



Recorder eNewsletter

for the botanical recording community
January 2025

Training Officer Recruitment

As we approach the third year of our DAERA-funded Northern Ireland Botanical Skills Project we are looking for a Training Officer to join the team and support the delivery of the project.

This role will, in partnership with our existing Botanical Skills Officer, deliver botanical training, recording and monitoring activities over the next three years, as well as working to increase participation in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS).

The vacancy [can be seen here](#). Please spread the word of this role to anyone you think may be interested.

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

Vice-county Annual Reports

A huge thank you to all VCRs who have submitted their Annual Reports. Both the County Officers and I have thoroughly enjoyed reading about your exciting botanical finds and re-finds from the past year.

We are carefully reviewing the reports and will work on addressing any issues or needs you've raised with the Country Support Team.

We aim to have the reports added to the county webpages during February, so keep an eye out. Thank you again for all your hard work and contributions.

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

BSBI New Year Plant Hunt

Our fourteenth [New Year Plant Hunt](#) ran from 29th December to 1st January. Thousands of citizen scientists took part, submitting a record number of observations using, for the first time, the BSBI Recording App.

647 different plant species were found in bloom, the third highest total in the history of the Hunt. Almost half (48%) of the species were flowering later than expected vs around a quarter flowering earlier than expected. Just over half (52%) were native.

The full [report](#) and [summary](#) are both available to read on the [New Year Plant Hunt](#) page on the BSBI website. Thank you to all who took part; you can also sign up online to be notified about next year's event.

Louise Marsh & the [BSBI New Year Plant Hunt Team](#)

Bringing FISCs to Ireland

BSBI is planning to trial an Irish FISC (Field Identification Skills Certificate) this year - to be held in Ireland and tailored to the Irish flora.

We will be hosting an online Irish FISC information evening on 26 February at 7:30pm, aimed at anyone who may have an interest in bringing FISCs to Ireland. We hope to provide some more details about what running and attending a FISC looks like, and gather insights from attendees on how an Irish FISC should be developed and who may be interested in helping us to do so.

If you would like to attend, please complete [this form](#). If you cannot make that date, but are interested, please also complete the form letting us know your thoughts and any questions you may have.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer, and [Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

Recording App data

With more recorders using the BSBI Recording App, more records are reaching the separate Recording App workspace in the DDb. The Documentation Site has a page dedicated to [working with this data](#) and moving it into the main database, including searches to identify hectad singletons, known recorders, and records with photos.

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

Forestry England *UPDATE & CORRECTION*****

Unfortunately, the information provided by FE and shared in the last issue of ReN was incorrect. FE have now confirmed that all recording visits will require a full application, and that public liability insurance is likely to be required.

If you are still planning on attempting to arrange access to FE land then applications can either be made via the ecology contacts given in the previous ReN or via the regional access contacts given [here](#). For a local recording meeting to be covered by the BSBI public liability

insurance the meeting must be clearly labelled as a BSBI meeting and a written risk assessment must be produced.

[Sam Thomas](#), BSBI England Officer

'Introducing my Vice-county' - articles wanted!

John Norton is looking for VCRs to write articles for BSBI News which introduce their Vice-counties to recorders and members, giving them a taste of the botanical delights and habitats which await them if they were ever to visit. If this is something you're interested in writing, then please let me know.

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

iRecord Data Transfer

I hope to make progress with the long-overdue refresh of the data from iRecord. The delays have been due to technical problems with the data transfer, there have been several abortive attempts since the last export in June to re-export the data from iRecord in a useable format.

I know that the lack of updates and missing chunks of pre-June data is causing problems for several recorders and frustrating others. We're grateful for the efforts of the many VCRs and other volunteers who are continuing to work on verifying iRecord data.

I hope to be able to report more positive news soon.

[Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

London Axiophytes - new list available

Dr Mark Spencer (VC21) and Paul Lose (Salix Ecology) have produced a new [list of London axiophytes](#).

[Sam Thomas](#), BSBI England Officer

BSBI Yearbook

You should be able to access your BSBI Yearbook 2025 next week, via the password-protected members-area of the BSBI website (email enquiries@bsbi.org if you have forgotten the password) and also in print, if you opted for print membership. For the first time this is in full colour and copies the format of *BSBI News*. A big thanks to Sarah Woods and all the others who have worked hard to put it together. Also thanks to all those who have offered to lead field meetings in 2025. I know that some VCRs don't plan their events

programmes until after the deadline for the Yearbook, so if you do have a meeting that you would like advertising more widely then it is possible to add it [to the field meetings & indoor events page](#). This webpage can also be used to update details of meetings, hopefully for example saying that they are fully booked rather than cancelled.

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

Final Winter Talk

The last of this winter's online talks takes place on Wednesday, 5 February at 7.30pm. The subject is *Tephrosieris and the challenges of trying to learn botany in your 40s* and the speaker is Anna Lacey. You can book [book here](#) for the talk - it's free.

[Videos of previous talks are freely available online.](#)

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Upcoming England Events

For England, we have two events coming up. First the England Annual Meeting (EAM) is on Sunday, 23 February at 2pm, and takes place via Zoom. [Book for the EAM meeting](#). The EAM will start with the AGM followed by a few short talks, and I will give a talk on Declining arable plants. Committee for England (CfE) members are elected at the AGM and there are vacancies for new members. We would particularly like to welcome enthusiastic beginner and younger botanists to the Committee. If you fancy helping to organise botany in England do get in touch.

Our Recorders' Meeting takes place at FSC Juniper Hall from April 4 – 6 and will follow the same format as previous meetings. It is aimed at all botanists who are wanting to progress to more comprehensive recording and it is also for the VCRs and specialists who will help support them. There are still places available, so [book for the Recorders' Meeting](#).

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Chair CfE

Shepherd's-cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis* & Winter Annual recording NI

22 & 23 March 2025. Murlough NNR, Dundrum, Co. Down.

Murlough NNR is a well-known site for Shepherd's-cress *Teesdalia nudicaulis* where it is mainly associated with patches of bare sand in areas of grey dune. The aim of this recording weekend is to map where *T. nudicaulis* occurs, count the population and record which other winter annuals are growing in association with it.

29 & 30 March 2025. Grange More dunes, Portstewart, Co. Derry/Londonderry.

In the past *T. nudicaulis* has been recorded from areas of dune both north and south of the Bann, at Grange More. The most recent records on the DDb for *T. nudicaulis* are from an area south of the Bann, adjacent to the railway line, in 2004. Therefore, the aim of this weekend will be to (hopefully) re-find, map and count the population of *T. nudicaulis* and record any other winter annuals found.

If you would like to participate in these recording events, please email me, Jen Farrar, directly. They will be further advertised via the BSBI events webpage.

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

Quadrant data in the DDb

There are approximately 480,000 records on the DDb at quadrant scale, that is 5km² resolution. Although we no longer record using quadrants, thanks to Andy Amphlett and Tom Humphrey a new DDb search improvement has now been added to allow VCRs to identify and query older records that were originally surveyed at this scale.

To view quadrant-level data for your vice-county, on the DDb search page add your vice-county, then click through 'more options' > 'locality' > 'precision', and then select 'quadrant (5km) only'. See [this example of a quadrant level-only data search for Stirlingshire](#). Selecting 'quadrant (5km) or better' will include records made at other scales that are found within a quadrant as well.

You can also view [all quadrant-level data on the DDb, grouped by vice-county](#), and search for records made in a specific quadrant, for example [this search for quadrant-level records in NH72SE](#) in East Inverness-shire. Yet another string to the bow of the wonder that is the DDb!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Uploading data directly to the DDb

A reminder to VCRs that you can now upload spreadsheets of data direct to the DDb – probably the most efficient way to get archived data or collated data sets on there. The BSBI Documentation website has [detailed guidance on how to import data to the DDb via a spreadsheet](#), and your Country Officer can help you through the process. You can also watch the video of this [Spreadsheet upload training](#) session run by BSBI England Officer Sam Thomas.

If your data represents a group of records from a distinct survey, report or project, during the upload process you can label it to make finding it in the DDb easier. To search for a specific data set, go to the search page and click through 'more options' > 'source' > 'data


set', then write the data set name or relevant keywords into the search box. For example, the data from a 2024 survey of *Aristavena setacea* (Bog Hair-grass) in South Aberdeenshire can be found and viewed in isolation using [this search](#).

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Editing Recording App data in the DDb

As some VCRs have noticed, Recording App data from other users, along with New Year Plant Hunt data and Indicia project workspace data (including iRecord and iNaturalist), are not currently editable in the DDb.

For now, VCRs can of course mark individual Recording App records as doubtful, reject them, or just leave them in the appropriate workspace rather than migrating them to the main DDb. Work is planned to allow VCRs to make some changes to Recording App data (e.g. re-determination of incorrect records) and to contact the recorder to request edits or more information.

Recording App users can, however, edit their **own** Recording App records in the DDb by clicking on the green pencil icon  at the left end of the record. This opens up the record as you would see it in your Recording App, rather than the DDb, making it easy to add missing info or correct any errors. As data is only accessible via the Recording App itself for a month after it is recorded, the ability to find and edit older data in the DDb is a particularly useful feature. From the main DDb search page, [select 'Recording App' from the 'project workspace' drop-down menu](#), and then add details (e.g. recorder, species or date recorded) to help locate the record you are after.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

A New Rare Plant Register for Wigtownshire

I'm delighted to announce that Wigtownshire (Vice-county 74) now has its first ever Rare Plant Register (RPR) list, thanks to the hard work of Recorder Michael Jeeves! Head to the [Wigtownshire county page](#) to view and download the taxon list, which is also uploaded to the [DDb](#).

The Stirlingshire (VC86) draft RPR list has also been updated to the end of 2024, and is available on the [Stirlingshire county page](#) and on the [DDb](#). If you are working on an RPR and have a new, updated or draft taxon list, why not get it uploaded to the DDb so everyone can make use of it? Your Country Officer will be happy to do this, and it might just help make writing the thing easier!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Irish Conferences in 2025

Some dates for your diary: The BSBI Spring Conference will be held on Saturday, 5 April, at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin - the theme will be 'Recording' and the day will include some training/information sessions on using the DDb and the new recording app, as well as the usual interesting talks and workshops, and of course the chance to meet up with like minded people who also love plants!

Looking further ahead, the Irish Autumn Meeting is planned to be held on Saturday, 4 October, also at NBG Glasnevin.

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Webinars from the Northern Ireland Botanical Skills Project

Our webinar series, part of our DAERA-funded Botanical Skills Project in Northern Ireland, is reaching its end for this year with only one talk left:

4th February - [Rubus \(Brambles\) in Northern Ireland](#)

All the talks that have already taken place can be viewed on the [BSBI YouTube channel](#).

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

Scotland Christmas Quiz - answers available!

The answers to this fun (but fiendish?) [festive quiz](#) are now available [here](#), with 120 points up for grabs in total!

I hope you enjoyed it, and hopefully there was something new in there for everyone. Happy New Year!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Vice-county Recorder Resources page

Do you ever find yourself *knowing* that a document or resource exists, but can't remember exactly where on the BSBI website it is? You're not alone!

To try and help with this we have created a new [Vice-county Recorder Resources page](#). Here we have tried to aggregate and organise the key support materials and guidance vital to the VCR role, but we might have missed something. If you have an idea of a resource to add to this page, please let me know.

Hopefully, between this page and the [Documentation Site](#) you should be able to find everything you need (if it exists).

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

The BSBI Documentation site

The [BSBI Documentation site](#) continues to be updated with useful guidance and I encourage all County Recorders (VCRs) to bookmark it. James Drever has recently [added a page for VCRs](#) with a list of useful DDb searches.

[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

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