

BSBI eNews – October 2019

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

State of Nature 2019

The latest State of Nature Report has just been published (4th October) and makes sobering reading. BSBI data, collected by our wonderful network of botanical recorders, once again fed into the report, which includes trends based on more than 1440 plant distribution records with analyses carried out by CEH. There's more about the State of Nature Report [here](#), including comments by BSBI Head of Science Kevin Walker, and you can download summaries for each country from the four country pages. [Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Atlas 2020

Weather permitting, there is much that can still be done to improve [Atlas 2020](#) coverage in October, especially in three of the habitats that are generally a bit under-recorded – aquatic, weedy fields and montane. However, if your aim is to improve Atlas re-recording rates you will already have discovered how incredibly difficult that is to do in hectads that have already had several visits. Either you must do a lot of careful analysis using the DDb, assuming pre and post 2000 detailed data is there, so you can target your efforts very specifically. Or, more opportunistically, just go out with a list of species recorded pre 2000 but not post and travel around the hectad until you see a target species (like a previously un-recorded tree or shrub) or an interesting habitat that might bear closer scrutiny. By the way, I would **not** recommend this in the car unless you can arrange a driver!

I've been busy tracking down useful data sets that might be available but which we don't yet have. We have got datasets from the Scottish Wildlife Trust, National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and of course Scottish Natural Heritage. If you are aware of datasets that would help with Atlas that we haven't already got (and preferably that would not require too much reconfiguring or validation work) then let your Country Officer know. Generally, these external data are **always** best fed directly into the DDb.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Date-classes on distribution maps

The [distribution maps displayed on the BSBI website](#) have been revised slightly. A separate 1930-1949 division has been added, splitting the traditional 1930-1969 date-class. Addition of the new category is intended to provide a more even, fine-grained time-series. This has been made possible by the gradual accumulation of precisely dated historical data in the DDb. Underlying records are not affected by the date-class split, records with only vague 1930-1969 dates will keep their original broad range.

The change disrupts the old concept of numbered date-classes. The date-class scheme was already potentially confusing, from now on it may be better to avoid referring to date categories by number. The next BSBI recording period (2020-2029) begins in January.

[Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

Garmin eTrex GPS

If you are not as eagle-eyed as you used to be, you might like to set up your Garmin GPS readout to twice the normal font size. Three simple steps:

1. On the Trip Computer page, press the menu button and use the thumb stick to highlight *Big Numbers* then press the thumb stick to select. That reduces the number of fields from 8 (small fields) to 4 (2 big and two small).
2. To change the individual fields to those you want, press the menu button again and use the thumb stick until *Change Data Fields* is highlighted and then press the thumb stick to select. Use the thumb stick until the field you want to change is highlighted, then press the thumb stick and scroll down until you find the new field you want to use. The two fields selected on illustrated eTrex are *Location (selected)* and *Accuracy of GPS*.



3. You can also replace the two small fields by a single big one, so you just have three large fields in total. To do that press menu, scroll to and select *Change Dashboard* using the Thumb Stick, then scroll to and select *Large Data Field*. Select the field information you want to display by repeating point 2.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Meetings

The BSBI wide programme of [field meetings](#) for 2019 concluded on 21st September with a meeting on Cotoneasters led by Alan Leslie. There are a few local group meetings to go (see the [BSBI Meetings Diary](#)), and then it is time for the indoor meetings particularly the [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) and the [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) (see below).

Reports of the BSBI field meetings are normally published in the Yearbook, so if you haven't written the account of your meeting yet, please send a copy to Trevor James and myself. If possible, we'd like to have them by the end of October. There is guidance on "Leading BSBI Field Meetings" on the [field meetings webpage](#).

It is also time to start planning the programme for 2020, and for this I'd like at least dates and locations by early November so that they can be advertised at the AEM, and full details by the end of November for inclusion in the Yearbook. I've had suggestions that it would be good to have lots of meetings specifically for beginners and I will be organising one in Cambridgeshire. If others could host such meetings to give good regional coverage it would mean shorter travel distances for those attending.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

Scottish Botanists' Conference

The 2019 [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) will be held on Saturday 2nd November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Bookings will close on 27th October so we can send participants joining information, an updated programme and exhibit abstracts a week ahead of the event. A reminder - our main speaker will be Prof Richard Crawford on *Plants at the margin in a changing climate* and we will also have seven short talks, eight mini-workshops and loads of posters and exhibits and the BSBI Scottish AGM. Please [book for the Scottish Botanists' Conference now](#). Everybody is welcome!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Annual Exhibition Meeting and AGM

Bookings for this year's [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) (AEM) opened in the last week of September: it takes place on Saturday 23rd November at the Natural History Museum, London. We've already had almost 100 bookings and the first two NHM Herbarium tours are now fully booked! If you're planning to attend, and especially if you'd like to try and secure a space on the third Herbarium tour, please use the [online booking form](#) ASAP. The programme and some essential info about location, catering etc. can be seen [here](#) and we'd also encourage potential exhibitors to use this [separate exhibitors' form](#) to book quickly before all the spaces are snapped up. If you're hesitating over whether or not to exhibit, just [email the organisers here](#) to talk through your plans. More info about the AGM will be posted [here](#) in the coming weeks but meanwhile you can email [Company Secretary Steve Gater](#) if you'd like to raise an agenda point.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Irish VCR Validation Day

We will be holding a workshop day on records validation on Saturday 9th November, at the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin. For those who came last year, it will be a similar event, where we'll divide into groups to help each other with any validation issues. It would be most helpful if recorders started validation before the workshop so they have an idea of what issues they might want help with. We're hoping to have a good mix of those who are already quite comfortable with validation and those who need a bit more support. We'll send further details directly to recorders soon.

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Ireland AGM and Committee update

The [Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM](#) was held on 21 September at the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin. There was a great range of talks covering the [big Irish recording trip to Connemara](#) this summer, the Rough Crew's exploits, the new Leitrim Local Group, the [Aquatic Plant Project](#), the importance of Irish wetlands, and some really useful aquatic plant identification tips. Talks were followed by the AGM, where elections for the Committee for Ireland took place. Robert Northridge, who reached the limit of his term, stepped down as Chair of the [Committee](#). We'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to Robert for all his hard work and leadership! Edwina Cole, previously committee secretary, was elected as new committee chair. The Committee for Ireland plays an essential role in the running of BSBI in Ireland, so thank you to all who contribute!

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

BSBI Photographic Competition 2019



Hornet Hoverfly on Ivy at
Blundellsands by P.H.Smith

Please send your entries to the [2019 BSBI Photographic Competition](#) to the competition organiser, [Natalie Harmsworth](#), by the 19th October. Remember the photographs don't have to be taken in 2019 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 and judged at the Scottish Annual Meeting and also displayed at the Annual Exhibition Meeting.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

New BSBI Handbook: Gentians of Britain & Ireland

BSBI publishes its 19th plant ID [Handbook](#) this autumn: *Gentians of Britain & Ireland* by Tim Rich & Andy McVeigh. Find out more [here](#) and read an interview about the book with Tim Rich [here](#). The pre-publication is now open, exclusive to [BSBI members](#) who can save £5 compared to the RRP. You'll be able to hear Tim Rich talking about the new Handbook at the Exhibition Meeting on 23rd November.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New grassland plants book from the BSBI Science Team and colleagues

Another [BSBI publication](#) due out this autumn is *Grassland plants of the British and Irish lowlands*. The authors are Kevin Walker and Pete Stroh of the [BSBI Science Team](#) along with colleagues Stuart Smith (Natural Resources Wales), Richard Jefferson and Clare Pinches (Natural England) and Tim Blackstock (University of Bangor). There's an interview with Pete about the book [here](#). You can find out [more here about the book and the special offer](#), exclusive to BSBI members - £10 off! Kevin will be at the Exhibition Meeting in November with display copies of the book and to answer any questions about grassland plants.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Vegetative Key to the British Flora Second Edition

The third important new botanical publication for autumn 2019 is the second edition of John Poland and Eric Clement's ground-breaking *Vegetative Key to the British Flora*, which makes it possible to identify plants without flowers or fruits. The pre-publication offer on this title is open to both BSBI members and non-members. Find out more [here](#) and read an interview with John Poland [here](#). John will be running his vegetative ID table at this year's Exhibition Meeting. There will be a Veg ID Quiz and the chance to bring live or pressed specimens along so you can challenge John to ID any plants you are unsure about.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Annual Review

We've just published the BSBI Annual Review covering the period April 2018 to March 2019. It sets out some of the achievements of BSBI members, including the amazing total number of plant records submitted so far to the BSBI Database. Huge thanks to all our recorders (with and without a capital 'R'!) who have so far notched up a jaw-dropping 43,600,000 records! [Download the Review here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI News

The September issue of [BSBI News](#), featuring 80 pages of botanical delights, was posted to all BSBI members last week. If you are not (yet) a BSBI member, you can see a [taster of this latest issue here](#). It's the final issue under the editorship of Andrew Branson and we'd like to thank him for all his excellent work, building on the equally excellent work of Gwynn Ellis and Trevor James who steered the *BSBI News* ship for so many years. New Editor John Norton now takes up the reins and if you'd like to submit an article for consideration for the January issue, you'll need to do that by 27th November. More info, including revised guidelines for submitting articles, [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI membership special offer

The BSBI's annual [special offer on membership](#) opened on 1st October. Anyone joining BSBI for 2020 after that date, your membership begins at once. So you can start enjoying all the benefits of membership, such as the special offers on [BSBI publications](#), straight away. That means up to 15 months of benefits for the price of 12 months! If you're already a BSBI member, why not [forward this link](#) to a friend or colleague who might also enjoy becoming a member? It sets out all the many benefits of joining the Society.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website in September

- The [Plant ID Training Courses page](#) has been updated with the latest links to BSc and MSC courses across Britain and Ireland.
- The [Obituaries](#) page has been updated with obituaries of Jeffrey Wood and Bill Thompson.
- New pages have been set up for the three new publications (above) and the [books](#), [Handbooks](#) and [Publications](#) pages have also been updated.
- The [BSBI News](#), [Join Us](#), [State of Nature](#), [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) and [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) pages have been updated (see above) and regular updates made to the [Meetings](#) and News pages and the country pages.
- The '[About Us](#)' page has been updated with the latest versions of the Annual Report & Accounts and the Annual Review.
- County pages, and contact details on the [Local Botany page](#), have been updated for Kirkcudbrightshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.
- Now that BSBI's autumn meetings season has started, pages on the password-protected [Governance website](#) have been updated with recent minutes and agendas.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in September

We published an [interview with Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI's new Ireland Officer; a guest post by the Gatsby Plant Science Education Programme about [their new MOOC](#); an [account by botanist Howard](#) of how he got on his bike to notch up some impressive first county records; our regular spot about Byron's Gin focused on [lemon-scented fern](#); we offered a taster of the [latest issue of BSBI News](#); and we featured interviews with the authors of the three new publications (links above) and [with Paul O'Hara about BSBI's special relationship with our book-sellers, Summerfield Books](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer