



Recorder eNewsletter

for the botanical recording community

March 2025

BSBI Irish Spring Conference

Bookings will open in early March for the [Irish Spring Conference](#), to be held on Saturday, 5 April 2025, at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. The theme will be 'Recording' and as usual, there will be a variety of interesting talks and workshops, as well as the chance to meet up with old friends and new botanists, with the added bonus of seeing the beautiful botanic gardens in all their spring glory!

[Bridget Keehan](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

iRecord data refresh

A fresh batch of occurrence records and validation annotations has been imported into the DDb. This batch adds around 400 000 Indicia/iRecord records, covering most UK counties (Indicia is a UK project, so doesn't include the Republic of Ireland).

The records are initially held in a separate workspace, from which they can be transferred to the main DDb workspace. For more information please see our [advice on working with Indicia data in the DDb](#). The data will include many useful new records, but of course, when working with data contributed by recorders with a very wide range of experience levels please proceed with a critical eye. As usual, the priority for validation and import should generally be records that are interesting and useful for you. Rejecting mistakes is a lower priority. Vague records (e.g. at genus level) that are not useful to you should be ignored and not marked as rejected or doubtful. Genus-level records can be relevant in some circumstances, are often technically correct and may represent the best-effort of an inexperienced new recorder.

Technical problems had led to a long delay since the last update in June. I'm very grateful for work by Oli Pescott at UKCEH that has allowed data exports to resume. I'm hopeful that regular, frequent updates will be possible soon.

[Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

Recorded Training

We have recently run training sessions for County Recorders on the new BSBI Recording App, the basics of working with the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb), and on direct upload of spreadsheets to the DDb. A representative session of each of these has been recorded and they can all be found on the '[For Vice-county Recorders](#)' page of documentation website.

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

Aquatic plant herbarium workshops at the NMNI herbarium, Belfast, with Nick Stewart.

Nick's aim for the workshops is to work through specimens in the herbarium which need verification or their taxonomic names updating. These workshops are therefore most suitable for botanists with good field experience of identifying aquatic plants who would like to improve their skills by using keys to aid in the identification of herbarium specimens.

The dates for the aquatics workshops are Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 March. There are only four places available for each day. If you would like to attend, please reserve your place by using the booking links below. If your reservation is tentative, please book anyway and confirm or withdraw your reservation at a later date.

To book a place for **Wednesday 19 March**, please use this link:

<https://buytickets.at/botanicalsocietyofbritainireland/1555245>

To book a place for **Thursday 20 March**, please use this link:

<https://buytickets.at/botanicalsocietyofbritainireland/1599491>

If you will not be attending yourself, I would greatly appreciate it if you could pass on these details to someone you know who may be interested. Please be aware that while this event is free for BSBI County Recorders, there is a fee of £30 for BSBI members and of £60 for non-members.

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

Gold standard surveyors needed for Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs)

If you are a [Level 5](#) botanist interested in becoming a Gold Standard Surveyor for [FISCs](#) and are not yet registered, you can [sign up here](#). The Gold Standard Surveyor undertakes a 2-3 hour survey of the FISC field site alongside candidates and your species list is used as a benchmark. It's also an opportunity to update records for sites and you can claim a fee from the FISC Provider for your survey work.

[Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

Help us identify the training gaps

We are in the process of gathering information about what gaps exist in training provision across all skill levels, geographical regions, and species groups. If you have thoughts on what training gaps need filling, or are interested in offering to run some training workshops to help us fill the gaps, please get in touch.

[Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

Basal Project Update: New 'Species Info Sheet' Launched

Since the Basal Project began in 2018—and with the website going live in 2023, followed by the introduction of a [Family Key](#) in 2024—I'm excited to announce the latest enhancement: a downloadable spreadsheet called the *Species Info Sheet*. You can download it [here](#). This tool is designed to help you verify your tentative IDs from photos by providing additional details that may not be immediately visible. The goal is to boost your confidence in plant identification and encourage a closer examination of species.

The spreadsheet has been kept as simple as possible while accounting for a range of variability. It features several useful tabs: a main ID sheet, a Common Names to Scientific Names list, a Notes tab for guidance, and a Photos tab with over 170 hyperlinked images of various plant parts. I'll continue to update and upload the spreadsheet as new species are added to the website.

A big thank you to John Poland for kindly permitting the use of data from [The Vegetative Key To The British Flora](#)—data that would otherwise take many years to compile—and to my friend David Merrick for his invaluable help with the initial setup and ongoing encouragement.

[Richard Mabbutt](#), The Basal Project

Yearbook 2025 now available

I'm really pleased that we've been able to print the *BSBI Yearbook 2025* in full colour. BSBI members can find a digital version in the password-protected [members-only area](#) of the BSBI website. The digital version includes clickable links — B&IB abstracts link directly to the full papers, and email addresses open new messages. The links may not stand out at first glance, but hovering your mouse over them will highlight them in pale yellow.

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

Updated guidance for meetings coming soon

The [guidance for leaders and organisers of meetings](#), as well as for participants, is currently being reviewed. I plan to post the 2025 update by mid-March, ahead of the main field season. If any incidents or accidents happen at meetings, please report them — this helps us identify risks and prevent future issues. Rest assured, the BSBI fully supports meeting leaders who follow our guidance.

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

England Annual Meeting

If you were not able to attend the [England Annual Meeting](#) (EAM) on 23 February, the talks were recorded and you can watch them on the [EAM 2025 playlist](#) on the BSBI YouTube channel. Learn more about the new axiophyte and red lists for London from Mark Spencer, Orchid comings and goings from Ian Denholm, Scarce Tufted-sedge – a new English sedge from Astrid Biddle and Declining arable plants from Jonathan Shanklin.

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

Annual Summer Meeting 2025 — Book now!

Booking is now open for the Annual Summer Meeting in Melrose, Scotland. The local team has put together a great mix of excursions, talks, and events — there's something for everyone! You can view the outline of planned excursions and book your place here: [Annual Summer Meeting Booking](#). It would be fantastic to see as many of you there as possible.

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

New *Trifoliate* Newsletter published - local botany at its best!

The [West Central Scotland Botany Network](#), a collaboration between botanists across three vice-counties in the Glasgow area, has published its latest edition of [Trifoliate](#). This electronic newsletter covers the Network's activities across Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Dunbartonshire, showcasing the people and places that make up this vibrant group and packed full of recording tips - well worth a read wherever you live!

This Spring 2025 issue includes advice on identifying aquatic plants, Primulas and common wall ferns in Scotland, how to photograph dandelions for ID by experts, showcases monads for targeted recording, and explains how to go about sending in plant records. Something for botanists of all levels! Frazer Henderson, the newsletter editor, has done a fantastic job, and he and the driving forces behind the Network, Michael Philip, Peter Wiggins and Keith Watson, deserve congratulations on a wonderful publication.

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

UKCEH Recruitment: 5 Botanists required for 2025 National Survey

UKCEH are looking to recruit 5 botanists or field surveyors to be part of a national survey team working across England. The roles are full-time between May – early September for the survey season in 2025. Your botanical / ecological expertise will be used to collect field data for a high-profile project monitoring biodiversity at [landscape-scales](#) which provides evidence to Defra and Natural England to inform policy. You may be employed through our recruitment agency, Hays, or self-employed. Please see guidance at the [bottom of the advert](#) regarding sole trader recruitment options. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

[Morag McCracken](#), UKCEH Ecologist

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