



**Botanical
Society of
Britain &
Ireland**

Recorder eNewsletter *for the botanical recording community*

April 2025

New Recording Activities and Priorities for this Field Season

Although BSBI is planning to launch several major projects over the coming years, we recognise that many recorders are itching to get going on something now, following a hiatus after the end of fieldwork for Plant Atlas 2020. To this end, a few suggestions for [recording activities](#) have been compiled.

Most require little in the way of specialist skills, methods, training or equipment and can be carried out using the BSBI Recording App. Others are more specialised and are directed toward more experienced recorders.

Full details can be found on the [recording activities page](#). The proposed activities are:

- [The origin and regeneration of non-natives](#)
- [Under-recorded monads](#)
- [Under-recorded species](#)
- [Targeted surveys of priority species](#)
- [Target plants for beginners](#)

As well as an Ireland-specific [Irish Upland Plants Project](#).

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

Training session for VCRs - Managing BSBI Recording App & iRecord data in the DDb

On Thursday 1st May we have a session for VCRs on working with Recording App and iRecord data within the DDb. With more recorders now using the BSBI Recording App, more records are reaching the holding pen on the DDb. This session will look at validating records and moving them to the main DDb workspace. As usual, this session will be recorded for those who can't join on the day. Please [book for the session here](#).

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

Recording of our recent iRecord Training session

Last week we held a training session on verification within iRecord. A recording of that session can be viewed on the [Documentation Site here](#) (along with our other recording

training for VCRs). We're aware that a few people tried to join the live session and were unable to join due to some sort of glitch; we apologise that you were unable to join and hope the recording is useful for you.

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

New BSBI Handbook: *Brambles of Scotland*

Brambles of Scotland by Angus Hannah, County Recorder for Clyde Isles, has just been published. It's the 25th title in our series of [BSBI Handbooks](#) for difficult plants and provides comprehensive accounts of 56 *Rubus* species resident in Scotland, each one accompanied by a distribution map and a gallery of colour photographs showing diagnostic characters. An Appendix covers another 30 rare or doubtful (mostly adventive) species. Many of the 86 species also occur elsewhere in Britain and Ireland.

The [Brambles of Scotland webpage](#) has more information, with a sample spread (for *R. vestitus*) and details of how to get hold of a copy of the Handbook, including how BSBI members can claim a hefty discount, paying £13 (excl. P&P) compared to the RRP of £20. The webpage also has a link to a full-length, illustrated [interview with Angus](#) about the new Handbook, the recorders who inspired and contributed to it, and how you can get involved in Angus's ongoing bramble recording project.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Identification Webinar Series on Difficult Plants

Our [new series of identification webinars](#), covering some of our more tricky plant groups, is now underway and proving very popular. These webinars are perfect for anyone looking to refine their botanical skills, from County Recorders to those just beginning their plant identification journey.

The webinars are led by national experts and are free, but if you'd like to make a donation towards the BSBI's work then the option to do so is available on the booking pages.

- Mulleins (*Verbascum*) of Britain and Ireland with Mike Crewe
 - Video recording now available on the [BSBI YouTube Channel](#)
- Mints (*Mentha*) of Britain and Ireland with Ambroise Baker
 - Wed 7 May 2025 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM via Zoom - [Booking Link](#)
- Broomrapes (*Orobanch* & *Phelipanche*) of Britain and Ireland with Chris Thorogood
 - Tue 10 Jun 2025 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM via Zoom - [Booking Link](#)

Huge thanks are due to the experts for agreeing to present so please do make the most of their time and come along. We're keen to organise more webinars so if anyone would be

interested in presenting a webinar on a group of plants or another subject then please contact me to discuss.

[Sam Thomas](#), BSBI England Officer

Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project - call for data

The [Scottish HectAd Rare Plant Project](#) (SHARPP) has been running now for four years, and we are preparing a report summarising its findings. In order to do this, we need to gather together all SHARPP survey data, including null returns!

Please could VCRs, or anyone else who has carried out SHARPP searches, email scans or photos of their original SHARPP survey forms to [Matt Harding](#) by 30 April. Further details on data sharing are available on the [SHARPP webpage](#).

If you have any questions please get in touch, and thank you to everyone who participated on the project. I'm excited to find out more about your discoveries and to assess the impact of the project on our knowledge of Scotland's flora!

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Scottish Local Nature Conservation Site boundaries now searchable on the DDb

Thanks to our Database Officer Tom Humphrey, all Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCSSs), also referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), in Scotland are now searchable in the DDb, using the 'bounded area' search option.

To do this, enter the name of the site in the 'bounded area' search box, select the appropriate site from the dropdown that appears, and click the 'display results' button. See this example search for [Thornhill North Common](#) LNCS. To return all potentially valid records select 'include intersections' from the dropdown box to the right - this will return monad and tetrad records that intersect with the site boundary. Selecting 'contained within' will only return records made at a resolution that is completely contained within the site boundary, typically those with a six, eight or ten figure grid reference.

A full list of all the LNCSSs in Scotland is available on the DDb [here](#).

[Matt Harding](#), BSBI Scotland Officer

Do you grow any unusual, rare or difficult to identify native plants?

BSBI's [FISC](#) assessments have expanded across England, into Scotland this year, and there is also a trial happening in Ireland this summer. As a result, over 30 FISCs will be run this year and each FISC requires a number of specimens for the lab tests. These specimens need to challenge the candidates, so we are always in need of help from collectors and growers around the UK and Ireland to provide unusual, rare or difficult to identify native plants. If you grow any native plants in your garden and are willing to provide some specimens for the FISC tests in the post, between June and August, please contact me to find out more.

[Chantal Helm](#), BSBI Training Coordinator

***BSBI News* #159 published**

The Spring issue of our membership newsletter has just been published, and it contains several articles likely to be of great interest to botanical recorders. There's a new review of plant ID apps by Lyn Jones, an article by Sam Thomas on BSBI data and the NBN Atlas, and a report from a recently appointed County Recorder (VCR) who is benefiting from the 'VCR Team Approach'.

If you're a BSBI member, you can view a digital version of *BSBI News* #159 right now via the password-protected [members' area](#); if you opted to receive a print copy, it should be on its way to you (email me if it hasn't arrived yet).

If you're not yet a BSBI member, you can see a sampler of this latest issue on the [BSBI News sampler page](#) and Lyn Jones' article is freely available via the [BSBI News public page](#).

Members: please share those two pages with your networks so they can enjoy a taste of our much-loved membership magazine and maybe they'll go on to join the Society!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

***Ficaria verna* subspecies wanted**

Please, if possible, send live plants in damp tissue in a jiffy bag to grow to maturity, with details of collection.

[Michael Wilcox](#) – see [BSBI Yearbook](#) for postal address

Funded PhD opportunity: History of Irish Botany

Queen Mary University of London (School of the Arts), and National Museums NI (Ulster Museum) are currently advertising an AHRC-funded PhD position on the History of Irish

Botany. We would be grateful if you could share the opportunity with anyone in your network who may be interested. Further details and application instructions can be found at [this link](#).

[Rhonda Ridley](#), Curator of Botany, National Museums NI

PhD studentship: emerging alien species and their management

A new project aims to analyse how emerging invaders could be identified from species distribution databases as well as citizen science records. A PhD studentship is being advertised by University of Coventry; the project will analyse stakeholder awareness and decision processes in the management response to emerging invaders. It will focus on non-native plants in Great Britain and Ireland working with the [BSBI Distribution Database \(DDb\)](#) and the citizen science project [Plant Alert](#) in which BSBI is a partner. More details [here](#).

A reminder that details of this studentship and the previous opportunity (Irish botany) can be found on the [Jobs in Botany page](#). If you (or members of your network) are looking for a new challenge, it's worth keeping an eye on the page, and if you hear of interesting opportunities, please let me know so I can help spread the word.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Address update

Alexis Fitzgerald, VCR for [Co. Monaghan](#) and co-editor of [Irish Botanical News](#), has had a change of address. This has been updated in our online version of the Yearbook which can be found on [this \(password protected\) page](#).

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

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 [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 website](#) you should be able to find everything that you need.

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

County Membership Lists

If, as a VCR, 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