

BSBI eNews – October 2020

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

BSBI Strategy 2021-24

We are pleased that we can now share the new [BSBI Strategy 2021-24](#) with you: it sets out an ambitious plan to deliver more training and learning; to continue to collect well-structured and accurate data to inform scientific research and policy to address the loss of biodiversity; it explains how we aim to reach more people and share our passion for plants in a variety of ways post-[Atlas 2020](#). On the [Strategy webpage](#) you will also find a list of Frequently Asked Questions explaining some of the associated structural and governance changes. [BSBI members](#) will be asked to approve some elements of these changes at the [AGM in November](#), or you can contact us if you have any other questions.

[Lynne Farrell](#), President; Chris Miles, Chair Board of Trustees & Jane Houldsworth, Head of Operations

Ireland Officer Changes

As many people will now know, I am due to begin maternity leave on 19 October, so will be off duty for a number of months. I am very pleased that while I am away, Paul Green has kindly agreed to take the reins as Ireland Officer! As well as being an incredible botanist, County Recorder, trainer and editor of [Irish Botanical News](#), he was previously the BSBI Wales Officer, so I know he'll do a fantastic job.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Atlas 2020 Progress

Validation continues for [distribution maps](#). The aim is to finish all maps by March 31st 2021, at which point the 'cleaned' data will be ready for analyses. To date (28th Sept 2020), 818 maps have been completed out of the 1598 native taxa to be mapped, and many of the remainder have had a first check. As well as the sterling work undertaken by County Recorders when validating county datasets, several volunteer specialists will be checking maps for 'difficult' groups over the autumn and winter. In addition, Andy Amphlett and Paul Green will be checking a selected list of taxa with new hectad records for Scotland and for Ireland and Wales respectively.

Volunteer editors are busy writing their captions, with many having completed a draft. All draft captions will be edited/checked by me and Kevin Walker prior to publication in early 2022.

Discussions with BSBI and CEH concerning the content and design of the Online Atlas continue to progress well, with several (Zoom) meetings held this year, the latest on 30th September. Further down the line, we will be focusing on developing the structure for a summary report for GB, and a separate one for Ireland. The GB report will include 2-3 page sections for Wales, England and Scotland, in addition to an overall summary of key findings. Finally, after various unofficial straw polls at Conferences over the past two years, I have been investigating options for a limited print run of maps and captions. As ever, if you have any questions about any of the above, please do get in touch.

[Pete Stroh](#), England Officer and Scientific Officer

MapMate updates

I usually encourage folk to keep up to date with [MapMate](#) patches and software updates. So, for example, everyone should have applied the important vascular plant patches 523 and 524 discussed in the [August BSBI eNews](#). If you now logon to [MapMate's User Zone](#) you should see that both these patches now come up as "Verified".

However, I wouldn't necessarily rush to download and install the latest version of the Replicator (which is really a separate app from MapMate itself). [MapMate's Alerts Issue 143](#) explains that this is only required if your MapMate fails to successfully generate sync (sqz) files - probably after a Windows 10 update. If you suddenly begin to experience problems syncing then this software update *may* help but be warned, any Custom queries (in Analysis > User queries) you may have will be lost. You will have to add these back manually - which will be easier if you copy them all individually into text files *before* you apply the software update.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

MapMate & Atlas 2020

Thank you to all the County Recorders who reset their MapMate sync record and synced their entire VC dataset to the BSBI Database (DDb) as requested in the [August BSBI eNews](#). Since then 129 MapMate syncs have been received at the DDb with just under 200,000 records. These are mainly for 2020 but included 3,600 for the Atlas 2020 period, and about 100 *Zostera* records.

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

Searching the BSBI Database for multiple grid references

Another useful but perhaps lesser known fact about the DDb is that you can search for records in multiple grid squares (references) simultaneously. This is particularly useful if you want to find all the records relating to a particular area, like an island: say Fair Isle, half way between Orkney and Shetland. You could just search for all records with Fair Isle as the *place name* but that will return less than half the total number of records. Far better is to search for records in all the OS grid squares which encompass the island. For Fair Isle it is simple because we can just use hectad grid references, because of its isolated position, though as luck would have it, we need four of them! [Here is the query](#) with the four hectad grid references separated by spaces.

You can mix grid reference types and have any type of grid reference that the DDb normally recognises. In search areas where you need to define the boundary more precisely, like inland areas or less isolated islands, compile a list all the 4 figure monads and / or 6 figure 100m squares, separated by spaces, that most accurately describe your area of interest, copy them into the DDb *grid reference* field and search. Having taken time to work out the grid references you may wish to save the query by clicking *save query* to the far right of the *display results* button, so you can easily return to it.

You can develop the query further to only return notable records in the search area by entering "National Status" or "GB Red Data List" in the *checklist/linked attribute* field. [Like this](#) example.

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

How many plant records are still lurking in old notebooks?

In early August, Rod Corner (joint County Recorder for Selkirk and [Roxburghshire](#)) sent me a short but very useful set of records for 1973 from Meall Fuar-mhonaidh, a hill on the west side of Loch Ness, that he found while searching through old notebooks during lockdown.

This prompted me to search out my own old notebooks, which go back to 1981. I have now gone through all the pre-2000 notebooks, checking any plant records against the DDb for omissions. Early notebooks rarely used grid references, usually using place names. Sometimes the place names were those used locally and do not appear on maps. Frustrating! But I could usually assign records to a grid ref, albeit at low precision. In all I have now entered an additional 1882 pre-2000 records, of 635 taxa, from 15 Vice-counties. See [this DDb query](#). Having greater experience and knowledge now, I was able to assess my old plant records and discard a few suspect ones!

The records add very few hectad or tetrad records but they do add useful detail at a local level, and it is pleasing to have my own records securely archived on the DDb. Of the 1500 or so taxa that I have recorded, just under 10% only have pre-2000 records. Quite a few of these I can remember vividly, though the memory of other sightings has faded ...

[Andy Amphlett](#), BSBI joint Recorder for Easternness

Field Meetings

The [Covid situation](#) continues to impose restrictions on what we can and cannot do, but at least as individuals it is still possible (in some areas) to get out and record. Here in Cambridge, autumn seems to have come more quickly than it has over the last few years and more and more dead plant identification is required. In order to help clarify whether plant hunting in England ranks alongside grouse shooting (and can therefore have up to at least 15 participants) I have approached the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in the first instance with the question. If we can establish a process it may be possible to hold at least non-residential field meetings before the spring. As the uncertainty over residential meetings is likely to continue for some time, we have made the decision to cancel the Guernsey [Annual Summer Meeting](#) (ASM) in 2021, but hope to hold it there in 2023, with an ASM in 2022 in Scotland.

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

Aquatic Plant Project

The Irish Aquatic Plant Project work is now wrapping up for the year. Nick Stewart ran two fantastic webinars and a really successful online aquatic plant ID workshop for us (the first BSBI has ever done!). The slides and videos from the webinars are available to view on the [Aquatic Plant Project webpage](#) and you can also view the videos on the BSBI YouTube channel's [Aquatic Plants playlist](#).

The project also included four days of recording to try to update pre-2000 records. Paul Green collected 454 records in mainly in Longford, Westmeath, Roscommon, including the first records from outside of Wexford of *Callitriche truncata* (Short-leaved Water-starwort), a rare Flora Protection Order species. Many thanks to Nick and Paul – and to NPWS for funding this project.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM

The Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM was held online last Saturday, 26 Sept, and included a welcome address from BSBI President Lynne Farrell, four talks covering [Atlas 2020](#), the [National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#) in Northern Ireland, the Rare Plant Monitoring Scheme run by [NBDC](#), and the [Irish Grasslands Project](#). This was followed by our first online AGM. Videos of the four talks will be available on the [Irish Autumn Meeting webpage](#) and on the [BSBI YouTube channel](#) soon.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Scottish Botanists' Conference 2020

The Scottish Botanists' Conference will be held entirely online over the weekend of Saturday 31st October and Sunday 1st November. We will have an exciting programme of talks, workshops and exhibits spread - all online and recorded so you can view them live or later (or again). No travelling involved! Registration is **essential** but there is no booking fee. To register and for more information including the programme, click [Scottish Botanists' Conference 2020](#). Do please consider exhibiting your exciting botanical finds of 2020 and include your exhibit title while registering.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

BSBI Exhibition Meeting 2020: exhibitor registration now open

The [BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) takes place on 21st November and this year's it's entirely online. There is no need to register to attend the Meeting and enjoy the [fabulous programme](#) we have lined up for you, but you do need to register if you'd like to have an exhibit. One advantage of a virtual Meeting is unlimited space so if you've never exhibited before, this is your chance!

There are lots of options for how your exhibit can be displayed, ranging from a traditional poster to a gallery of images and text to a simple photograph of a pressed specimen. Our [exhibitor registration facility](#) is now open so please register asap so we can all avoid any last-minute rush! Or email us at meetings@bsbi.org if you'd like to discuss a possible exhibit.

Jodey Peyton, Chair, BSBI Events & Communications Committee
Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020

All BSBI members are invited to attend the AGM which this year will be held online. The AGM is only open to members and you will need to register in advance. Please visit the [AGM webpage](#) for details of how to register; to view the agenda; and for deadlines if you wish to raise a matter for discussion, arrange proxy voting or nominate an individual for election as a Trustee.

[Steve Gater](#), BSBI Hon. Gen. Secretary

State of the World's Plants and Fungi 2020

The [latest report](#) on the [State of the World's Plants and Fungi](#) has just been published. We were co-authors of the report and also on [one of the accompanying research papers](#) which are published in a [special issue of Plants, People, Planet](#). There will be a State of the World's Plants and Fungi symposium at RBG Kew on 13th - 15th October: more details [here](#).

[Kevin Walker](#), BSBI Head of Science & [Pete Stroh](#), BSBI England Officer and Scientific Officer

Europe's smallest and rarest fern turns up in the west of Ireland – from the tropical cloud-forest?

One of the most jaw-dropping papers we've ever published in [British & Irish Botany](#) concerns Dr Rory Hodd's find of *Stenogrammitis myosuroides* in Killarney, [Co. Kerry](#). The genus is completely new to Europe; the tiny fern's nearest relatives occur in the neo-tropics and it's so rare, it doesn't even have a common name. Could it have been lurking in Killarney, unrecorded and overlooked, for thousands of years? Proof that there are always new finds to be made by the dedicated botanical recorder! Read the paper [here](#) and read the story behind this amazing find [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Photographic Competition

Last call for entries to the [2020 BSBI Photographic Competition](#)! Email them to the competition organiser, [Natalie Harmsworth](#), by the 23rd October. Remember the photographs don't have to be taken in 2020 so you can select images from your back catalogue in one or other (or both) categories: 1) Natives and 2) Aliens. The competition entries will be displayed online at the Scottish Botanists' Conference and the Annual Exhibition Meeting.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

BSBI membership: autumn special offer

Most BSBI *eNews* readers will already be [BSBI members](#) but if you are not, then this is the best month of the year to join: as of today, 1st October, join for 2021 and your membership will start at once, so you get 15 months of membership benefits for the price of 12 months. That's great value! Find out more [here](#).

Please forward [this link](#) to any friends or colleagues who you think might enjoy BSBI membership. You can also take out a subscription as a gift - details [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New Atlas (Atlas 2000) Mastercards

A reminder: email me, Oli Pescott, if you wish copies of New Atlas hectad mastercards or of the 1987-88 Monitoring Scheme cards for your Vice-County. See the [September BSBI eNews](#) for further details.

[Dr Oli Pescott](#), UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

New on the BSBI News & Views blog in September

In the latest of a series of blogposts from BSBI President Lynne Farrell, we reported on the [plants and butterflies she spotted](#) in her local area during August; we [revisited *Orchid Summer*](#) with author and naturalist Jon Dunn; we shared a report of [May blossom flowering in September](#); we gave you a [glimpse into the latest issue of *BSBI News*](#), which has now gone out to all our members; and we featured a [full-length interview with Mike Waller](#), co-author of the newly-published *Britain's Orchids*.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website

To follow latest news and updates across the BSBI website throughout the month, please keep an eye on the [News page](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

A link to BSBI *eNews* is sent out to 394 subscribers, including Recorders, Referees, staff, committee members and ordinary members. A total of 166 County Recorders subscribe (67 in England, 46 in Scotland, 36 in Ireland and 17 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