BSBI *eNews* – September 2017

From Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer, jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org

Atlas 2020 Plugging the Gaps

Right for a bit of fun, I'd like **everyone** to work out the grid reference of the hectad (10 x 10km square) you live in, and enter it in the BSBI DDb Grid Ref Lookup Tool. (No need to login). Then click the "View detailed taxon list for…" and check "sort recent records recently". You may also have to select the Vice-county you live in if the hectad intersects more than one.
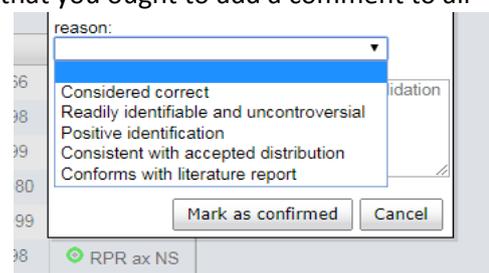
Now look carefully at the list of species in feint (as opposed to bold) at the top that have not been seen since 2000. The date after the species indicates the date of the most recent record and first number after that indicates the number of 1987-1999 records. You might be surprised to find some relatively common species listed. Whenever you are out and about in your home hectad(s) look out for these species and record any you refind. Or if you are aware of populations of some of the less common species on the list locally – go and re-record them!

Then, of course, email your County Recorder the records. If you get very enthusiastic and have lots of records to forward from local hectads, you should enter them into a spreadsheet before forwarding to the County Recorder. Here is one for GB and another for Ireland - from the BSBI Resources page.

<div align="right">Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer</div>

Atlas 2020 Validation: Commenting on your Validations

In recent months, I've included a series of articles in BSBI *eNews* about validating records as soon as County Recorders have entered and uploaded them to the DDb. Following on from last month's piece on confirmed records when I said "select all the records for the period tested, click the down arrow in the box prefixed by 'mark validation state' and select 'confirmed'. Finally apply the change to selected records. It is that easy!" I should have gone on to mention that you ought to add a comment to all validations, typically using the drop-down list, see right.

If they are your own records or from a very trustworthy recorder you can use 'Positive identification'. For most other records, use 'Considered correct'. Do consider the different reliabilities of different recorders / species ID difficulty.

Do not confirm records over which there is any doubt. There is an option to mark records as 'Needs checking' which removes them from maps but they are still returned by default queries - handy until you have made up your mind whether to accept or reject a record.

<div align="right">Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer</div>

Atlas 2020 Validation: Spotting grid reference errors

When checking recently added records it is really useful to use the DDb's zoomable maps option to spot grid reference errors. Here is an example of why: Some records of mine from a recent recording day, along the A9 cycle path at the Slochd. I am very careful when entering grid refs, always double checking, but the circled group of records were entered as NH828253 whereas they should have been NH838253. The grid ref in my notebook was correct, just entered into MM incorrectly.

Andy Amphlett

Atlas 2020 Validating-as-you-go Guidance

Finally, I've brought together all the articles from recent issues of BSBI *eNews* on Validating-as-you-go into a standalone piece of guidance that is available in the DDb Message Board here.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer

Moving Memory Map to a new computer

Last month I included a piece on Moving MapMate to a new computer. I know many of you also use Memory Map, and I am occasionally asked about how to move it to a new machine.

To do so, first check that you have the latest version of Memory Map on your old computer by clicking Web > Check for updates… and update it, if necessary, following the instructions. (This is a crucially important step.) Then open it and make sure it works OK. Install the latest version of Memory Map on your new computer – available from the Memory Map website, and with Memory Map closed, copy the 'Map Overlays' folder from your old computer's Documents folder and completely replace 'Map Overlays' in your new machine's Documents folder. Then copy your 'Maps_v5' folder from your old machine to the new one, and reconnect Memory Map with its maps by clicking Map > Map List > Refresh Map List and navigating to the new 'Maps_v5' location and clicking OK.

Finally, you will need to migrate your Memory Map licences to the new computer. On your new machine, click Help > Licence Management and sign in and make the appropriate changes.
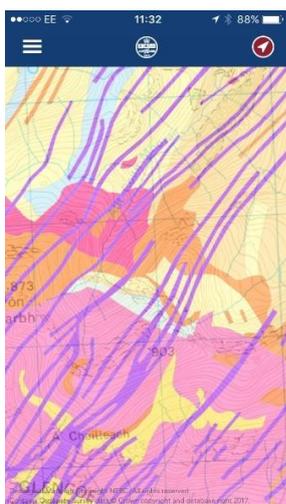
Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer

***Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed) subspecies**

I would like to encourage recording of *Sparganium erectum* subspecies. The subspecies are variously over or under recorded. It would be great to get a better picture of their true distribution for Atlas 2020. Please send me mature fruits (which should be ripe now or, if not, shortly) peeled off and put in paper packets with details, only one head per packet, so as not to mix plants up. Please send material to my address at 43 Roundwood Glen, Greengates, Bradford BD10 OHW along with your email address so I can feedback easily to you. Alternatively, if you have problems sending material in the post try sending a good photograph of a group of the mature fruits, peeled off, flat on a sheet. There will be a fuller note in the imminent BSBI News.

Mike Wilcox

The British Geological Survey iGeology App

I have the free BGS iGeology app on my smartphone. It shows your position on a detailed geological map superimposed on a feint 1:50,000 OS map. If you tap anywhere on the map a window pops up which explains what the superficial and bedrock geology is at that precise point. You can even access geological maps with no network connection, by navigating to the area before heading out into the field and the app caches the maps.

I put the app to test recently by using it to successfully refind a very localised and remote outcrop of limestone high up in the hills north of Glencoe where I'd seen *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens) 30 years previously. I also renewed a 52 year-old record for *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated horsetail) and also found *Carex capillaris* (Hair sedge) at the same location. The limestone (always in blue) wasn't precisely where the app indicated but it was close enough.

Over much of Scotland (and I suspect elsewhere), the geology is pretty dull and it is useful to search for outcropping limestone or other base-rich bedrock and geological dykes, as they often offer the best chance of finding interesting species in an otherwise species poor landscape.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer

Irish grid reference system is changing – what does it mean for BSBI recorders?

The grid reference system in use in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is (gradually) changing to the **IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR** (**ITM**). There is more about the change here. However, the BSBI will continue to use the older system, the **IRISH GRID** (or **IG**), for all recording and mapping, and recorders are advised to continue to use it.

Tom Humphrey, BSBI's Database Officer, writes "The BSBI's gridded distribution mapping will continue to use Irish Grid squares. All grid-based surveys that are intended to contribute to BSBI atlases or Floras should therefore continue to use the Irish Grid. Occurrences expressed as centroids can use either grid system, although Irish Grid remains our preferred system. Centroid records that are already in ITM format should not be converted before being sent to the BSBI's Database."

The problem is that while point grid references can be converted from one system to another reasonably accurately, the conversion doesn't work so well for grid references that describe larger squares (e.g. 1km, 2km or 10km squares). Recorders who work in consultancy should take particular care that their GPSs are always set to IG when recording for BSBI.

Key message for everyone – keep recording using Irish Grid as before!

Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer

Open Access Journals

Just in case you weren't aware, many journals now permit open (free) access to content that is over one-year old. This link shows a selection of the available publications.

Pete Stroh, BSBI Scientific Officer

The Vegetative Key eBook

I'm sure everyone who succeeded in obtaining a free copy of John Poland and Eric Clement's *Vegetative Key to the British Flora* for their smartphone and computer will want to join me in thanking John for his very generous offer. We are really sorry if you didn't succeed or missed the offer. The Kindle eBook version is still available and is still fantastic value even at £25 from Amazon!

John tells us that 2,620 copies of the eBook were downloaded during the promotion and it was seen by many more people via social media – see below under 'BSBI News & Views'!
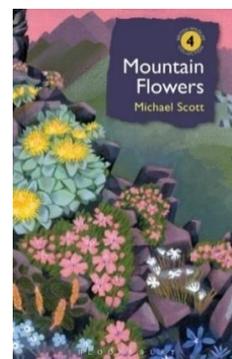
John is working on a second edition (which won't be out for a few years yet) and it would be the least we could do to thank him to provide him with any comments, corrections and constructive criticism. Please send feedback directly to John Poland.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer

BSBI Scottish Annual Meeting

The 2017 BSBI Scottish Annual Meeting will be held on the 4th November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. *Everyone* with an interest in Scottish botany is very welcome.

Our guest speaker is well-known nature writer Michael Scott, who will give a beautifully illustrated talk on *Mountain Flowers*, based on his excellent new book. We also have a full programme of interesting short talks. Last year's selection of mini-workshops on a variety of plant ID topics proved very popular so this year, we are offering an expanded choice of seven workshops for both beginners and more experienced botanists.

Regular features will include the Identification Helpdesk, the BSBI Photographic Competition and Summerfield Books pop-up bookshop. For more information and to book…

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer

BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting

The 2017 BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting will be held on Saturday 25th November at the Natural History Museum (NHM), London. It is free to attend and everybody is welcome: member or non-member, beginner or expert.

As well as a hall full of exhibits, we have a selection of speakers ranging from AEM "regulars" to first-timers such as Andrew Branson, former editor of *British Wildlife*, who will be telling us about BSBI's new publication and Alex Mills (NHM) who will be talking about 'Identification trainers for the future'. We will also be offering regular features such as John Poland's vegetative plants ID Quiz, the Identification Helpdesk, tours of the NHM herbarium and Summerfield Books pop-up bookshop. A programme and booking details (for visitors and exhibitors) will be available inside the September issue of BSBI News and on the Exhibition Meeting webpage.

Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI News & Views

On the News & Views blog in August: two posts by recipients of BSBI Training grants on the courses they attended (one in Wales, one in Scotland); Josh, one of our next generation of botanists, reported on the North-West Rare Plant Initiative which he has just set up; from Ireland, we featured reports on the inaugural meeting of the BSBI Kerry group and on a Heritage Council-funded urban plant hunt in Galway; and readers were alerted to the publication of *New Journal of Botany* 7.1, with brief notes on the seven papers published and a note about a newly-published RHS monograph (on Ivy) by the authors of one of those papers.

We also published Pete Stroh's tribute to BSBI Project Officer Bob Ellis who retired recently – this blogpost included photos of Pete presenting Bob with his retirement present; Hampshire VCR Martin Rand told us about finding *Equisetum* x *bowmanii* in Hampshire and Scotland; we shared a report by the organiser on Day One of the inaugural Grassland Conservation Conference; and we also published both Mike Wilcox's request for fruits of subspecies of *Sparganium erectum* (see above) and a reminder about the free eBook of the *Vegetative Key to the British Flora*.

You may be interested to hear that the latter blogpost attracted almost 8,000 page-views and reached more than 51,000 people via BSBI's Facebook account, many of whom gave profuse (and very public) thanks to John Poland and to BSBI.

Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI News

The September issue of BSBI News should be dropping onto your doormat round about the 26th of the month. It will include a piece on the new publication which is due to replace BSBI News itself. Keep an eye on BSBI News & Views for more information on this. Remember you can see back issues of BSBI News (and Watsonia and more!) in the BSBI Publications archive. This link appears at the foot of every page on the BSBI website. Please let me know if you can't find an item you're looking for or if you spot a broken link to a paper.

Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI *eNews*

The current and recent back issues of BSBI *eNews* are available on the Publications page of the BSBI website. An email with a link to BSBI *eNews* is circulated to BSBI Recorders, Referees, staff and committee members. Please feel free to forward it to anyone (including non-members) who you think might be interested. Please click on the links at the bottom of the email if you wish to unsubscribe or amend your contact details.

I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. BSBI *eNews* is generally published on the 1st of each month (unless it happens to be a bank holiday!) so contributions should ideally reach me by the 21st of the preceding month. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles appearing in BSBI *eNews*.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Senior Country Officer