

BSBI eNews – February 2018

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

New Year Plant Hunt

BSBI's seventh New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH) was a huge success and we'd like to thank all of you who contributed records, led group Hunts and shared photographs via social media. BSBI Head of Science, Kevin Walker has cleaned up the data and you can now see the final results on the [Results page](#) of our [New Year Plant Hunt website](#). You can download Kevin's analysis of NYPH data on the [New Year Plant Hunt](#) webpage, where you will also find a link to NYPH coverage on BBC Countryfile.

A few stats for you taken from Kevin's analysis:

- A total of 9,907 records were received of plants in bloom across Britain and Ireland.
- 532 different species were recorded, compared to 492 last year and 611 in 2016.
- 612 lists were submitted, compared to 460 in 2017.
- The most floriferous place in Britain was Phillack in Cornwall with 114 taxa in bloom; the most floriferous place in Ireland was Irishtown/Ringsend near Dublin with 58 taxa in bloom.

You can read articles in [The Guardian](#), in [The Times](#) and in [The Telegraph](#). A report will appear in the April issue of *BSBI News*.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Atlas 2020 Validation

Many of you have completed your 2017 data entry – well done! That gives you the perfect opportunity over the long dark evenings and wet days before the 2018 recording season to begin to tackle validation. The sooner you start the better. And the easiest place to start is with the recording cards you have just digitised. There is some helpful guidance on doing that [here](#) and more general guidance [here](#). If you need a helping hand, [Andy Amphlett](#) would be pleased to help you get started.

Validating & Verification of critical species records

The identifications of records in the *Hieracium* and *Taraxacum* databases on the DDb have been critically checked. For example, David McCosh has checked or accepted all the record identifications the 'Hieracium David McCosh' dataset. So, the record identifications are *verified*. But there may still be errors in site name / grid ref / VC combinations, especially of historic records. And these records will appear in the *Records to target for validation* section under the My County / Data Validation tab.

So, Recorders, with their good local knowledge could usefully check and correct these elements of the records (i.e. *validate* them) and we would be delighted if Recorders would do that. However, as many will not be mapped in the online atlas, this **should only** be tackled once you are fully up to date with Atlas 2020 validation generally. If you do make a start on this, note that identifications should never be altered without consulting the Referee. Also, when there are apparent errors with geo-referencing (mostly grid ref typos which are correctable) it's usually OK to edit with evidence and with an explanation, but place names are best left unchanged.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

New Atlas (Atlas 2000) Mastercards

CEH has scanned copies of the *New Atlas* hectad mastercards. These have recently been re-organised by our new Data Analyst apprentice, Mark Logie, and are now indexed by vice-county, making it much easier for these to be sent out to Recorders. Please contact Dr Oli Pescott (oliver.pescott@ceh.ac.uk) for copies. A download link will then be sent by email.

CEH also have copies of detailed Juniper cards for England (from an historic project managed by Dr Lena K. Ward), and scans of pink species cards. We cannot provide VC-specific sets of pink species cards (they are organised by species across numerous PDFs), but we can send out those PDFs that relate to a certain species. However, I cannot respond to requests for large numbers of species: please limit your requests to one or two species at a time. The other option is for me to send you the entirety of the scanned pink card archive, which will be an 8 GB download!

[Oli Pescott](#), CEH Botanist & Plant Ecologist

New BRC/BSBI Plant Recording Card on iRecord

Over recent months BRC have been working with the BSBI to bring a 'square bashing' data input mode to iRecord. The results of this can be found at www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/enter-vascular-plants (login or register first on [iRecord](#)) and a [poster](#) giving an overview.

This input mode enables you to enter lists of species at either monad or tetrad levels, enter finer-scale grid references for unusual finds, and also collects visit information, such as the number of recorders and the time spent recording. We hope that such 'metadata' about recorders' visits will provide an indication of recording effort that can be incorporated into future analyses.

Other enhancements to the iRecord interface include the ability to specify the vice-county when recording a 'straddling' square, the presence of vice-county boundaries on the map when selecting a square, and the ability to enter 'visit'-level notes about the recording session.

Additional information can be entered including life-stage, status (i.e. planted, invasive etc.), standard measures of local abundance (e.g. DAFOR or counts), determiner names, altitude, comments, and there is even an option to add a photo! The entry of names uses the standard iRecord auto-complete, allowing for the use of many forms of name abbreviations, including the popular strategy of typing just the first few letters of the genus and the specific epithet.

A final review screen provides the list of species, all additional information entered, and the vice-county boundary, thus allowing one to check that any finer-scale records entered are in the right place. Try it out this spring and send us any comments or bug reports!

[Oli Pescott](#), CEH Botanist & Plant Ecologist or [Kevin Walker](#), BSBI Head of Science

Last call for Vice-County Annual Reports

Thank you very much to all those of you who have completed and sent their Annual Reports. If you haven't sent in your Annual Report yet, could you please return it as soon as possible? Remember to complete the supplementary questions 2-4 which are visible if you scroll down.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Message Board for BSBI Recorders and Referees

BSBI Recorders and Referees now have their very own message board on the DDb webpage. Login into the DDb, click "message board" and select "Vice county recorder and taxon referee" at the bottom of the list. Note that you **must** be registered to use the DDb **and** be logged in. (If any Recorder or Referee is not registered to use the DDb, you are very welcome to. Please click "register" in the top left and follow the instructions.) This is an opportunity to raise any issue relating to the BSBI and your role as recorder or referee with fellow recorders, referees and staff. Any issue that is, except those relating to the DDb which should go on the most appropriate of the other four (DDb-related) message board categories!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Could you be a Referee?

A poster exhibited at the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting in November (and now [available to download here](#)) sought new taxon referees. It asked:

- do you have a special interest in a particular group of plants?
- do you have, or would you like to develop, expertise in your chosen group?
- do you want to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others?

Some current vacancies in the referee network include: hawkweeds (*Hieracium*), sea-lavenders (*Limonium*), glassworts (*Salicornia*), evening-primroses (*Oenothera*), bedstraws (*Galium*), mulleins (*Verbascum*) and hogweeds (*Heracleum*). But we are also looking for people to assist existing referees, and people who might like to form or join 'study groups'.

So, have a think, could you be a referee? Get in touch with me if you would like to know more.

[Jeremy Ison](#), Referee Network Co-ordinator

Garden plants: a threat to the natural environment due to climate change?

I have recently started a PhD at the University of Reading titled '*Garden plants: a threat to the natural environment due to climate change?*' This project is supervised by Dr Alastair Culham and Dr Brian Pickles at the University and by Dr Eleanor Webster at the RHS. I am interested in garden plants which are showing early signs of naturalising - or invasive potential - in the natural environment. A few of you discussed the project with me at the recent BSBI Exhibition Meeting

If you are a BSBI vice-county recorder, you are invited to complete a survey. This will gather information on which garden plants you perceive to be a future threat to the natural environment in your VC. It can be completed in 5-15 minutes and can be accessed on the Culham Research Group blog [here](#) from **February 1st**. It will be open until the end of March. If you would prefer to complete a hard-copy version, please email me with your address. If recording duties are shared for your VC, both/ all County Recorders are welcome to complete the survey.

The data from the survey will inform subsequent elements of the PhD, including a citizen science initiative. This will give the wider BSBI membership an opportunity to engage with this project. The results from the survey will be made available at the next BSBI [Exhibition Meeting](#).

If you have any questions, please email me.

[Tomos Siôn Jones](#)

Twitter: @TomosJones92

Request for locations where Oak species are growing together

Ashley Watson, one of the students on Sarah Whild's Biological Recording course at MMU, has asked if BSBI recorders could help him find sites where *Quercus petraea*, *Q. robur* and *Q. cerris* all grow together. If you know of any such sites – ideally in the Shropshire area but anywhere across England would also be of interest – please [email Ashley](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

County Pages

County webpages are a great way to keep in touch with local and visiting botanists. They are remarkably easy to set up: just select a couple of nice photographs (perhaps a landscape view, some botanists in action or a close-up of a special local plant) and draft a little text – including contact details and any local group meeting programme. More detail can be added later - we are aiming to keep the county webpages looking dynamic and full of useful information with regular updates.

The [Kent](#), [Lanarkshire](#), [Lancashire](#), [Montgomeryshire](#), [North Ebudes](#) and [Sussex](#) county pages are all being updated with details of plans for the year ahead or reports on last year's recording activity for example. New pages are also in preparation for Antrim and Bedfordshire. It would be great to have a page for every county. So, if you would like to set up a new page for your county, or if you are responsible for a county page and would like it updated, please [contact me](#) and copy in your County Officer. We will work with you to make the process as quick and painless as possible!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website in January

- Twelve news items were added to the [News page](#) on the BSBI website during January.
- The dates of six FISCs in 2018 and booking details were added to the [Field Skills page](#).
- The [Recorders Conference page](#) was amended with the news that the 2018 conference has sadly had to be postponed.
- More than fifty field meetings were posted on the [Meetings page](#) which is updated regularly. (Two under-subscribed/ last-minute winter twig ID meetings were successfully promoted via social media and across the BSBI website, so if you would like some extra promotion for your meeting, just [contact me](#).)
- Details of the 2018 Training, Plant Study and Research Grants are now on the [Training page](#).
- A [new page about Byron's Gin](#), the official gin of the BSBI, was created. For every bottle sold, a contribution will be made to BSBI's training programme.
- The [Wild Flower Hour page](#) was updated with news of the fortnightly [Wild Flower Half Hour podcasts](#) and of the launch of [Herbology Hunt](#), the junior wing of [#wildflowerhour](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI News & Views

On the News & Views blog in January: lots of blogposts about the New Year Plant Hunt! Read posts about [Day Two](#), [Day Three](#) and [Day Four](#) of the Hunt. You can also read about [what the BSBI President and the New Year Plant Hunt Support Team found on their Hunts](#); about [BBC Countryfile filming the Hunt in Leicestershire](#); and about [how to view that coverage](#). Non-Hunt posts include: John Box's request for [locations of Mistletoe on Oaks](#) (featured in full in January's issue of *eNews*); a note about

[BSBI Training grants and botany courses](#) on offer in 2018; a sneak peek at the [latest issue of BSBI News](#), the first under Andrew Branson's editorship; and a note about the [launch of Byron's Gin](#).

[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 let me know if you wish to unsubscribe or amend your email. 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 Scottish Officer