

BSBI eNews – April 2019

From Jim McIntosh, Senior Country Officer, jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org

News from the Irish Officer

I have been the BSBI's Irish Officer since Oct 2012 and have absolutely loved the job. However, I'm about to move to pastures new soon. It has been a difficult decision as I really enjoy my BSBI job, but the new role offers me a full-time important position in nature conservation in Ireland (as grasslands ecologist with the National Parks and Wildlife Service). I will finish with BSBI at the end of April. One of the best things about working with BSBI is the people involved - the staff, the recorders, the members, all the different people who pull together to a common aim. It's been inspirational to be part of such a remarkable network of largely voluntary workers! I plan to stay as closely involved with BSBI as possible and look forward to attending field meetings and events as an ordinary member.

Maria Long, [BSBI Irish Officer](#)

Vice-County Annual Reports & Questionnaires

Thank you very much to everyone who completed the VC Annual Report and questionnaire. We received a total of 104 responses - which is fantastic. The Annual Reports will be collated and published online, and the Scottish ones will also appear in the Scottish Newsletter. The responses to the two final questions on local groups, which Council asked us to include, have been extracted and forwarded to them. I've gone through the responses to the remaining three questions and teased them out into distinct issues or comments and then grouped them into broad categories. I have forwarded this to BSBI staff colleagues. If we have not already responded to specific points, then we would hope to do so shortly, at least via articles in future editions of BSBI eNews. Many thanks again.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

MapMate Maintenance

OK, here is the third and final nagging article on MapMate maintenance! If MapMate users haven't already followed the steps outlined in the [February](#) and [March BSBI eNews](#) – please do so now!

1. Generally, it's better to use the distribution maps on the DDb than those in MapMate Atlases, as they will map all records from all sources and not just the subset of records in your MapMate. However, it is still very useful and interesting to see distribution maps of all your MapMate records. If you don't already have an 'Atlas' containing distribution maps of species recorded in your VC (Check File > Open > and select each map with a likely name in turn) then you can create your own. There are simple instructions on the [BSBI MapMate support](#) site.
2. Periodically you need to Rebuild your Atlases to ensure they include a distribution map for every taxon you have recorded. Simply, select and open each Atlas that you regularly use in turn (File > Open and select from a picklist or just File > 1 (Atlas name), or File > 2 (Atlas name). Then with the Atlas open, File > Rebuild...and follow the instructions by answering "OK" then "No" when it asks you if you want to list (map) all entries in the MapMate species dictionary whether you have any records for them or not.

3. Finally, it is worth checking that your Data Entry Validation settings are set to warn you whenever you enter an unusual record (e.g. one that is new to hectad, vice-county or recorder, etc.) Details on how to do this are included in the first short video on Data Entry Settings on this page of the [BSBI MapMate support](#) website.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Detailed Grid References

When you are out and about recording this summer, do stop and take full GPS grid references of any notable species you encounter, if you can. I would recommend noting to 8 figures. It only takes a minute and will help future generations of botanists refind your most exciting records. Also, if the records are forwarded to conservationists and land managers these details might help protect rare plant populations. (In Scotland there have been cases where populations of rarities such as *Linnaea borealis* (Twinflower) have been damaged because forest managers were unaware of them).

Final point: when entering details of rarities in your computer *always* include the detailed grid reference as a new site name / grid reference combination and *never* in the "Comments" field. That will allow the detail records to be properly mapped and queried.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Field Meetings & Spring Recording

The full field season is nearly upon us, so I will look forward to receiving reports of meetings and am happy to relay highlights in these entries in BSBI *eNews*.



I've continued getting out, either to record in under-recorded neighbouring counties, or as part of regular visits to specific sites in my county. I hadn't expected to find a great deal in the way of interesting species this early in the season, but my second visit to RSPB Fen Drayton had several notable local species. I found a couple of patches of *Sison segetum* (Corn Parsley) - a New Stage 4 name! - which is in monad decline in the county and perhaps elsewhere. Then *Oenanthe aquatica* (Fine-leaved Water-dropwort) by a drainage channel, stable in the county, but noted as in decline in the English Red List. Then most exciting a large patch of *Myosurus minimus* (Mousetail) on a poached bank leading to a gateway. When I first saw it, I thought "that's a bit early for *Sagina procumbens*", but a closer look showed the true nature (photo). It may be under-recorded, as it is a tiny plant and I only noted it because a few plants were already in flower.

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

Malham Tarn Annual Summer Meeting

One room has become available for the Annual Summer Meeting at Malham Tarn, so if there is anyone (or a couple wanting to share) who would like to come to the ASM, there is a space. We may be able to squeeze in a few more day visitors, but otherwise you will have to wait for a cancellation if you want to come to the meeting. I will send further details to all those who have booked nearer the time.

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

Field Meeting Programmes in Ireland & Scotland

The 2019 field meeting programmes in [Ireland](#) and [Scotland](#) have just been collated into handy A4 flyers. Take a look and put the dates in your diary. All botanists are particularly welcome to any and all outings this year in Ireland and Scotland to help with the last push for Atlas 2020. So, what are you waiting for?! ... book that trip!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer & [Maria Long](#), BSBI Irish Officer

BSBI Scottish Spring Conference

I am now confident that I will be able to organise a [Spring Conference](#) (after my Achilles rupture a few months ago), so I'm pleased to announce two one-day conferences in April in Scotland. The theme is, of course, Atlas 2020 and the programme will include an update on the project, what County Recorders are planning to do in its final year and how all our members can help. There will also be a series of short talks by a variety of speakers and a discussion on post-Atlas activities. The first conference will be at [RBGE on Thursday 11 April](#), and the same programme will be repeated the following day at the [RSPB Offices in Aberdeen on Friday 12 April](#). Everyone interested is welcome! Click the links for more information and to book, and forward to anyone who might be interested.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Online survey on the impacts on non-native plants at the vice-county scale

The BSBI and Coventry University are conducting research into the impacts of non-native plants at the vice-county scale. For this purpose, we have produced an online survey which allows County Recorders to report the ten non-native plants with the greatest environmental impacts in their vice-counties. The survey uses a methodology that was developed to score impacts of a wide range of taxa at a national level and includes information on the level of impact, confidence in the assessments made, and the habitats affected. County recorders in England, Scotland and Wales who take part will also be asked to assess ten non-native plants that have been ranked highest in terms of their impacts at the GB level using the same methodology.

We will have emailed all County Recorders a link to the survey very shortly. The deadline for completion of the survey is 18th April. The survey should take no more than 15-30 minutes to complete and a summary of the results will be published in *BSBI News*. We hope that County Recorders will have time to complete this survey which will provide vital information on which non-natives are having the greatest impact at the vice-county scale, which habitats are most affected and the extent to which national prioritisation of invasive non-natives matches the reality at the local scale.

If you have any questions about the survey or prefer to fill out a paper copy, please contact Kevin Walker (kevin.walker@bsbi.org) or Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz (ab6340@coventry.ac.uk).

Veronica hederifolia agg. – Ivy-leaved Speedwell

In the British Isles, there are two subspecies of *Veronica hederifolia* L (Ivy-leaved Speedwell), subsp. *hederifolia* and subsp. *lucorum* (Klett & Richt.) Hartl. (Stace 2019). While both are relatively distinct in their flower characters (flower/anther size and colour, and pollen size c.40 & 30 microns resp., see [Plant Crib](#)), when not in flower they pose problems as other characters are variable and seem to overlap. It may then require anatomical aspects such as the size of the stomata to be looked at. As a

last push towards the Atlas, please collect vouchers especially if in flower. Preferably samples should be fresh in a small plastic bag as flowers will drop off easily. I would also be interested in mature fruiting specimens of *Veronica persica* for a small study on characters in this species. I will refund the postage in stamps if required.

Michael Wilcox, 43 Roundwood Glen, Greengates, Bradford, BD10 0HW michaelpw22@hotmail.com

New on the website in March

- A new [County Floras' webpage/ database](#) with a search facility to help you track down 500+ County Floras, whether current or historic. Prepared for us by David Pearman who also produced the new RPR spreadsheet on the [Rare Plant Registers page](#).
- Our new [Taxon lists page](#) has a downloadable pdf of [Stace 4 name changes](#), compiled for us by Martin Rand, County Recorder for South Hampshire.
- There's a new [videos webpage](#) offering links to various short videos to aid plant ID, including several from Tim Rich of Plant Crib and BSBI Handbooks fame.
- We have a new '[Record a plant](#)' page designed to introduce people to how to make a record, i.e. the all-important supporting info of who, where and when. Completed forms and images come direct to the Communications Officer - the intention is that they will replace the emails and images that have in the past come either to me or gone straight to County Recorders. The page is very much a work-in-progress but we can reassure County Recorders that the aim is to reduce, rather than increase, the flow of entry-level records heading their way.
- The latest issue of the *Welsh Bulletin* is now available to download free of charge from the [Wales page](#); you can still access back issues 1964-2010 in our new [Welsh Bulletin archive](#).
- We've added some new dates and locations if you'd like to sit a FISC (Field Identification Skills Certificate) in 2019 – check out the [FISC page](#).
- There's a new county webpage for [West Lothian](#).
- We've updated county pages for Devon, Somerset, Sussex, Kent, Huntingdonshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, North-west Yorkshire, Cumbria, Pembrokeshire, Glamorgan, Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire, Flintshire, Anglesey, Dumfriesshire, Lanarkshire, Stirlingshire, North Ebeudes, Co. Antrim, Co. Leitrim, Co. Wexford, East Mayo, Guernsey with progress reports on local recording, county newsletters, details of this year's field meetings and new contact details for County Recorders. Head over to the [Local Botany page](#) to find links to all county webpages. Many thanks to all the County Recorders who have sent updates, making their county pages so useful and informative.
- The [Field Meetings](#), [Meetings Diary](#), [Summer Meeting](#), [Irish Conferences](#), [Scottish Conferences](#), [National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#), [Byron's Gin](#), [Get Started in Botany](#), [Plant ID training courses](#), [Who's Who](#), [Exhibition Meeting](#), [New Year Plant Hunt](#), [Publications](#) and Identification pages have all been updated. The last four have been split into two or more pages to streamline the content and so they load more quickly on your smartphone, e.g the [Plant Crib page](#) is now separate from the [Identification page](#) and the latter has been streamlined to make it easier for both beginner and more experienced botanists to go straight to what they need. The Publications page has been split into [BSBI books](#), [BSBI Handbooks](#) and pages for our various [periodicals](#), including a new [BSBI eNews page](#).
- The [News page](#) is updated several times a week with links to papers on British and Irish botany, job vacancies for botanists, conferences and other items of interest to recorders.
- Finally, a reminder that the [A-Z site map](#) is kept updated as new pages are added, so it will always provide a quick and easy route to finding the page you want.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in March

We told you about the [second winner in BSBI's prize-draw](#), selected at random from the many people who completed a Direct Debit mandate to pay their annual membership fee; we shared [Mike Wilcox's request](#) for specimens of *Veronica hederifolia* subspecies (see above); there's a [note about daffodils](#), native vs cultivar; we alerted you to the [new County Floras webpage](#) (see above) and to some of the delights [on offer for botanists in Ireland](#); this month's [Byron's Gin blogpost](#) looked at uses of, and ID tips for, sweet vernal-grass; and there's a note about [what the National Plant Monitoring Scheme can offer to recorders](#), whether beginners or experts.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

BSBI eNews is aimed at all BSBI recorders, referees and members involved with recording. 280 BSBI members have now opted in to receive this monthly news email. Remember you can update your contact details or unsubscribe at any time.

If you are reading this online, or perhaps because it was forwarded to you, and are one of the County Recorders or Referees who did not sign up - you can do so via a link on the new [BSBI eNews](#) page (which is linked from [BSBI Publications](#)) at any time. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest to fellow readers. BSBI eNews is generally published on the 1st of each month so contributions should reach me by the 21st of the preceding month. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles in BSBI eNews.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer