BSBI *eNews* – January 2020

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

New Year Plant Hunt

The ninth New Year Plant Hunt will run from 1st to 4th January 2020. Details of how to take part are here, and results will appear in real time on the interactive results map. If you are organising a group Hunt in your area, please send us details to nyplanthunt@bsbi.org that we can share on the website.

Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer

Atlas 2020 Data – Last Call

It would be a great pity if any Atlas records gathered over the past twenty years don't contribute to it. Although the previously stated deadline for data submission is the 31st December 2019, realistically there is a small window before the return to work after the New Year holiday.

So, everyone should check urgently that they have forwarded all the records they have collected to the respective County Recorders. This includes records collected by County Recorders outside their own counties.

And County Recorders should check for:
- any missed recording cards or notebooks,
- any overlooked letters or emails with records and
- any overlooked letters or emails with determinations or confirmations.

It might even be worth sending a quick email to local group or other contributors making one final call for any outstanding records, but remember to include a short deadline for responses.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer

Atlas 2020 Data – Reset Sync Record

Please do a sync reset now, even if it appears all your data has gone through. It is incredibly easy for the MapMate synching process to go wrong and for records to fail to reach their intended destination and there are some bugs in MapMate that cause some edits to be missed from regular sync files.

So, if you contribute records to County Recorders (or *other* County Recorders) using MapMate then following on from the above article, please Reset Sync Record with each of them as your synch partner in turn and synch your data again. If it is successfully received and synched then you should receive an acknowledgement email.

As soon as County Recorders have received synchs from their main contributing synch partners they should reset their own sync record with the BSBI DDb as their synch partner and send a final synch. (Recorders can always send follow-up synchs if they subsequently receive late synchs.)

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer

Atlas 2020 Validation

As soon as the records are in and until April, the priority for County Recorders will be data validation. If you have not made a start on this already, check the priority records flagged up in your 'my county' page. There is guidance on validation and editing on the Atlas 2020 page, but if you need any help please do get in touch.
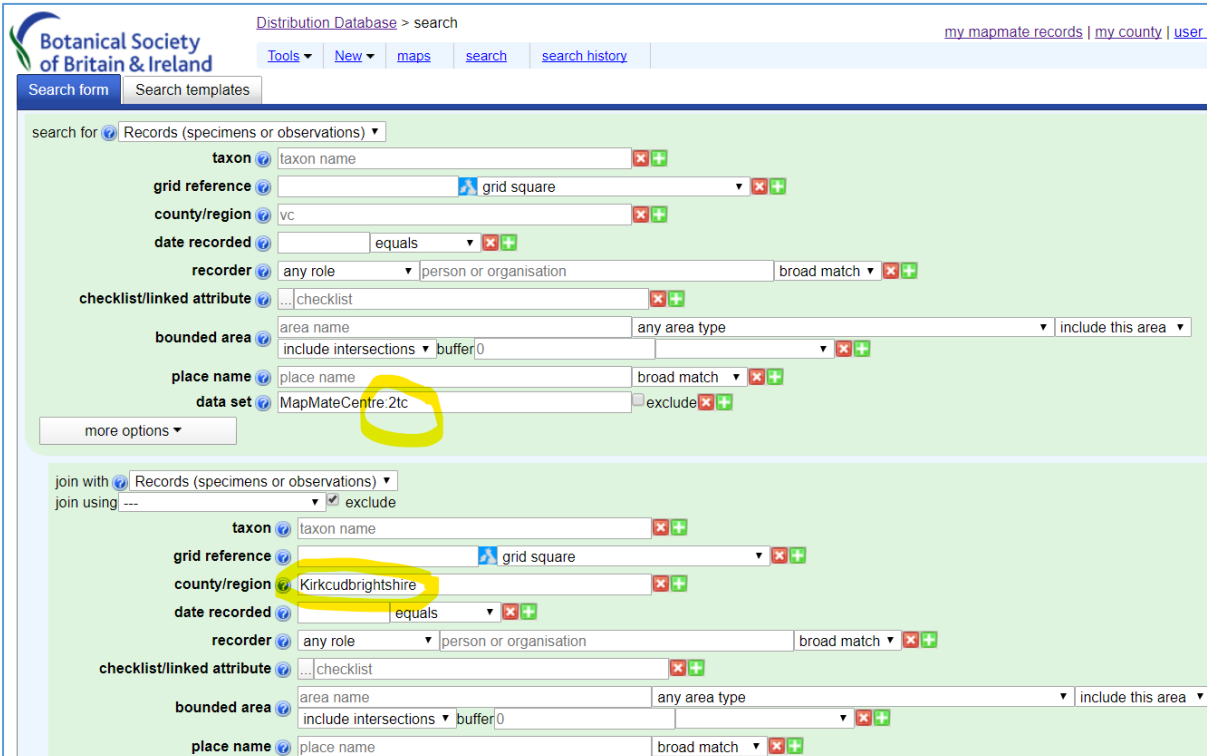
Pete Stroh, BSBI England Officer

Grid Reference and VC mismatches

One of the first things to check is whether records have been allocated the correct grid reference and VC. Normally the BSBI Database will spot mismatches and they will be included in the *Grid-reference – vice-county boundary matching* table in My County's Data Validation tab and annotated in search results with an asterisk if within 2km of the specified VC boundary, or with the ‡ symbol if > 2km from the specified VC. As the header for the table explains, records are hidden on public maps (and will be excluded from the Atlas) if a grid-reference is further than 2km from the specified county. So it would be great to get these records corrected - or rejected if correcting them is not straightforward.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer

Hidden Grid Reference and VC mismatches

Some mismatches may go unnoticed however, often due to MapMate's automatic allocation of sites to vice-counties when using the short-cut method of creating new sites. County Recorders can logon to the DDb and use this query to look for records they have created on their MapMate in vice-counties outside their own and then synched them to the DDb. You'll need to replace the CUK with yours in the *data set* field. And replace your VC in the *county/region* field in the joint query. Then click the *display results* button.

If you do find that records have been allocated incorrectly to an adjacent VC, then open your MapMate and open up the data entry window, Records > Properties and click the Defaults tab, and change the *Default to sites in*… to the incorrect VC in question (assuming it's not already set to "All"). Then find the record with the incorrect site details by entering the grid reference into the *Site* field then press return and select the exact match. Finally, pressing function F5 should bring up the full list of records with that site and grid reference. You will only need to correct one instance of the site and grid reference combination to correct all the incorrect records listed.

Once you have made all the required corrections you will need to synch them to the DDb.

<div align="right">Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer</div>

Salix fragilis & Salix euxina

Both Ken Adams and Andy Amphlett (in his *BSBI News* 142 article) have noticed that, due to a mis-interpretation of Stace 4 changes, some recorders have been recording *Salix fragilis* as *Salix euxina*. This is not correct. Most of our crack willow records formerly under *Salix fragilis* L. should now be recorded as *S*. x *fragilis* (*S. euxina* x *S. alba*). Only those formerly identified as the var. *decipiens* should now be recorded as *S. euxina* (a very rare willow, and certainly one that I have never knowingly seen). Furthermore, *Salix* x *fragilis* nothovar. *fragilis* is not the 'common' crack willow, and so if fragile willows have not been separated from the common nothovar. *russelliana*, they should be recorded as *S*. x *fragilis* agg.

There are records for *Salix euxina* from 79 vice-counties. Of these, there are more than 10 records from 24 vc's, with most in either Scotland or Ireland. There will, of course, be some genuine *S. euxina* records amongst these, but I suspect that the vast majority should be marked as the *S. fragilis* aggregate. Could you please have a look at the map in the DDb, and either correct records that you now know to be incorrect, or let me know so that I can make the changes?

<div align="right">Peter Stroh, BSBI England Officer</div>

Vice-County Annual Reports for 2019

The 2019 VC Annual Reports will be very interesting given the effort that has gone into recording in the final year of Atlas 2020. As noted in last month's BSBI *eNews* we will delay calling for the 2019 reports until February as we don't want to add to County Recorders' workloads at this crucial point for Atlas 2020. Guidance on the format, content and number of words will be published in the next issue of BSBI *eNews* and we will set up Survey Monkey to automatically collate and collate responses.

<div align="right">Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer</div>

BSBI Welsh Officer

I'm pleased to let you know that we've managed to secure funding to extend Barbara Brown's contract until the end of March 2020. You may be aware that it had been due to end at the end of 2019. We're hopeful that further funding opportunities will be announced in the New Year that mean we can extend her contract even further.

<div align="right">Jane Houldsworth, BSBI Head of Operations</div>

BSBI County Recorder in New Year's Honours List

Trevor James, long-term BSBI County Recorder for Hertfordshire and Receiving Editor for *BSBI News* 2008-17, has been awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition of his service to nature conservation. Here's the report in Trevor's local newspaper. Congratulations to Trevor from everyone at BSBI!

Jim McIntosh, BSBI *eNews* Editor

Field Meetings and Indoor Events in 2020

There is a new webpage listing all the national field meetings and indoor events in 2020. We've added facilities so you can search by time period, by country or county, and under five categories - General, Beginners, Training, Specialised or Recording - to help you find the kind of meeting or indoor event you are looking for. Clicking on an entry expands it so you can see more detail about that event and also gives you a handy link (the icon in the bottom left of each box) that can be forwarded to friends and colleagues or shared on social media.

Details of all national meetings and events for 2020, and reports on 2019 meetings, will appear in the 2020 *BSBI Yearbook* posted to members and available from early spring via the password-protected members-only area of the website. There is also a handy meetings diary which includes details of local meetings we know about, alongside all the national field meetings and indoor events.

We'd like to thank Tom Humphrey for help with setting up the new webpage and to the organisers of all meetings and events: many thanks for all your hard work throughout the year.

Louise Marsh, BSBI Communications Officer
Jonathan Shanklin, Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

BSBI grants programme

Applications open on 1st January for the following BSBI grants:
- Training Grants (up to £250) are aimed at aspiring botanists, from absolute beginner to improver, who'd like to attend a short course in plant ID.
- Plant Study Grants (up to £1000) are aimed at undergraduates and postgrads hoping to undertake a botanical project during vacation.
- Science & Research grants (up to £1000) support academic or amateur researchers carrying out work aimed at enhancing our knowledge of the British and Irish flora.

Application forms and further information are available via our Grants page from 1st January, where you can also see links to reports from previous grant recipients.

Please spread the word to anyone you think might benefit from a BSBI grant in 2020 and to any academics and trainers among your contacts. I've uploaded the Grants poster that was exhibited at the AEM to the Grants page and would be very grateful if you might post it on University notice boards and other institutions where it might be seen by potentially interested people.

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](#); it features several papers that will be of particular interest to botanical recorders: Oli Pescott, Tom Humphrey, Kevin Walker & Pete Stroh ask '[Temporal changes in distributions and the species atlas: How can British and Irish plant data shoulder the inferential burden](#)?'; Kevin and Tom have also teamed up with Simon Leach, Chris Preston, Paul Smith, David Pearman and Trevor James to co-author '[Recording plant status and regeneration during single visits](#)'. This issue also includes papers on bird-seed aliens, a hybrid comfrey, and a pink bindweed; a new species of *Alchemilla* is described and there is a vegetation analysis of a South Downs site over two decades.

[Submissions](#) are now invited for publication in 2020 - please [contact us](#) to discuss your proposal.

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

Botanical University Challenge

The third [Botanical University Challenge](#) will be held in February 2020. The idea was started by Jonathan Mitchley at Reading and me. Previously Reading have won twice, but Liverpool came close in 2019. We follow the BBC TV format of University Challenge, with starter question and three follow-up related questions, plus lots of picture rounds. Obviously, all questions are botanical in the widest sense. I am involved in writing and collating questions for Botanical University Challenge and would be grateful if BSBI *eNews* readers might suggest suitable questions in the format of starter question and three follow-ups.

[John Warren](#), Chair of Training & Education Committee

Special offer on *The Vegetative Key to the British Flora*

A reminder that BSBI members have until midnight on the 31st December to sign up for the pre-publication discount on the 2nd edition of [The *Vegetative Key to the British Flora*](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website in December
- The [New Year Plant Hunt page](#) was updated and there's a [new page listing more than 40 group Hunts](#) being organised across Britain and Ireland.
- The new [Field Meetings and Indoor Events page](#) went live (see note above).
- Martin Rand has very kindly updated his list of Stace 4 changes – download the list from the [Taxon Lists page](#).
- Dates for FISCs in 2020 went live. The FISC is the industry standard for assessing botanical survey skills. Head over to [the FISC page](#) to find out the dates and locations, download the flyer and follow the links to book your space.
- The [Ireland page](#) has been updated and there's new news on the [News page](#)!
- County pages for Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, Somerset and Kirkcudbrightshire have been updated with newsletters and details of events as well as the usual changes to email addresses. Links to county pages and contact details for County Recorders are available via the [Local Botany page.](#)
- Minutes of recent meetings of BSBI Council and the Board of Trustees have been uploaded to the password-protected [Governance website](#) and the Diary has been updated by Steve Gater, our new Hon. Gen. Sec.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in December

We told you about the [publication of the *Flora of Cambridgeshire*](#) by Alan Leslie; we alerted you to the [publication of the fourth issue of *British & Irish Botany*](#) (see note above); there were two posts by recipients of BSBI Training Grants – [one by Claire](#) and [one by Julie](#) – in the run-up to grant applications going live on 1ˢᵗ January (see above); we brought you a [Christmas message from Lynne Farrell](#), BSBI's new President; and there was a post about [the forthcoming New Year Plant Hunt](#) (see above) in which we hope you will all take part. Still to come before the end of the year: our summary of BSBI members' greatest achievements in 2020.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer