



## Recorder eNewsletter

*for the botanical recording community*

February 2024

### **Thank you for your Annual Reports**

Thank you to everyone who has submitted their Annual Report for 2023. They always make fascinating reading, demonstrating a tremendous range of events and activities as well as some surprising and intriguing plant records.

If you didn't manage to submit your report by the deadline, you can still email a copy to your Country Officer or me and we will make sure they are added.

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

### **Recruitment for an England Officer**

BSBI has recently received funding to support our work in England; supporting VCRs, increasing participation in structured surveys, and improving data flow. To do this, we are planning to recruit an England Officer for a one-year pilot project.

We are looking for someone with strong people, communication and project management skills along with experience in field botany, biological recording and training delivery.

The job is advertised [on our website here](#) and the closing date is 11th February. Please share this role with anyone you think might be interested.

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

### **New Year Plant Hunt 2023**

Our thirteenth [New Year Plant Hunt](#) ran from 30th December 2023 to 2nd January 2024 and was a huge success! We hit a new record for participation: 3,336 people took part, almost double last year's total, and many of the participants were non-members and had never attended a BSBI event before. Huge thanks to all the seasoned recorders who led group hunts and supported all those new participants. The lists of surveys and species found can be viewed on the [2024 results page](#). You can read an in-depth analysis of the results [here](#) or take a look at the [summary/press release](#) which went out to our media contacts.

Data from the Plant Hunt is included in BSBI's database in a separate workspace, but Recorders can opt to transfer Plant Hunt records into the main DDb if they wish, so please don't re-enter lists in MapMate etc.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

### **BSBI Science Strategy – update**

As many of you will know, we've been busy working on a [new Science Strategy](#) to direct our work over the next five years (2024-2029). This is now complete and so we are now in the process of developing several new science projects. Those in the 'pipeline' cover a range of topics including phenology, aquatics, summit floras, local change, priority species and plant pathogens. We clearly can't do them all straight away and so in 2024 we will be focussing on a couple only, running pilots, testing methods, and starting to fundraise. Others are much longer term and will require more time to develop.

We will be in touch with more details soon but in the meantime, if you have any questions about the Science Strategy then please drop me a line at [kevin.walker@bsbi.org](mailto:kevin.walker@bsbi.org)

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

### **Request for surveyors for NPMS squares in Northern Ireland**

Are you, or do you know, someone who would be interested in surveying NPMS squares in more remote and/or less accessible areas of Northern Ireland?

We need several folk able and willing to set up and survey seven NPMS squares starting in February 2024 and on a rolling basis

This is contract work and surveyors would be paid a daily fee and expenses.

The seven squares are situated in Counties Armagh, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Derry/Londonderry and Antrim and are in upland and/or more remote areas.

If you would be interested in this yourself, or know someone who might be, [please contact me](#) at your earliest convenience.

[Jen Farrar](#), Botanical Skills Officer Northern Ireland

## **Last chance to apply for a BSBI grant!**

The window to apply for a BSBI grant in 2024 closes on 31st January, so it's not too late for you to apply - but you'll need to hurry!

If you're a PhD student, an academic researcher or an amateur botanist working on research that could result in a scientific publication which would enhance our knowledge of the British and Irish flora, why not apply for one of our [grants for science and research](#)?

If you're an undergrad or postgrad who would appreciate up to £1000 to help you carry out study into a particular plant or plant group, then why not apply for one of our [grants for plant study](#)?

All the forms and guidance can be found on our [grants page](#), where we also share links to any other sources of grant funding that we know about. So please apply before the deadline and remember, you don't have to be a BSBI member to apply for either of these grants so please spread the word around your networks.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

## **Kintyre: looking for a new Vice-county Recorder!**

The vice-county of [Kintyre](#) is one of Scotland's hidden gems, consisting of the peninsula of Kintyre and the area of Knapdale to the north, along with the isles of Gigha and Cara lying off the west coast. Although a relatively small vice-county, Kintyre supports a superb range of flora including rarities such as *Oxytropis campestris* (Yellow Oxytropis) and *Lathyrus palustris* (Marsh Pea), and other specialities such as *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid), *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's-tresses) and *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine). You can enjoy coastal, woodland, wetland and moorland plants in close proximity, and there is plenty of potential for exploratory botany and new discoveries!

Dave and Pat Batty, the current Recorders, are looking to retire after an amazing 25 years in the role, studying and recording Kintyre's remarkable flora. If you are interested in becoming Kintyre's new Vice-county Recorder(s) please [get in touch](#).

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

## **Aquatic Plant Project ID Workshops - February 2024**

As part of the Aquatic Plant Project programme, Nick Stewart will be leading two workshops on Aquatic Plant identification on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th February, in the Praeger Room, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. All are welcome, although numbers are limited to 12 on each day. Different taxa will be covered each day, so you can attend on both days if you wish (you will need to book separately for each day, however). By kind permission of Herbarium staff, herbarium specimens will be used to demonstrate key features of the taxa to be covered. For more information, and to book your place, visit the [Aquatic Plant Project page](#) of the BSBI website

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

## **Botanical Networks in Ireland**

Those who attended the 2023 Irish Autumn Meeting will remember that one of our talks was by Michael Philip, County Recorder for [Dunbartonshire](#) and joint County Recorder for [Lanarkshire](#), on the subject of establishing 'Botanical Networks' to assist in botanical recording. Michael has pioneered this approach in Scotland with great success - if you haven't already heard it, I would definitely recommend that you give his talk ([available here](#)) a listen, even if just to hear about his experiences and all he has achieved in his area since becoming VCR, in spite of initially feeling quite daunted by the role.

Michael has kindly offered to come to Ireland this spring to provide mentoring and advice to anyone interested in setting up such a network, either now or in the future. If you think that developing a loose botanical network is something that you, or someone in your county, might be interested in, or you would like to be involved in the network that Jen Farrar, NI Botanical Skills Office, is setting up in the North of Ireland, then please do [get in touch with me](#) so that we can make plans accordingly, or [email Jen directly](#).

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

## **Ireland: Writers wanted!**

British Wildlife magazine is looking for someone to write the occasional report on plants in Ireland (around 1,200 words in length), for inclusion in the 'Wildlife Reports' section of the magazine. These would typically provide roundups of news (notable records, recent research, interesting observations etc) on different taxonomic groups, once or twice a year, and a small fee is payable to the author. If you are interested, please [contact me](#) for more information.

We are also currently seeking a volunteer to put together the Ireland Country Roundup for future editions of BSBI News. This can be a really pleasant task, collating and highlighting the best finds of the season, capturing recorders' delight in the unexpected, even recounting the trials and tribulations of plant hunting! If this sounds like something you'd enjoy, please [get in touch](#) - your help and expertise would be much appreciated.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

### **Building capacity for delivery of FISCs across the UK: can you help?**

[Field Identification Skills Certificates](#) (FISCs), as an established standard for assessing field botanical skills, are becoming more and more popular and we have over 200 potential candidates on the BSBI waiting list for 2024. In order to deliver FISCs, we need to recruit for a number of roles, as well as identify suitable locations from which FISCs can be run.

If you are interested in helping, either as an experienced botanist running a FISC; someone who grows a selection of native plants which you may be willing to share for FISC lab tests; someone able to provide a venue from which a FISC can be run, or as an owner or manager of a suitable species-rich field site which could be surveyed as part of a FISC, BSBI would like to hear from you. You can contact us on [fisc@bsbi.org](mailto:fisc@bsbi.org).

In order to build capacity for delivery of FISCs to meet increasing demand, BSBI is running a FISC information event via Zoom on 21 February 2024. The session aims to explain what the various FISC roles entail and the process of applying to become a FISC Assessor or Gold Standard surveyor. It will be for anyone with the requisite skills or anyone aspiring to this level, who may be interested in becoming part of a specialist team delivering FISC assessments across the UK.

If you are interested, or know someone in your network who may be interested, please [sign up using this link](#).

[Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

### **British & Irish Botany 5.3 published**

The latest issue of our open access scientific journal was published at the end of 2023; it features six papers of interest to botanical recorders. This was the final issue under the editorship of Prof Ian Denholm who helped set up the journal and has led it through its first five years. Read Ian's summary of his final issue [here](#) or go straight to the journal website to [read the papers in full](#). Watch this space, for news about the new Editor-in-Chief!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

### **2024 Irish Spring Conference**

We are delighted to announce that the [Irish Spring Conference](#) will be held this year on **Saturday 20th April**, at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. The full conference programme and link to the booking page will be posted on the website nearer the time, so watch this space for updates!

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

### **Yearbook 2024**

The 2024 Yearbook should soon be landing on your doormat (if you are a BSBI member - if not you can [join here](#)!). Thanks to all who have provided reports of meetings held last year and who will be leading meetings this year. In parallel with the printed Yearbook there is a digital version in the members' area, which has enabled links to URLs and email addresses. The individual meetings will also be listed soon on the [field meetings and indoor events page](#).

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

### **Upcoming events**

Two major events are the [Recorders' Meeting](#) at Preston Montford from 19 – 21 April and the [Annual Summer Meeting](#) in Guernsey from 20 – 24 May. The Recorders' Meeting is for all those that do, or would like to, make records for the BSBI. It is both a learning experience and a social occasion. The same is true for the Summer Meeting, which will introduce new species to many people. Booking for both is now live.

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

## **Please check your car insurance**

Please can vice-county recorders check that your car insurance policy covers the use of your vehicle for BSBI activities - including, for example, driving off the public highway, where you have landowner permission (if required). This is because the use of a vehicle is not covered under BSBI's public liability insurance policy.

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

## **Grouping records by grid-square in the DDb – how to include empty squares**

When planning your recording it can be very helpful to group records by monad (or another grid-square unit) to see where the gaps in recording effort are. However, empty grid-squares are not automatically returned by the standard grouping search. There is an easy fix!

- 1) First group records by grid-square (e.g. monad):
- 2) Set your area of interest (e.g. vice-county)
- 3) Set up the 'group by' option by clicking the 'more options' button, then: grouping > group by

Click the button by the 'group by' option that has appeared, then: localities > monad (or your preferred unit)

This groups the records by monad. To then include empty monads in your search return do as follows:

- 4) Click the 'more options' button again, then: grouping > include empty grid-squares
- 5) Your search page will then show a 'group by' option set to your chosen unit (e.g. monad), and underneath it an 'include empty grid squares' option with a checkbox ticked

Running the search now will return records from your area of interest (e.g. vice-county), grouped by grid-square but also listing those grid-squares with no records. [Here is an example, set to Stirlingshire and grouping records by monad \(including blank squares\).](#)

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

### ***Nuphar lutea x advena* = *N. x porphyranthera* Lansdown & Ruhsam**

In a [recently published paper](#), Lansdown and Ruhsam have re-determined almost all extant populations of *Nuphar advena* (Spatter-dock) as the previously undescribed hybrid *Nuphar lutea x advena* = *N. x porphyranthera*. The only confirmed location for *N. advena* is Spottiswoode Loch (vc81). Table 1 in their paper lists locations from which they have determined material as the hybrid. Records of *N. advena* from these localities should be edited on the DDb to the hybrid. If there are reported locations for *N. advena* not mentioned in the paper, they should be marked on the DDb as 'needs checking'.

[Andy Amphlett](#), VCR for Easternness, 96

### **Norwegian willows**

**Elven, R. & Fremstad, E. 2018. *Salix* – vier, selje og pil i Norge. (The genus *Salix* (willows) in Norway.) *Gunneria* 82. 715 pp.**

This very detailed and copiously illustrated account of all the willow species (and many hybrids) found in Norway was published in 2018 by the NTNU University Museum at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, in their open access online journal *Gunneria*. It can be [downloaded here](#).

While the text is in Norwegian, the captions for the photographs are also in English, and Google translate does a good job of translating where required. All the British and Irish native species are included, and coverage is very thorough. For example there are 32 photographs of *Salix caprea* subsp. *caprea* and 20 photographs of *S. caprea* subsp. *sphacelata*. The volume also includes detailed discussion of the ecology and habitats of willows in Norway.

[Andy Amphlett](#), VCR for Easternness, 96

### **England Annual Meeting**

The [England Annual Meeting](#) will take place via Zoom on February 25, starting at 2pm, and will include the AGM, several short talks, a keynote talk on the biological control of alien species, and the Chair's address on What and where I record (not just plants). If you are interested in helping on the Committee for England there are plenty of possibilities. We could do with a secretary to take notes, an editor for the bulletin and would particularly welcome members who can help with social media.

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



## Upcoming UK NPMS events

On the 1st February there is an [Introduction to NPMS and survey methodology](#) - perfect for those interested in getting involved with NPMS.

Or, if you fancy something a bit different, there is an [online watercolour workshop](#) on the 21st February.

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

## County Membership Lists

If, as a BSBI volunteer such as a County Recorder, you need access to members' contact details in your area, we can arrange this. We will need you to read and sign our Volunteer Confidentiality and Data Protection Agreement. For more information see [Membership List – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland](#)

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

## 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