week in Torridon in West Ross, where the Recorder needs all the help he can get to cover his huge, remote and mountainous vice-county! The dates are 9-16 July. Accommodation is in mostly in two to four bedded rooms in a huge [log cabin](#) and catering will be arranged by Hilary Hawker.

As usual we will record in small groups. You will need to be happy on rough and hilly ground. If you can tear yourself away from Atlas Recording in your own vice-county your help would be much appreciated! Please let me know if you are interested before places get snapped up once the meeting is advertised in the yearbook.

BSBI / BSS Scottish Annual Meeting

If you weren't able to make it to the Scottish Annual Meeting in Battleby (or even if you did and would like a reminder), many of the talks are available as pdfs by clicking [here](#) – including Mick Crawley's excellent and thought provoking main talk on [Aliens in the British Flora](#). Thanks to the efforts of Recorders and members we had a great exhibition and you can read their exhibit [abstracts](#). A tremendously popular innovation was the mini-workshop. We offered six – including a couple on popular taxonomic problems such as [Identifying Agrostis](#) by Arthur Copping and [Distinguishing Scaly Male-fern species](#) by Fred Rumsey. Click the links to see their handouts.

Despite the overwhelming vote by those at the Scottish Annual Meeting to return to Battleby in 2017 we have decided to hold the SAM in RBGE next year and go to Battleby in 2018. So put the date in your diary now: Saturday 4th November, 2017 at RBGE.

Christmas Lunch

Twenty five BSBI members joined me for Christmas Lunch at RBGE. We had the same Christmas lunch that RBGE offers its staff – for almost the same price! A great bargain – and very convivial! Many arrived early or stayed late to attend co-incidental talks on the Flora of Fair Isle and on Apps & Portals in Science. In between times they visited me, the library and herbarium. Remember you are welcome to visit me at RBGE anytime and to take advantage of the other lovely RBGE facilities – such as the library and herbarium – not to mention the canteen! Just get in touch before hand to arrange a date!

Many, many thanks for your contribution to the BSBI in 2016 which is **much** appreciated. Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer, December 2016 jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org

PS I'll send this Newsletter out electronically as well so you can easily click the links.