

BSBI eNews – September 2020

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

BSBI's Policy on Nature Conservation

During 2019 members of BSBI's Council developed a [Policy on Nature Conservation](#) which aimed to clarify BSBI's role in the conservation of wild plants in Britain and Ireland. In 2020 BSBI's trustees approved this document, which is now available to view [on our website](#). BSBI has already followed this policy by submitting objections to the high-profile cases at Askham Bog and Coul Links and future issues of our [News & Views blog](#) and [BSBI News](#) will contain pieces on how BSBI's data contributes to plant conservation.

[Lynne Farrell](#) (President) and [Chris Miles](#) (Chair of the Board)

MapMate & Atlas 2020

Thank you to all the County Recorders who reset their MapMate synch record and synched their entire VC dataset to the BSBI Database (DDb) as requested in the [August BSBI eNews](#). Since then 72 MapMate synchs have been received at the DDb with 85,000 records. These are mainly for 2020 but included 1,500 for the Atlas period of which 1,000 were for 2019. But (strangely) only one *Zostera* record.

If you regularly contribute records via MapMate to a County Recorder, but haven't already updated your MapMate, entered any outstanding *Zostera* records, reset synch and synched with them (as per the August BSBI eNews), can you please do so now.

Likewise, County Recorders, if you have yet to follow this procedure and synch to the DDb, please do it now – or at least as soon as you receive any synchs from regular contributors.

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

MapMate Validation

It is worth checking periodically that you have as many of MapMate's data validation options ticked as possible – particularly if you are a relatively new County Recorder. Take a look – open the Data Entry window, File > Properties and click the Validation tab. The most useful check to select are *Warn if this is a duplicate record*, *Warn if this is a VC Record*, *Warn if this is a 10km record* and *Warn if this is a first for a recorder*. Then of course tick the box to Enable Data Validation and finally click OK.

You might also want to *Warn if this is Tetrad (2km) record*, if you already have loads of tetrad records. What you don't want is a warning message every time you enter a record, just every time you enter an unusual one! But remember you can adjust these settings quickly and easily at any time.

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

Searching the BSBI Database for records in bounded areas

It is useful to learn how to use the BSBI Database (DDb) to list records in a bounded area – like a SSSI or a Local Wildlife Site. Login to the DDb and slowly type the name of the site (e.g. SSSI name) in the

bounded area field and wait until a list of possible options to appear. You may have to keep typing to narrow the options down until you see the one that you are looking for. Or click the down arrow in the adjacent *area type* field to bring up a shortlist of bounded area types (like SSSI, Local Wildlife Site, National Park, etc) and select “SSSI” to reduce the search to just SSSIs.

Once you have found the site you are looking for, click it firmly, then decide whether you want records entirely within its boundary (*contained within*) or overlapping its boundary (*include intersections*) in the adjacent field. *Contained within* is usually the better option. *Include intersections* means that records with hectad grid refs that overlap the site will be returned. Enter other search constraints as required, such as a from date so the search will only return more recent records. As an example [here is a list of all records contained entirely within Arthur’s Seat Volcano SSSI since 1980](#).

Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland Distribution Database > search

Tools New maps search search history

Search form Search templates

search for Records (specimens or observations)

taxon taxon name

grid reference grid square

county/region vc

date recorded from 1980 from for vague record date ranges use start date

recorder any role person or organisation broad match

checklist/linked attribute checklist value/value (optional)

bounded area Arthur's Seat Volcano include this area contained within buffer

place name place name broad match

more options

Current search-form filter records where recorded since 1980 and area within Arthur's Seat Volcano

display results email results download results save query reset search form

help...

Finally, if you just want to see notable species such as Nationally Rare and Scarce species enter “National Status” in the *checklist/linked attribute* field. [Like this](#). Or if you are looking for records of species that are on the GB Red Data List as *endangered* or *vulnerable* [here is the query](#).

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

New Atlas (Atlas 2000) Mastercards

The Biological Records Centre (BRC) has scanned copies of the New Atlas hectad mastercards and of the 1987-88 Monitoring Scheme cards. Please email me (Dr Oli Pescott) for copies. A download link will then be sent by email. BRC also has copies of detailed Juniper cards for England (from an historic project managed by Dr Lena K. Ward), and scans of pink species cards. We cannot provide VC-specific sets of pink species cards (they are organised by species across numerous PDFs), but we can send out those PDFs that relate to a certain species. However, BRC cannot respond to requests for large numbers of species: please limit your requests to one or two species at a time. The other option is I send you the entirety of the scanned pink card archive, which will be a ~8 Gb download. BRC also holds physical copies of the field cards from the first Atlas (often at sub-hectad resolutions), and are happy to respond to enquiries concerning these, although, as for the pink cards, these are not scanned and so large requests or extensive queries will not normally be able to be dealt with. After COVID-related restrictions are lifted, recorders will be free to visit the BRC archives as has previously been the case.

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

Field Meetings

Summer is nearly over and the plants seem to have recognised this. In Cambridgeshire it is almost the case that I have to recognise species by their dead flowers – perhaps an area for a future id guide. Some independent county groups have been able to resume field excursions, though Government guidance varies across Britain and Ireland over how many can take part, and guidance at a local level may differ again where further restrictions are applied. In most parts of England the limit is six, whilst other countries may allow more. I have been following best practice with my local meetings by using the full [risk assessment from the BSBI Guidance on Leading field meetings](#). Although this might seem complex, it is actually quite straightforward as most potential risks have already been identified, along with control measures, and all you need to do is put “yes” or “no”. At the very end is a section for any additional risks and that is where the Covid control measures should go – usually a case of limiting numbers and maintaining social distance. After that, the only question is whether the weather will co-operate!

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

BSBI Ireland Autumn Meeting and AGM

This year's Autumn Meeting and AGM will take place on **Saturday, 26 September**. The event will be held online only, but we hope that will allow more people to participate than are usually able to in person. The meeting will begin at 10am, with talks on Atlas 2020, the [National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#) in Northern Ireland, the Rare Plant Monitoring Scheme run by NBDC, and the [Irish Grasslands Project](#). We'll have a short break before the AGM, where you can hear about what's been happening in BSBI this year, and BSBI members can vote for new appointments to the Committee for Ireland. The meeting will end by 1pm.

Irish members will receive details by email from Cfl Secretary, Paula O'Meara. Details including how to register will also be posted on the [Autumn Meeting and AGM webpage](#) soon. We hope to (virtually) see you there!

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting & Scottish Botanists' Conference

Both the [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) (AEM) and the [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) (SBC) will go ahead later this year but as virtual rather than physical events. The AEM will be on **Saturday 21 November** and the SBC on **Saturday and Sunday, 31 October and 1 November**. Both events aim to have the usual great programmes of talks, workshops and exhibits - all online and recorded so you can view them live or later (or again). No travelling involved – and you can even participate in both events and the Irish Autumn Meeting!

A key part of both events is the exhibits, which stimulate a lot of interest, activity and discussion. We plan to mount virtual (online) exhibitions, but it will take time to set up so could exhibitors please come up with their exhibition ideas earlier than usual.

As well as the usual methods of preparing posters or laying out specimens with text, exhibitors could also consider sending us their exhibit text in Word accompanied by electronic images (e.g. photographs of those specimens). We can also include live links, e.g. to websites, video clips etc. and there will be the option to add a 1-2 minute flash talk where you tell us all about your exhibit. An

online-only exhibition offers us more scope than ever before and no space restrictions so if you've never exhibited before – this is the year to have a go!

But please book your exhibit in *at least* one month prior to the event, i.e. by the end of September for the SBC and by 21st October for the AEM. Further details on the event webpages, in the October BSBI *eNews* and the next issue of *BSBI News*.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer & [Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Aquatic Plant Project

Continuing the [Aquatic Plant Project](#) which started last year, we are offering some online training with aquatic plant expert Nick Stewart to help people build their aquatic ID skills and hopefully inspire a bit more aquatic recording this autumn!

There will be two webinars with Nick, both free and open to everyone:

- **Introduction to Aquatic Plant Identification. 5 September at 10am.** [Register here.](#)
- **Stonewort Identification. 12 September at 10am.** [Register here.](#)

We're also going to trial an interactive online **Aquatic Plant Identification Workshop on 19 September at 10am**. Nick will lead a live workshop, identifying specimens using a digital microscope and participants will be able to ask questions throughout. Numbers will be limited to 20, with first preference going to anyone actively recording aquatic plants in Ireland. If you are interested in this, please contact me. For more details on any of these events, please visit the [Aquatic Plant Project](#) webpage. Thanks to NPWS for funding this project.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Irish Grasslands Project

Our Irish Grasslands Project was a big hit this summer, with 500 people attending at least one of our webinars live, and recordings of the webinars being viewed nearly 3000 times so far. Thank you everyone for your support! Recordings of all the webinars are available on the [Irish Grasslands project page](#), along with slides from the presentations and useful lists of links and resources, and the videos are also available on the [BSBI YouTube channel](#). We'll continue to update the project page during September. Also watch out for our new, downloadable *BSBI Ireland Annex I Grasslands Resources*. The first one on *Molinia* Meadows will be available soon. For news of the project, keep an eye on [#IrishGrasslandsProject](#) and [#IrishGrassOfTheWeek](#) on twitter and facebook! Thanks to NPWS and CEDaR for supporting this project.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Britain's Orchids

There's a new book, due out on 29th September, about the native orchids of Britain and Ireland. Written by BSBI members Mike Waller and Sean Cole, and featuring BSBI distribution maps, *Britain's Orchids* is published by Princeton Wild Guides. A 30% discount and free shipping are offered to any BSBI members who wish to pre-order a copy. Visit the password-protected [BSBI members-only area](#) to find out how to claim your discount. Find out more about the book and the authors on [this webpage](#) (due to go live on 1st September) and check out our new [Orchid ID page](#) for more links and resources.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

British & Irish Botany

We are due to publish our biggest ever issue of *British & Irish Botany* on Monday 31 August. This bumper issue will be available to [view or download in full here](#) and features some fascinating papers from across BSBI's geography, including a joint paper by Rory Hodd and Fred Rumsey about the exciting new *Stenogrammitis* (fern) find in Ireland, a piece on the wild plants of *Scotia Illustrata* (1684), an account of common broomrape in the British Isles, a list of vascular plants endemic to these islands and much more. [Submissions](#) from recorders are invited for publication in our November issue - please [contact us](#) to discuss your proposal.

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

On the BSBI News & Views blog in August

We reported on the steps botanist Sarah is taking to [boost biodiversity in her Somerset village](#) and the obstacles she is having to overcome; in the latest of a series of blogposts from BSBI President Lynne Farrell, we reported on [what Lynne is spotting in her local area](#); we shared Howard's find of a [very strange Frog Orchid](#) and Mike Wilcox's [request for seeds of the two forms of Prickly Lettuce](#); still to come: August's Wildflower of the Month, chosen by BSBI Head of Science Kevin Walker, will be Autumn Lady's-tresses.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

A link to BSBI eNews is sent out to 390 subscribers, including Recorders, Referees, staff, committee members and ordinary members. A total of 168 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