

BSBI eNews – May 2020

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

BSBI position on the COVID 19 Coronavirus

BSBI's position on the COVID 19 Coronavirus can be found on our website here: <https://bsbi.org/covid-19-coronavirus>. This page is updated as and when the government guidance and our response to it changes. It was last updated on the 20th April to reflect cancellations to all our meetings until the end of June, and to any with an indoor or residential element until the end of July. Any activity carried out under BSBI's name must be done in full compliance with government advice. Our insurance cover will be invalid otherwise.

BSBI is speaking regularly with other recording societies and NGO's to inform our position. We will continue to do so as government advice changes over the coming months to determine when and what activities can resume. We will continue to reflect our position on our dedicated webpage and through messages in BSBI eNews.

[Jane Houldsworth](#), Head of Operations & [Chris Miles](#), Chair of the Board of Trustees

Activities 2020

This is probably a good point to remind you about our new, updated [Activities 2020](#) webpage that pulls together some of the activities that you can enjoy while under lockdown.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Rare Plant Registers

Last month, I suggested that there had never been a better time to consider drafting a new Rare Plant Register - or updating an existing one – now that Atlas 2020 fieldwork, digitisation and much of the validation have been completed. However I completely omitted to point out that there is a dedicated [Rare Plant Register page](#) on the BSBI website that includes the [County Rare Plant Register Guidelines](#) to help you make a start.

It's the perfect botanical desk exercise to keep you happily engaged at home during the lockdown! It might also be useful in identifying the odd validation issue. And once you have a draft Register, you then have the perfect tool to guide interesting detective field work in a post-Coronavirus world!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Atlas Validation

Many of you will have recently received queries from me as I go through the distribution maps for native taxa checking for anomalies, new hectad records, etc. Thank you very much to those who have already responded. I'll be sending another batch of queries out to County Recorders by mid-May at the latest, perhaps earlier, depending on how long this rather rubbish weather lasts. Thanks also to County Recorders who have completed validation for their respective county, or are continuing to check records. It is all extremely useful for us as we check the latest maps for Britain and Ireland.

As a special plea, the checking of maps for new hectad records of native taxa that are uncommon in your county, but common nationally/elsewhere, would be particularly helpful to me. I try my best to pick up on oddities/outliers, but inevitably will have missed some, and your local knowledge is critical in helping to make the final published maps as clean as possible.

As ever, if you have any questions about the validation process, please do get in touch.

[Peter Stroh](#), BSBI England Officer

BSBI Vice-County Annual Reports for 2019

Thank you to everyone who submitted an Annual Report for 2019 and completed the accompanying questionnaire. The collated [Irish](#), [Welsh](#) & [Scottish](#) reports are available on the BSBI country webpages and the English reports will shortly appear in the new English Newsletter.

They make fascinating reading - about how different vice-counties tackled [Atlas 2020](#) fieldwork in its final year, whether they achieved their targets, how they got on with digitisation and validation and some of their most notable finds. And about the huge diversity of local initiatives, such as Rare Plant Registers, checklists, local groups, local field meetings, public talks and working with partners. The BSBI is truly indebted to our enthusiastic and dedicated network of County Recorders and to our members, supporters, referees and everyone else who contributes. Thank you!

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

BSBI Insurance

BSBI provides insurance cover for its activities in Britain and Ireland and recorders might be interested to know a little of the detail and how it relates to them. On occasion, land owners have requested a copy of BSBI's insurance policy in order to allow access to their land for plant recording purposes.

BSBI takes out public and employers liability (which includes professional indemnity) insurance which covers all (legal!) recording activity directed by and for the benefit of BSBI, e.g. as described in the *Recording Strategy* (2010) or in VCR or Atlas 2020 guidelines or for individuals participating in our projects; New Year Plant Hunt, the Garden Wildflower Hunt, etc. This applies to both BSBI members and non-members.

This insurance extends to activity carried out by **some** local botany groups, but only in certain circumstances (e.g. where BSBI controls activity, there is no other affiliation with other organisations etc, etc). Given the variation of local groups, please contact Jane Houldsworth to discuss your local circumstances to determine whether your group is covered by BSBI insurance. Please don't assume it is without checking first!

To discuss this or request a copy of our policy note to help with land access requests, please contact:
Jane Houldsworth (jane.houldsworth@bsbi.org)

BSBI Annual Summer Meeting

We had a great programme of field meetings lined up for the [BSBI Annual Summer Meeting](#) at Melrose in the Scottish Borders in July and over 30 members had booked. Sadly, we have had to cancel the event in line with BSBI policy and government guidance. We have been in touch with everyone who was booked and are arranging full refunds. As there already is an Annual Summer Meeting planned for 2021, on Guernsey, 21-28 May, we are planning to postpone the Melrose Annual Summer Meeting to Friday 8 - Monday 11 July 2022. We hope things might be back to some kind of normality by then.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Committee for England

As Chair of the Committee for England I organised a series of Zoom meetings for the England vice-county recorders in April. This was originally to replace the postponed Regional Recorders' Workshop, but was then extended to cover all of England. Many issues were discussed during the meetings and notes will appear in the first England Newsletter, which I hope to complete in May. The Newsletter will aim to include material of relevance to England, and I'd welcome contributions from anyone who would like to send material. It will be for all members, so contributions by, or for, beginners would be particularly appreciated, especially as this will help balance some of the more technical material from the Zoom meetings.

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

BSBI News

The April issue of *BSBI News* has been published and all members should now have received their print copies. Members whose copy has been sent to their place of employment, while they are stuck at home under lockdown, need not despair: they can access electronic versions of the current issue, and all recent issues, via the password-protected [members-only area of the BSBI website](#). Please email the Communications Officer if you can't remember your password and don't forget to include either your membership number or your postal address.

For the first time ever, we are making some of the content in this latest issue of *BSBI News* available to non-members. A [five-page sample issue](#) can be viewed or downloaded and a [seven-page sample article, about apps for plant identification](#), is also available. Members are encouraged to share these two samples of our much-loved membership newsletter as widely as possible and to remind non-members that receiving three issues each year of *BSBI News* is just one of the advantages of [becoming a BSBI member](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Scottish Newsletter

The [2020 BSBI Scottish Newsletter](#) was published during April in electronic form only. It's another bumper issue with articles on climate change and montane species in Kirkcudbright, a new alien fern species from Arran, a report from last year's Recording Week near Loch Ness as well as all the regular features such as the report on the Scottish Botanists' Conference, exhibit abstracts and VC Annual Reports. Being online and without the constraints of printing, it has many more images than normal and we've included links for further information. It's a great read – take a look! Many thanks again to the editor, Angus Hannah for another splendid edition!

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

Irish Botanical News

The latest edition of [Irish Botanical News](#) was published in March. It includes interesting pieces on *Epipactis dunensis* – a new addition to the Irish flora, three hybrid sedges new to Co. Meath, *Rumex maritimus* & *Chenopodium rubrum* in E. Cork, the Irish [Aquatic Plant Project](#) and on Recording for Atlas 2020 in 2019. There are also reports from Limerick, Wexford, Leitrim & County Down and the 2019 Field Meeting reports. All of which makes for a great read. Take a look!

[Sarah Pierce](#), Ireland Officer

The Passion in Plants

In the week running up to Easter, BBC Radio 4 ran an interesting programme about how tree and flower species came to play a part in telling the Easter story. It was by writer and naturalist, Bob Gilbert. It was originally broadcast in five fifteen minute instalments over the week, but an omnibus version can be heard until the 12 May on [BBC Sounds](#).

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

New resources for Taraxophiles

There is a new [Dandelions page](#) on the BSBI website, with tips on identification and collecting, and links to the new dandelion species pages written by the BSBI Taraxacum referee, who is putting together accounts for all British and Irish species. There is a diagram showing the parts of a dandelion, keys to sections and links to the BSBI Handbook for Dandelions, to blogposts and PPT presentations, and to sources of ID help on social media.

Links are also included on the page to the [slides](#) and [video presentation](#) for an online dandelion identification course, held on 25th April by ecologist Joshua Styles. The course attracted more than 300 participants.

It is hoped that this new style of webpage for difficult genera will encourage more people to tackle identification. The best way to do this is of course to [join BSBI](#) and gain access to our 100+ expert referees!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI member seeks long-lost botanist

I have received the following enquiry from a BSBI member, Jo Jones, who is also the Co-ordinator of the Breckland Flora Group:

“I am organising a celebration of 50 years since the establishment of the Arable Weed Reserve adjacent to Weeting Heath in Norfolk. The Reserve was started in 1970 when Ann Jones, a student, worked with a local farmer and seeded 10 acres with rare Brecks flora. I am trying to track down Ann Jones, both to invite her to the celebrations, to learn in more detail from her exactly what she did and so she can know how the work she started is flourishing. Quite how our celebration will go ahead in the current climate is uncertain, but whatever we do, to find her would be fantastic.

“I had a look down BSBI’s members list (as a member myself) and did not see her name. She may of course not be a member. Alternatively, she may have married and changed her name. Or a member

may know of her. I wondered if there is any way that I could put out a message through BSBI channels to try and locate her?"

If you have any information that might help Jo get in touch with Ann Jones, please could you get in touch with me and I will pass on the message. Thank you.

[Gwynn Ellis](#), BSBI Membership Secretary

New on the BSBI website in April

- A new [Definitions webpage](#) was launched, with definitions of terms such as 'native', alien', 'archaeophyte' and 'neophyte', and notes on how these categories apply to the [Garden Wildflower Hunt](#).
- An [archaeophytes page](#) was set up, with a table listing all the archaeophytes of Britain, as recognised by various authorities.
- A webpage was published featuring an [opinion piece by Kevin Walker](#) on the pros and cons of wildflower seed mixes. This was in response to wide interest in this issue on social media.
- The FISC scheduled to take place in Kent in June has been postponed due to Covid-19. The new date can be found on the [FISC page](#) but participants are encouraged to check with the FISC centre nearer the time.
- The [Wales](#) and [Charophytes](#) pages were updated to include links to the new [Red List of Welsh Stoneworts](#).
- The [Latest News](#), [videos](#) and [BSBI News](#) pages were updated (see above); pages for the [Welsh AGM](#), [Annual Summer Meeting](#) and [Field Meetings & Indoor Events](#), were all updated to notify people of events cancelled or postponed due to [Covid-19](#).
- The order form on the [Hawkweeds of south-east England](#) webpage was amended to correct an error in the address for anyone ordering by post. The special offer price on this latest BSBI Handbook of £25.50 + P&P (compared to the RRP of £35.00) is available to everyone, BSBI members and non-members alike, until the end of May.
- County pages and links for Bedfordshire, Brecknock, Warwickshire, Northumberland and Shetland were updated with newsletters, RPRs or lists of axiophytes. Links to all county pages and updated contact details for County Recorders (including East Cork) are available via the [Local Botany page](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in April

We published [Paul Ashton's 'Notes from lockdown'](#); April's '[Wildflower of the Month](#)' featured snake's-head fritillary with an account by Kevin Walker, considering whether or not this species is native in Britain; there were was a [report on the first month of the Garden Wildflower Hunt](#); and we published three blogposts about *BSBI News* (see above): a [peek inside the latest issue](#); the new [sample issue](#); and an [interview with Hamlyn Jones](#) about his review for *BSBI News* of apps for plant ID.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

A link to BSBI eNews is sent out to 369 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