

BSBI eNews – October 2018

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

BSBI English Officer

My job title has now changed to full-time English Officer for the BSBI. I'm excited about being able to spend more time assisting VCRs in England, and I'd love to hear how you'd like to use me, both in the run-up to the completion of the atlas, and post-atlas (only a year and a bit to go!). I'll also be co-leading work on the online atlas until its completion, so if you have any questions about this, and how I can help (dare I mention the dreaded 'validation?'), please get in touch. I plan to visit and chat with as many of you as possible over the next 12 months, starting with this month's [Recorders' Conference](#) in Shrewsbury, and I'll try and live up to the high standards that Jim, Maria, Paul and Polly have set.

[Pete Stroh](#), BSBI England officer

BSBI Welsh Officer

We recently interviewed for a new Welsh Officer, offered the job to the successful candidate and will make an announcement shortly.

[Jane Houldsworth](#), BSBI Head of Operations

Autumn Recording

Many recorders stop recording in October for winter. To be fair, it does become more of a challenge - especially in the north - with shorter days, poorer light and poorer weather and with plants past their best. However, many species can still be identified and usefully recorded well into winter. A different approach is required, where you don't spend too much time trying to identify specimens that are too far gone but watch out for fresher specimens – or habitats where they are more likely. The Vegetative Key can also be very useful when you are not 100% sure. It's a useful exercise to improve your vegetative ID skills and 'keep your hand in' over the winter – as well as plugging gaps in your Atlas coverage. Besides, there nothing better for the soul than to get out recording on a nice autumn day!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Keeping on top of validation

The good news is that twice as many 2018 records on the BSBI Database (DDb) have been validated compared with 2017 records at this point last year. The bad news? That's still only 15% of the total number of 2018 records! Validating records that you have just sent to the DDb is highly recommended. The great advantage of doing so is that - even if you have a big validation backlog - it won't get any bigger! It also has the advantage that if queries arise, you are more likely to remember the answers. Here is some [simple guidance](#) on how to go about it (on just two sides of A4).

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Happy Recorders!

In the above piece and in other articles that appear in BSBI *eNews* from time to time, we have light-heartedly and gently nagged. Can I take this opportunity to say that we certainly do not want to inadvertently stress out County Recorders? We realise that there is only so much recorders can do in the time available to them and we are enormously appreciative for the huge contribution our key volunteers – the County Recorders – make to the society. Perhaps we don't say that enough. The last thing we want is unhappy, stressed-out recorders – we want recorders to feel valued and to enjoy their volunteering. So, please let your Country Officer know if you are struggling or need help with any aspect. We can't promise to have all the answers but it is always good to talk!

Specifically, on validation, which can seem pretty daunting especially if you have yet to make a start, do remember that [Andy Amphlett](#) has very kindly offered to help any recorder.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

***Fumaria muralis* - records of rare subspecies**

Fumaria muralis (Common Ramping-fumitory) has three subspecies; *boraei*, *muralis* and *neglecta*. Subspecies *boraei* is the widespread taxon. Subsp. *muralis* & *neglecta* are rare; Stace (3rd edition) says they have not been confirmed for more than 50 years. Murphy (BSBI Fumitories Handbook) says that subsp. *muralis* has not been recorded since 1939 (Devon) and that subsp. *neglecta* was only found in Cornwall and may be extinct. Both the rare subspecies appear to have been incorrectly recorded elsewhere.

I noticed that there were records for subsp. *muralis* from 4 hectads in vc96, all dated 1975. These are not listed in McCallum Webster's Flora (published 1978). The error appears to have resulted from incorrect coding of the RP1 August 1968 recording card, on which *Fumar mur* is given the code 851, but that code refers to subsp. *muralis*. The code for *Fumaria muralis* is 850 and that for subsp. *boraei* is 846, neither of which was listed on that recording card.

The DDb has records of subsp. *muralis* from vcs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 36, 37, 39, 40, 46, 58, 59, 60, 75, 78, 80, 82, 85, 87, 88, 90, 100, 106 and H15. Away from SW England, these records should be investigated. The vc96 records have been corrected to *F. muralis*.

There are also records of subsp. *neglecta* from vcs 58, 77 and H1 that are outside its known range and may be errors.

[Andy Amphlett](#), BSBI Recorder Banffs.

***Acaena ovalifolia* and possible ID errors depending on which Flora is used**

It is likely that all County Recorders and many keen and active recorders, will have access to at least one edition of Stace's Flora. But it is highly likely that other contributors to Atlas 2020 will not. Most likely they will be using Rose (2nd edition 2006) or Streeter (2009). Obviously these two Floras are not as comprehensive as 'Stace'.

Recently I was looking at *Acaena ovalifolia* (Two-spined *Acaena*) in vc96, the only *Acaena* sp. recorded from this vc. I noticed that it was not included in either of the editions of Rose or in Streeter. Yet it is now the second most widespread species in this genus in Britain and Ireland:

Taxon	Hectads (post 1999)	Rose (1981)	Rose (2006)	Streeter (2009)
<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	182		Yes	Yes
<i>Acaena ovalifolia</i>	103			
<i>Acaena anserinifolia</i>	41	Yes		Yes
<i>Acaena inermis</i>	22			

Table. The four most widespread *Acaena* species (post 1999). From DDb 27/9/2018

It seems quite possible that *A. ovalifolia* could be being misidentified as one of the other two widespread species, if recorders are only using Rose or Streeter as their ID guide. Note that the single species of *Acaena* included in Rose differs between the two editions. The distribution map for *A. ovalifolia* is at <http://bsbi.org/maps?taxonid=2cd4p9h.wa4>.

County Recorders should be aware of similar potential issues in their VCs, and of which ID guides / Floras contributors of records are using.

[Andy Amphlett](#), BSBI Recorder Banffs.

Field Meetings

Thank you to all those who have organised field meetings during 2018. Thank you also to all those who have participated. I know that these have made a big contribution to Atlas 2020 recording. The programme of [national field meetings](#) has drawn to a close, although there are still quite a few meetings taking place in October. If you did organise a national meeting and have not yet sent in a report for the Yearbook, please send it to [Trevor James](#) with a copy to me as soon as possible. Guidance for the reports is given in [Leading BSBI Field Meetings](#).

Now is the time to start planning meetings for 2019, the final year of Atlas 2020 recording. With the [Exhibition Meeting](#) taking place a week earlier than usual (see note below), my deadline for outline details comes forward to early November, so that I can prepare a summary sheet for the AEM. For this all I need is the provisional date and location. I will need full details for the Yearbook by the end of November. [Leading BSBI Field Meetings](#) gives guidance on these adverts so it is worth taking a look. The Guidance suggests about 100 words for a one-day meeting and 150 for a longer meeting. Longer notices can appear on the web page, but I will edit down over-long submissions for the Yearbook.

I look forward to meeting you at the Recorders Conference in October or at the AEM in November.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

Indoor Meetings

Meeting	Date(s)	Venue	Comments
Recorders' Conference	12-14 October	FSC Preston Montford, Shrewsbury	All residential spaces are now fully booked.
Scottish Botanists' Conference (the new name for the Scottish Annual Meeting)	3 November	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh	Book now! Flyer with September <i>BSBI News</i>
Annual Exhibition Meeting	17 November	Edge Hill University, Ormskirk (just north of Liverpool)	Book now! Flyer with September <i>BSBI News</i>

Scottish Botanists' Conference 2018

This year's Scottish Botanists' Conference - the new name for the BSBI / BSS Scottish Annual Meeting - will take place on Saturday 3rd November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Our main speaker this year is Professor Richard Ennos, University of Edinburgh, who will give a thoughtful and thought-provoking talk on tree pathogens, which is apt just as Ash die-back is becoming so evident.

We expect to have another great exhibition, a full programme of interesting short botanical talks and a great selection of ID mini-workshops. This year's mini-workshop topics include introduction to grasses, horsetails, conifers, The Vegetative Key and the BSBI Database. There are also workshops on English, Sessile and hybrid Oaks and separating difficult species-pairs in the herbarium. It's going to be another action-packed day! Full details on the [Scottish Conferences](#) page or go direct to the [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) page.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting 2018

Details of this year's BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting (AEM) are now available [on the website](#), there's an [online booking form](#) and a flyer went out with the latest issue of *BSBI News*, which all members should have received by now. The AEM takes place on Saturday 17th November and in response to requests from members in the north of England, the AEM is being held in Lancashire this year, at Edge Hill University (EHU), where a new Plant Science degree has just been launched. The programme features a morning of botanical talks from alumni of EHU's Biology degree course, followed by an afternoon of talks by BSBI staff and officers, including Kevin Walker on Atlas 2020. We'll also have the usual array of exhibits, book-sellers, the AGM... so we hope to see you all there.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

The BSBI Ireland Autumn Meeting 2018

A good number of VCRs and members came along for the [BSBI Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM](#) at the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin on the 22 September. The opening talk from Úna Fitzpatrick of the National Biodiversity Data Centre on her rare plant monitoring scheme was very well received, with many questions and comments afterwards. It certainly piqued interest, and I'm sure she'll gain more participants! There then followed three presentations from BSBI members and VCRs, reporting back on events they had attended during the year: Edwina Cole on the two-day charophyte course, Cliona Byrne on some 'rough crew' island adventures and Eamonn Delaney on the Mayo Recording Event. Paul Green talked us through recent updates (and there are lots) on Atriplex around the Irish coast, and brought an excellent array of labelled samples for participants to examine (he even labelled and grouped bracteole types – very useful!). After lunch the AGM was held, and remarkably, finished an hour early! A good sign of a busy and productive time for BSBI in Ireland!

[Maria Long](#), BSBI Irish Officer

BSBI Photographic Competition 2018



Remember to take your camera when you are out and about this autumn and use it to take photographs that you could enter in the 2018 BSBI Photographic Competition. It has two categories: 1) Plants and People and 2) Plants and Pollinators. The competition entries will be displayed and judged at the Scottish Annual Meeting and also displayed at the Annual Exhibition Meeting. [More...](#)

Field Pansy (*Viola arvensis*), Maxstoke, West Midlands by Kate Gold. A 2017 entry.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

On the News & Views blog in September

We reported on [hunting urban plants in the north of Scotland](#) and on [BSBI excursions in the Dublin area](#); we shared [comments from the BSBI President and the Head of Science](#) about The People's Walk for Wildlife in London, which attracted c10,000 participants; we told you about an article on BSBI written by BSBI Scientific Officer Pete Stroh and Irish Officer Maria Long and [published in the latest issue of Irish Wildlife magazine](#); and there is a report on [Rod Corner's visit to the grounds of a historic house](#) in the Scottish Borders and a plant that Sir Walter Scott liked. This month's post about BSBI training grants focused on the [limestone flora course Julie and Sharon were able to attend](#) thanks to their grant; and this month's post about Byron's Gin looked at [Andy and Sandy, the masterminds behind the gin](#). Finally, a post on the final day of September alerted people to the [imminent publication of the September issue of BSBI News](#) and some of the delights we can expect to find in it.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI membership

If you are not already a BSBI member, this is a great time to join and if you are, this is a great time to suggest to friends and colleagues that they might like to join! That's because if you join BSBI in October, your membership starts at once, so you effectively get 15 months of membership benefits for the cost of 12 months. [Find out more about those benefits](#), and the membership special offer, and please forward the link to anyone you can think of who might like to join.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

BSBI eNews is aimed at all BSBI recorders, referees and members involved with recording. 240 of the 306 regular BSBI eNews recipients have now opted in to continue to receive their monthly news email. This includes many who took the opportunity to update their email addresses. Thank you very much indeed. Remember you can update your contact details or unsubscribe at any time.

If you are reading this online, or perhaps because it was forwarded to you, and are one of the County Recorders or Referees who did not sign up - you can do so via a link on the [BSBI Publications](#) page at any time. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest to fellow readers. BSBI eNews is generally published on the 1st of each month so contributions should reach me by the 21st of the preceding month. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles in BSBI eNews.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer