

BSBI eNews – July 2020

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

Irish Grasslands Project - seminars

Our Irish Grasslands Project is off to a roaring start! Last Saturday we hosted an Introduction to Grass Identification webinar with over 325 attendees. Fionnuala O'Neill gave a fantastic presentation for an hour, followed by a great Q&A session. If you missed it live, you can check out the recording on our [Irish Grasslands Project playlist](#) on the BSBI's new YouTube channel. We still have 4 webinars to go in the series, and there is some space available on all of them. The next is part one of two on Vegetative Grass Identification. It will take place this Saturday (4 July) at 10 am. For details on all the webinars, check out the [Irish Grasslands Project webpage](#). We'll also add recordings of these to the playlist.

[Sarah Pierce](#), Ireland Officer

Irish Grasslands Project – grass of the week

Our social media efforts are off to a great start too, with [Jessica Hamilton](#) highlighting an [#IrishGrassOfTheWeek](#) every Friday on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). So far, we've covered *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Briza media*, and *Nardus stricta*. Have a look to find out what this week's species is!

[Sarah Pierce](#), Ireland Officer

Irish Grasslands Project – downloadable resources

Finally, a request for help! We're making great progress on creating a series of free downloadable resources looking at key indicator species for Annex I grassland habitats. Big thanks are due to John Conaghan, Jessica Hamilton, and Edwina Cole, and the lovely County Recorders and volunteers who have sent us images to use so far. However, we could still use high-quality images of *Alchemilla glabra*, *Brachypodium pinnatum*, *Bromopsis erecta*, *Carex caryophyllea*, *Carum verticillatum*, *Centaurea scabiosa*, *Crepis paludosa*, *Festuca ovina*, *Galium ulginosum*, *Helictotrichon pubescens*, *Hordeum secalinum*, *Knautia arvensis*, *Lathyrus palustris*, *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Sesleria caerulea*, *Trisetum flavescens* and *Viola persicifolia*.

We are looking for both photos of whole plants and close-ups of any specific identifying features. Photos will appear in the resources with your name credited in the caption. If you are able to help, please send any photos to IrishGrasslandsProject@bsbi.org. It would really help if you could label the photos with both your name and the species name. If you have any questions or want more information, you can also email that address or get in touch with me. Thank you for your help!

[Sarah Pierce](#), Ireland Officer

Garden Wildflower Hunt update

We wrote last month to say that the [Garden Wildflower Hunt](#) (GWH) has been split into two phases. So, if you submitted records prior to midsummer (in Phase One) – thank you! And it would be great if you might repeat the exercise sometime over the next few months in Phase Two! Of course, if you didn't get round to submitting GWH records in the first phase, we would welcome your GWH submissions anytime now.

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer, [Kevin Walker](#), Head of Science

Atlas 2020 Coverage

Andy Amphlett wrote recently to say that since his last set of maps at the end of January 2019, more than 6 million Atlas 2020 records have been added to the DDb so he has updated the vice-counties coverage maps. They are in the same Google Drive folders as previously used for [Great Britain](#) and [Ireland](#)

In total the maps summarise: 10,675,684 taxon x tetrad records in Great Britain and 1,475,457 taxon x tetrad records in Ireland. (Where Taxon = species and hybrids). Andy writes "This is most likely the last time I will update these maps. They portray the *amazing* degree of coverage in many vice-counties, and where there are gaps, highlight areas that might be worth targeting in the future". Well done everyone - and thank you Andy!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Cumulative coverage since 1950

Andy also created a second set of maps for all vice-counties showing taxa (species & hybrids) recorded per tetrad for the period 1950 to 2019. These maps therefore combine all the recording (at tetrad or better precision), for the original Atlas, Atlas 2000 and Atlas 2020, as well as all the other recording projects over the intervening years. Here are the 1950-2019 VC coverage maps for [Great Britain](#) and [Ireland](#). It is informative to compare them to the maps for the period 2000 - 2019.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Threatened Plant Project

Last month I mentioned too briefly that [Threatened Plant Project occurrence records](#) have an additional tab listing the site meta-data and including a link to a scanned copy of the original TPP recording form. This seemingly small change is a major achievement involving loads of volunteer hours (and me) scanning 4,000 original TPP forms and Tom linking them all into the DDb. It means that you can now see the TPP raw data forms, complete with photos and sketch maps for any of the TPP target or associated species. So, for example, if you click the yellow page symbol in the first row in the record column of this [Anacamptis morio TPP species query](#) to view the individual TPP record. Then click [TPP survey OM1204601](#) to see the full details of the TPP record and finally, if you click the [OM1204601 recording form \(pdf\)](#) link, you can see the original TPP recording form.

These can be really useful to refer back to if there are any errors to investigate or you plan to try and refine a population but don't have the original paper copies.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

Field Meetings & Covid-19

As coronavirus restrictions ease it may be possible to hold field meetings with limited numbers of participants, depending on the government guidance for the country the meeting is to be held in. I have trialled a couple of local (non-BSBI) meetings in Cambridge, with numbers limited to six by a booking system (as per guidance at the time for England). I found that it was very difficult to maintain a two-metre gap, so it is very important to be aware of this risk and take every step necessary to keep people distanced. It is the responsibility of the participants but the leader must play a very active role too. The format of the meetings was mostly directed towards recording, although limited training was

possible. One result was to find several additional species that are on the county register of plants of conservation concern in what were fairly well recorded sites. There was certainly demand for the meetings and both were oversubscribed, so there was a waiting list.

The government guidance varies across the BSBI countries, and within them, so it is important to check what applies in your area. I have updated the guidance both for leaders of field meetings and participants in them to cover some broad advice on things to consider when we are in an epidemic situation. The update for leaders is mostly confined to the H&S section. Both documents are on the BSBI [field meetings and indoor events page](#).

Summary of the current BSBI advice: During the present epidemic, BSBI and those acting on behalf of the Society must follow government [guidance](#) at the time and for the relevant country. This may mean some field meetings are not possible. If they can proceed, it is important that all participants are aware of measures they must take to keep them safe at all times. It is the leaders' responsibility to do this.

If you as leader are not happy to continue with the meeting, either in advance or on the day, do not feel obliged to do so. The BSBI will support any cancellations made on safety grounds.

If additional guidance is required in regards to meetings already arranged or those being planned, please contact the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary or Head of Operations.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), BSBI Hon Field Meeting Secretary

Message Board for County Recorders

Remember that we do have a message board especially for BSBI County Recorders and Referees. It was set up some time ago but never took off, however now might be a good time to relaunch it! Michael Braithwaite has just made an interesting first post based on his many years as Recorder. Take a look and feel free to respond or to post on a different topic! [Login to the DDb](#) first then click [Message Board](#) in the top right. Only those with a DDb registration can view and post on the forum.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

BSBI YouTube channel: update

In [last month's issue of BSBI eNews](#), we told you about our new [BSBI Youtube channel](#) and [our first in-house video](#): it was filmed by BSBI England Officer Pete Stroh and featured the wild flowers of a Northants water-meadow. Pete has now produced a [second video](#), this time featuring the wild flowers of a protected road verge in Hunts. and starring Crested Cow-wheat *Melampyrum cristatum*. Also on the channel is the first of five grass ID videos from the Irish Grasslands Project (see above).

The channel also features various [playlists](#) where we've pulled together videos by BSBI members and partner organisations. Examples are a list of [short videos on plant ID](#) by Chris Metherell, Fred Rumsey (NHM) and various Wildlife Trusts; a selection of [videos about the National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#); and glimpses [behind the scenes in various herbaria](#). There are also some excellent [videos about biological recording](#): what makes a record, why is biological recording important etc. We also have links to featured channels by BSBI members such as [Josh Styles](#) and [Tim Rich](#) who regularly upload botanical videos.

Find out more on this [videos page on the BSBI website](#) or go straight to the [BSBI YouTube channel](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

British & Irish Botany: latest issue published

The latest issue of *British & Irish Botany* is out now, available to [view or download in full here](#); Kevin Walker and Pete Stroh report on changes in the distribution and abundance of *Carex ericetorum*; Chris Preston and Rosaleen Fitzgerald tell us about a newly discovered population of *Stuckenia x suecica* in South Tipperary; Phil Smith reports on non-native taxa in the coastal dune system on the Sefton coast; Nick Riddiford *et al.* provide a list of wild and naturalised taxa recorded on Fair Isle; and there are three hawkweed papers from Tim Rich *et al.* [Submissions](#) from recorders are invited - please [contact us](#) to discuss your proposal.

[Ian Denholm & Louise Marsh](#), *British & Irish Botany*

On the BSBI News & Views blog in June

We reported the [very sad news](#) that Trevor James, Joint County Recorder for Hertfordshire and a leading light in British biological recording, had died; we featured author [Colin French telling us all about his new Flora of Cornwall](#) and sharing a few sample pages and important finds; Darlington botanist Falgunee Sarker told us about the [virtual walk through the trees](#) she led for visually-impaired botanists under lockdown; BSBI Head of Science Kevin Walker chose Bee Orchid as his [Wildflower of the Month for June](#) and explained why it might be the 'canary in the cage' for climate change; and we told you about the [papers and authors featured in the new issue](#) of British & Irish Botany (see above).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website in June

- There's a new [Fern ID page](#) and a new [Grass ID page](#): the latter complements the new webpage for the Irish Grasslands Project (see above). We've also added more species accounts to the [Dandelions page](#).
- If you missed out on last month's online fern ID training course and you're a BSBI member, you can still access the video of the webinar for a very small cost. Details on the [Fern ID page](#).
- The [Plant Crib page](#) has been updated to include the corrigenda file.
- The [field meetings and indoor events page](#) has been updated to show cancellations.
- In the password-protected [members-only area of the website](#), there's a new BSBI Membership List compiled by Gwynn Ellis.
- We've launched a paperless Direct Debit facility to make it easier than ever for people to pay their [BSBI membership subscription](#).
- County pages for South Northumberland, Berwickshire, North Ebeudes, Easter Ross and Orkney have all been updated to include new newsletters, Rare Plant Registers and other resources for local botanists. Links to all county pages and updated contact details for County Recorders are available via the [Local Botany page](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

A link to BSBI *eNews* is sent out to 380 subscribers, including Recorders, Referees, staff, committee members and ordinary members. A total of 162 County Recorders subscribe (67 in England, 44 in Scotland, 35 in Ireland and 15 in Wales). But it is freely available to all on the [BSBI eNews](#) page of the BSBI website. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. BSBI *eNews* is *normally* published on, or near, the last Friday of each month so

contributions should ideally reach me at least two days before that. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles appearing in BSBI eNews.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer