



Recorder eNewsletter

for the botanical recording community

June 2024

BSBI Wales Officer (Priority Plants Project)

I am delighted to announce that we have recruited Alastair Hotchkiss for the position of BSBI Wales Officer (Priority Plants Project).

Alastair is an experienced ecologist who lives with his family in Montgomeryshire, Mid-Wales. He has worked on protected sites in Powys for CCW and NRW, and as a specialist adviser for the Woodland Trust across the UK. He loves looking for plants and looking at dot maps and has many wider natural history interests including lichens (on trees mainly!). His first role was at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and he is excited to focus his work on plants across Wales again. He is also looking forward to meeting BSBI members throughout Wales and aiming to attend the [Wales Annual Meeting & AGM](#) in July - so please come and say hello/S'mae.

This 4-days-a-week role runs until March 2026 and focuses specifically on the delivery of the Priority Plants Project funded by the Nature Networks Programme, which will involve working with volunteer botanical recorders to survey and assess individual plant special features on SSSIs in Wales in order to improve evidence of their condition and determine future management.

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

BSBI Documentation Website

The brand-new [BSBI Documentation website](#) is probably now the most useful place to check when you have a question relating to the DDb, the Recording App, MapMate or data more generally. It is constantly being updated with new pages and responses to queries, and is worth exploring whether you have a question or not. In future, if you have a problem with any of the above areas, then these pages are worth checking in the first instance. Thanks to James Drever, BSBI Data Support Officer, for creating this masterpiece!

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

The easiest ever way to make a Vice-County Checklist

It's a grand claim but we think we've cracked it. Thanks to the efforts of Matt Harding, James Drever and Tom Humphrey, we have come up with a way to make a VC checklist with a single DDb search. This search can be found on [our guidance pages here](#). If you use it to make a county checklist, then please contact your Country Officer about getting this added to your county page.

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

The Aquatic Plant Project is back

The Aquatic Plant Project is back again in Ireland. We now have a selection of training days and rare plant surveys in several counties across Ireland, available to [book here](#). Nick Stewart is once more giving a webinar, this time on the identification of [aquatic plants with floating leaves](#). For more information please visit the [Aquatic Plant Project webpage](#).

The first of our Targeted Aquatic Plant Project field days will be held on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 June, at [Curragh Chase Forest Park](#), Co Limerick. These will be led by Aquatic expert Nick Stewart, with TAPP Manager Paul Green and Olly Lynch Milner, VCR for [Co. Limerick](#). These promise to be two fantastic days, with an emphasis on learning more about aquatic plants, along with some recording of aquatic species. You can book either or both days [here](#), but do it soon, as these events are always popular and places are limited! This event is free of charge, thanks to the generous funding of the TAPP project by [NPWS](#).

[Polly Spencer-Vellacott](#), TAPP Events Coordinator &

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

DDb upload assistance for England VCRs

Do you have a backlog of digital records that haven't yet been uploaded to the DDb? If you are a County Recorder based in England, then I would be keen to help get them uploaded for you. Please get in touch with me to have a chat about options around getting your backlog uploaded.

If you are a VCR in Scotland or Ireland then your Country Officer will be able to help with data uploads to the DDb, or if you're in Wales, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands then contact James Harding-Morris. Contact details [can be found here](#).

[Sam Thomas](#), BSBI England Officer

Interesting Irish finds for *BSBI News*

As the plant hunting season is now in full swing, please remember to pass on your most interesting finds for inclusion in *BSBI News* at the end of the summer. If you could email me a short description of the find and perhaps a photograph or two, whenever you have a chance, that would be much appreciated. Hopefully this will save much wracking of brains later, and ensure the spring and early summer finds don't get forgotten!

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

SHARPP rides again!

For the 2024 field season, we are again encouraging recorders in Scotland to take part in the [Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project](#), or SHARPP for short. This project aims to revisit populations of notable Scottish plant species not recorded since 2000 – despite over 20 years of intensive survey effort for [Plant Atlas 2020](#). Over the last three years, 246 hectad refinds have been made for species of national and local conservation concern across 35 vice-counties in Scotland, many as a result of targeted searching.

Full details on the project can be found [on the BSBI website](#), including recording forms, and anybody with access to the DDb can use [this search](#) to check for target species in any vice-county, hectad by hectad (remember to change “county/region” from “Stirlingshire” to the relevant county). You should contact the relevant VCR before setting off on a search to avoid duplication of effort.

When creating records for successful SHARPP searches, or equally importantly reporting null records, please remember to add a reference to the project as a note in the Comments field, to allow searching for relevant records in the DDb. Please use ‘SHARPP target’ as a reference for target species, and ‘SHARPP associate’ for other plants recorded in the field as associated species.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer & David Elston, Chair of Committee for Scotland

Searching for null records in the DDb

Null records sent to the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) are marked up as ‘looked for but not found’. Records marked as this are excluded from the standard search parameters, meaning you might end up looking for but not finding them!

To see null records for a vice-county, on the [DDb search page](#) click on ‘more options’, then ‘attributes’, then ‘status (intrinsic)’. In the newly added ‘status (intrinsic)’ field, scroll down the dropdown menu and select either ‘looked for but not found’, to view just these null records, or select ‘include any status’ from the dropdown to see all records (including null records).

Here is an example search for VC86 null records only: [records where vice-county: VC86 and status 'looked for but not found' \(bsbi.org\)](#).

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Scottish Newsletter with extra content available online

The 2024 Scottish Newsletter is now available online, to read or download from the [Scottish Newsletter webpage](#). In addition to the great articles and field meetings programme available in the print version, the digital issue includes extra content such as vice-county annual reports. A big thank you to the new editor John Crossley for all his work and a great 46th edition!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Irish Botanical News published

The [latest issue](#) of *Irish Botanical News* is now available to read or download online: congratulations to editors Alexis Fitzgerald and Ciaran Flynn on a great issue! You can access it via the [Irish Botanical News webpage](#), where you can also view all the back issues since 1991.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Accessing BSBI periodicals

Did you know that you can sign up to receive free digital copies of any or all of our four country periodicals - *English Botanical News*, *Irish Botanical News*, *Scottish Newsletter* and the *Welsh Bulletin* - by filling in [this form](#).

For back issues of all BSBI periodicals - the four country newsletters, but also historic journals such as *Watsonia* and *BSBI News* up to April 2022 (plus indices to help you find what you need) - please visit the [BSBI periodicals landing page](#) and follow the links.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

English Botanical News

With the completion of the 2024 Recorders' Meeting and Annual Summer Meeting, I now have a little time to turn towards producing the 2024 [English Botanical News](#). This will include the VCR reports, details of new BSBI staff, meeting reports etc. I'd welcome some additional contributions so do consider sending me anything that you think might be of interest to other botanists in England.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Chair, BSBI Committee for England

My County page in the DDb

A reminder to vice-county recorders to check their [My County](#) page in the DDb from time to time, to keep an eye out for wandering records that can appear in the wrong vice-county or even the sea (see 'Grid-reference - vice-county boundary matching' under the Data Validation tab)!

The 'Records to target for validation' section on the same tab is also incredibly useful, helping you single out a small number of key records that are a priority for checking. A quick check early on in the field season could help spot records to follow up over the summer! Accompanying guidance on validating records is available on the [BSBI Documentation website](#).

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

New eBooks available

A number of County Floras have recently been added to the [BSBI eBook collection](#). With thanks to their authors, we have been able to add the following titles, available for a nominal fee that will support the work of the BSBI:

[A Short Flora of Berwickshire](#)

[Isle of Bute Flora](#)

[The Flora of Rum](#)

There will be more titles to follow in the coming months.

If you are a Flora author and would like to make your Flora available as an eBook then please contact me.

[Sarah Woods](#), BSBI Fundraising and Engagement Manager

Wildflower ID workshop for beginner botanists in Northern Ireland

This workshop, which takes place at the Ulster Folk Museum on Saturday 15 June, aims to introduce beginner botanists to the 'Find the Family First' approach to plant ID. There is a charge of £40 which includes course materials as well as refreshments, but BSBI members and full-time students benefit from a 50% discount. There are still some spaces available so if you know any beginner botanists in Northern Ireland who might find this workshop helpful, please consider encouraging them to attend and forward [this booking link](#) to them.

[Jen Farrar](#), NI Botanical Skills Officer

Sampling Scottish *Mertensia maritima* and *Crambe maritima* populations for salt tolerance research project

I am a postdoctoral researcher working on physiological mechanisms of salt tolerance at the University of Milan-Bicocca, and I am interested in two plant species located on the beaches of northern European countries: *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) and *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale). Specifically I am interested in understanding the physiological tolerances of these species and the environmental pressures that they are facing. I hope to sample from several populations in Scandinavia, and would also like to survey populations in the British Isles, which appear to be on the southern edge of *M. maritima*'s range. If any BSBI recorders are interested in assisting with this work, please get in touch - any help would be gratefully received!

[Emily Palm](#), University of Milan-Bicocca

Infraspecific variation in *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter-vetch)

The results of a preliminary study by Andy Amphlett, investigating infraspecific taxa for *Lathyrus linifolius* (Bitter-vetch) included in Sell & Murrell, are available to view here: [Infraspecific variation in Lathyrus linifolius.pdf - Google Drive](#).

[Andy Amphlett](#), VCR for Easternness

Celebrating the outstanding contributions of BSBI members

The recipients of the BSBI Awards for Outstanding Contributions were announced in the latest issue of *BSBI News* by Chris Miles, Chair of the Board of Trustees. These Awards aim to highlight the most exceptional examples of the work of the Society's members. In the 'Outstanding Contribution to Botany in your Area' category, three County Recorders were awarded: Ian McNeill in Co. Tyrone; Richard Pryce in Carmarthenshire; and the late David Welch in North Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire; Malcolm McNeill was also awarded in recognition of his urban recording work in the Glasgow area.

The 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' award went to Tim Rich in recognition of his many achievements including authorship of BSBI Handbooks and the Plant Crib, acting as one of our foremost expert Referees and his ground-breaking work on recorder bias and standardised recording.

You can read more about the achievements of these inspirational role models on [this webpage](#) and we would also encourage all BSBI members to start thinking about who to nominate for the next round of awards - more info [here](#) on how to do this.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

MapMate sync issues

We have had a few reports of MapMate sync issues in the last few weeks and this issue has now been fixed. See [this page on the documentation site](#) for note on how to correct this.

[James Harding-Morris](#), BSBI Countries 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 the [membership list](#) page on the password-protected [members' area](#) of the BSBI website.

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

National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS): Annual Report published

The latest NPMS Annual Report contains several articles that may be of interest to botanical recorders: Oli Pescott writes about abundance profiles of arable indicator species; Oliver Wilson looks at a new study on climate change impact monitoring, based on NPMS data; and there are ideas around making plant monitoring more inclusive and accessible. [Take a look!](#)

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Talk by BSBI Handbook author

Chris Thorogood, who co-authored and illustrated the [BSBI Handbook on Broomrapes \(*Orobancha spp.*\)](#), is giving a talk at the Royal Institution on 10 June about his quest to protect the world's largest flower, Rafflesia, in the face of extinction and deforestation. You can book for the event [here](#); read an [interview with Chris here](#) about the Broomrape Handbook; and just follow the links if you'd like to [order the Broomrape Handbook](#) - or any other [BSBI Handbook - in digital format](#).

[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 Manager