



Scottish Officer's Report for 2021

General Recording

Square bashing continues to be popular even after Atlas 2020. An amazing 167,500 general records were made in 2021, digitised and uploaded to the BSBI Database. Some vice-counties have truly excelled. We've never had so many records in one year from either Dunbartonshire or Renfrewshire – thanks to Michael Philip and his local recording networks; nor from Dumfriesshire – thanks to Chris Miles and the Dumfries Local Botany Group. There has been an amazing recording effort in the two vacant vice-counties; by local member Anne Burgess in Banff and by neighbouring recorders and local members in Midlothian. At least three vice-counties have done a lot of field work, but for one reason or another their records haven't reached the BSBI Database (yet).

The trend to record at 1km resolution continues – with nearly all (99.4%) Scottish recording now at that resolution or better. Perhaps, even more surprisingly, one third of all Scottish records are at 100m resolution or better. Thanks are due to everyone who has contributed to this splendid recording effort.

Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project (SHARPP)

Several recorders participated in a trial of the new SHARPP project that launched in 2021 with a [SHARPP project page](#) and a talk at the [Scottish Spring Conference](#). The project is a sort of rare plant treasure hunt that aims to refind rare species not seen since before 2000 (despite all the effort that went into [Atlas 2020](#)) and make detailed records of them.

We sent out a feedback form to gauge the level of uptake and how it had gone. Generally, recorders found it very enjoyable even if the refind rate was only about 50%, or lower in more thoroughly recorded counties. But even when the target species weren't found, plenty of other nice records were made in lovely habitats. I still have to digitise the recording cards that were sent in. I plan to promote the project at this year's [Spring Conference](#) with a talk that will enthuse people just in time for the field season! Thank you to everyone who participated in 2021.

Urban Flora Project

The [Urban Flora Project](#) was developed by our sister society, the Botanical Society of Scotland, six years ago when BSBI members were pre-occupied with Atlas 2020. However, with Atlas fieldwork finished, we were keen to promote recording in this important and rather neglected habitat. So, we launched an initiative to promote the project to BSBI members in Scotland in June 2021.

Since then, several recorders have got involved including, most notably, Michael Philip. He has organised lots of great urban recording with his local networks in 12 large west central towns such as Greenock, Airdrie, Wishaw, Renfrew and Helensburgh. Consequently some 2,500 Urban Flora project records were digitised for an area where there had always been a major gap in the project's coverage.

Training

We held two online training workshops for beginners in 2021; one on Identifying Wildflower Families, led by Aileen Meek and the other on Grass ID, led by Matt Parratt. We tried to make the grass workshop as interactive as possible by sending out grass specimens in advance for participants to work on during the workshop. We also gave participants homework - to collect and identify six grasses and send them with their identifications to us. Both workshops were recorded and uploaded to the [BSBI's YouTube Plant ID Training playlist](#) where they have now been viewed over 1800 and 1330 times respectively, and are amongst the most "liked" of all the videos we have on YouTube.

We included two more advanced workshops in the [Scottish Botanists Conference](#) programme; one on [Polypody Fern ID](#) by Rob Cooke and the other on [Larch ID](#) by Matt Parratt. Again, the videos have been subsequently viewed by many more people than actually viewed them live.

In late 2021 we developed plans for three beginners' training workshops in 2022; [Grasses by Michael Philip](#), [Sedges & Rushes by Chris Miles](#) and [Yellow Composites by Faith Anstey](#). Booking pages have been set up and the events advertised. Please encourage anyone who might be interested to book. Many thanks to everyone who was involved with training in 2021 and who will be involved in 2022.

Scottish Spring Conference

130 people participated in the online [Scottish Spring Conference](#) in March. Analysis of the feedback shows that people particularly enjoyed the talk on the restoration of Carrifran Wildwood and Alan Walker's beautifully illustrated talk on Mountain Flowers. All the talks were recorded, edited and uploaded to the [Scottish Spring Conference playlist](#).

Scottish Botanists' Conference

A record 282 people participated in the online annual Scottish Botanists Conference in 2021 and we had great feedback on the conference such as "all the talks were of such a high standard: as good as one would expect at any international scientific meeting" and "you did well to make us feel we were in the room; it was one of the best online events I have participated in". A major theme was National Nature Reserves: Ian Sargent and Sarah Watts gave very popular talks on, respectively, the plants and habitats of Beinn Eighe NNR to mark its designation 70 years ago, and on 40 years of rare plant monitoring on Ben Lawers NNR. The talks and online exhibition can still be viewed on the [Scottish Botanists Conference](#) site. Many thanks to everyone who contributed and participated.

2021 VC Annual Reports

Almost every Scottish vice-county submitted a 2021 Annual Report – mainly using the new system that enables County Recorders to directly upload their own reports and include photographs. They were collated and published in the Scottish Newsletter and will appear on County webpages. Take a look! I am always *really* impressed by the range of botanical endeavour and achievements. Although I thanked all contributors individually, I would like to reiterate my thanks for the splendid effort by BSBI County Recorders and members in Scotland in 2021!

Scottish Newsletter

Angus Hannah produced another great BSBI Scottish Newsletter in 2021, thanks to all contributors. It returned to a printed publication after lockdown disrupted printing and distribution in 2020. You can see it and all back issues on the [Scottish Newsletter page](#).

Thanks

Thanks are due to all the BSBI recorders, members, volunteers and supporters who contributed to the BSBI's work Scotland in 2021. In particular, we are very grateful to NatureScot (SNH) and RBGE who continue to support the BSBI in Scotland.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer, February 2022