



Recorder eNewsletter

- *for the botanical recording community*

August 2023

New BSBI recording app

I'm glad to report that we have begun testing BSBI's new recording software. The new tool is intended to allow efficient entry of recent field records. It can be used as a mobile app in the field or as a webpage. Although the software is still at an early stage of development, initial feedback has been encouraging. Thanks to a stream of bug reports and suggestions, improvements are being made rapidly.

Everyone who signed up as a tester last year has been invited to try out the new software and, from this point onwards, I hope to expand the pool of users rapidly. If you are interested in testing the app, please [sign-up here](#).

[Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

Introducing our new Ireland Officer

Following the retirement of Paul Green, we have appointed [Bridget Keehan](#) as his successor as Ireland Officer. Bridget previously worked as a Senior Ecologist - Botany Lead for Woodrow Environmental Consultants. She is based in Leitrim but will travel across Ireland and will also spend some workdays at the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, Dublin.

Paul has not entirely left us yet – he is still County Recorder for [Co. Wexford](#) and he is staying on with BSBI until October as the Targeted Aquatic Plant Project Manager and so you may see him if you attend [one of those events](#).

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Support Manager

Data Support Officer

I'm delighted that James Drever will join BSBI as our Data Support Officer on 14th August. James will work alongside Tom Humphrey, Database Officer (DO) and other BSBI staff to increase our capacity to support recorders and improve data management and dataflows. Alongside this new post a more detailed data plan has been developed, which sets out our priorities in terms of data management and how these will be achieved over the 2-year period of the post.

James has a wealth of experience in IT, web development and data management, having spent 15 years as the Head of Digital at Field Studies Council. Since 2017 James has also run

his own IT company (Careful Digital) and he set up and maintains the [Shropshire Botanical Society website](#). He is looking forward to meeting members and providing guidance and training for our recording network, as well as supporting us in developing our data infrastructure.

[Kevin Walker](#), BSBI Head of Science

New DAERA-funded project in Northern Ireland

We are delighted that BSBI has been [awarded funding](#) to grow botanical skills and evidence for nature recovery in Northern Ireland, thanks to funding from DAERA's Environment Fund. The project will work to support botanical training, recording and monitoring activities over five years, 2023-2028.

We will work closely with DAERA, CEDaR and our NPMS partners (BSBI, Plantlife, JNCC and UKCEH) as well as landowners and other organisations to ensure there are the necessary botanical skills and evidence to underpin nature recovery in Northern Ireland.

We are [currently advertising for a Botanical Skills Officer](#) who will organise training and events to encourage plant identification and recording, as well as working to increase participation in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS). Please spread the word of [this role](#) to anyone you think may be interested.

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Support Manager

Consultation on BSBI Science Strategy - please remember to take part!

As you may have heard, the BSBI will be publishing a new Science Strategy later this year. To help develop this we are consulting with all our members, VCRs, referees and key partners to gain feedback on what scientific work we should focus on in the years ahead. Anyone who would like to contribute can do so via the online consultation that is [available here](#). This sets out the BSBI's current thinking on future BSBI science and includes 10 questions which we would value members' and partners' feedback on. This consultation should take no more than 15 minutes to complete, and we'd encourage as many members to take part as possible as your responses will help us to set a clear agenda. Please note that the consultation will close at noon on Monday 21st August 2023.

[Kevin Walker](#), BSBI Head of Science

Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project (SHARPP)

A reminder to Scottish VCRs about [SHARPP](#). If you haven't already, check out this [SHARPP DDb search](#) for your vice-county (just click the link then change the vice-county from 86 to yours). This is a brilliant way to highlight plants of conservation concern in your vice-county that haven't been seen in a hectad since pre-2000 and is a useful tool to help plan and target your fieldwork.

(Note to non-Scottish VCRs: the search will work for your vice-county as well; why not try it and see what you get?)

When entering your SHARPP records via MapMate, please remember to include the word 'SHARPP' in the Notes/Comments field! This will allow us to search for SHARPP records in the DDb. Some guidance on how to tag SHARPP records already in the DDb but not identified as 'SHARPP' records will be shared soon.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Rare Plant Registers

I know many VCRs are working on projects such as County [Rare Plant Registers](#) (RPRs), which is fantastic! However, if you are like me and have a draft list sitting on your computer, some way from the finished article, this can still be shared on the DDb to help you and others botanise within your vice-county. Having that draft on the DDb will help target searches for locally important taxa, and feed into other recording projects.

To upload a draft RPR to the DDb, all that is needed is a list of taxa and their local designation in a spreadsheet format. Send that to your BSBI Country Officer, who can upload it to the DDb for you. Once your list is updated or finalised, we can upload the new version which will overwrite the existing draft. Visit the [Checklists](#) area of the DDb to view the current vice-county RPR lists.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Upcoming recording and training meetings

In the next few weeks, we'll be holding BSBI recording meetings in [Middlesex](#), [Essex](#) and [Co. Limerick](#); the [Wales Annual Meeting](#) with excursions to local sites of botanical interest; and there are training meetings happening in [Perthshire](#), [Lanarkshire](#) and [Co. Wexford](#) – the latter is a specialised day looking at the *Dryopteris affinis* group.

If you haven't made it to a national BSBI field meeting so far this year, why not take a look at the [Field Meetings and Indoor Events page](#)? And if you know any beginner botanists, why not forward them links to any of the meetings marked 'Beginners' or 'General'? What better way to sharpen your ID skills than in the company of friendly BSBI botanists!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Upcoming NPMS events

There are a number of habitat-specific [NPMS talks](#) coming up over the next few months, including [Spectacular Saltmarshes](#) by the wonderful Joshua Styles. If you haven't set up your NPMS square yet, or if you have recorders in your county that are looking to get started, then

there is an introduction to NPMS and the survey methodology in early November that you can [book onto now](#).

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Support Manager

New BSBI Health and Safety Policy

Your health and safety is very important to us as you undertake activities for BSBI, such as field meetings and recording. We have recently developed a new Health and Safety Policy. This includes information about risk assessments and accident reporting. If you have any questions or would like support with H&S or risk assessments, please contact me.

[Julia Hanmer](#), BSBI Chief Executive

Access to RHS resources

Interest in horticultural plants - especially those which become naturalised in the wild - has never been higher among botanical recorders, especially since [Plant Atlas 2020](#) showed that [more than 50% of the taxa recorded in the wild are actually non-natives](#). Did you know that BSBI members carrying out research into horticultural taxa can request free access to the vast resources of the Royal Horticultural Society? Anyone can drop in and access the modern collections held at the Lindley Library in London but, if you want to view the reference collection, access the rare books or check out the botanical art collection, you need to register as a researcher – and BSBI members are now invited to do just that. There are also some interesting RHS events coming up, one of which is led by a BSBI County Recorder! Find out more [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Recorder eNewsletter

Recorder eNewsletter is aimed at all BSBI recorders, referees, members and supporters involved with recording. If you have active recorders in your county that you think would appreciate receiving it then please encourage them to [subscribe to it here](#).

I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest to fellow readers. Recorder eNewsletter is generally published at the beginning of each month so contributions should reach me at the beginning of the preceding week. I'd also be pleased to have feedback.

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries Support Manager