

BSBI eNews – August 2019

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

Atlas 2020

With less than five months until the deadline, County Recorders need to make sure they select sites and squares to survey which will give them the greatest return for their effort. One way to do that is to extract a list of all the species recorded pre 2000, but not post 2000, in a hectad and search for all records of those species in the hectad and analyse them. This can be easily done using the BSBI Database and Excel.

First, type the hectad grid ref in the *Tools > grid reference lookup*, click the *'look-up grid reference'* button and then the *'View detailed taxon list for {hectad GR}'*. Tick the box *'sort recent records separately'* and I usually amend the *'earliest date'* to 1970 for my VC. You may also need to select your VC if it is a boundary hectad. Highlight the list of species not seen post 2000 and CTRL+C to copy and then CTRL+V paste to the top left-hand square of an excel spreadsheet, selecting *'match destination formatting'* to get rid of the hyperlinks. Then, with the species list in column A still highlighted, click the *'Data'* tab and select *'Text to columns'*, click *'Next'* and tick the *'Other'* option and enter a left-hand bracket "(" in the box. Then click *'Next'* again and then *'Finish'*. This will leave just a simple list of taxa in Column A.

Tidy up that list by removing microspecies, intergeneric hybrids (beginning X), and any aggs where species in the agg have been recorded post 2000, any s.l.s where s.s. have been recorded post 2000 etc. Then copy the list of taxa (only) and paste into the taxon box of a DDB search. Then enter the hectad grid ref, the VC and enter the date as between (say) 1950 and 2000. Select more options > grouping > distinct > taxa and more options > grouping > group by tetrads. Finally click *'display results'* and analyse to determine which tetrad would be most potentially productive to revisit. Repeat for monads and sites.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Atlas 2020 – aquatics and arables

Both aquatics and arable weeds species are rather under-recorded for [Atlas 2020](#). August is generally a good time to survey both aquatics and arable weeds, though this year high water levels in some areas will make survey aquatic habitats difficult. You could look for the most promising open water sites using the above technique and be very targeted about where you survey in a hectad which has many aquatics yet to re-record.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Aquatic Plant Project Ireland

The Aquatic Plant Project is still steaming ahead. Nearly 60 people have taken part so far and we have 18 more days of field training and recording to come! From 18-26 August, Nick Stewart will be leading days across the Irish Midlands (please note this is a change from the earlier advertised 17-25 August). Then from 7-15 September he'll be leading 9 more days across Northern Ireland. You can find more details about the project and how to get involved at bsbi.org/aquatic-plant-project. If you'd

like to join any of the training and recording days you can book the Midlands dates [here](#) or the Northern Ireland dates [here](#). All are welcome, but there is a limit of 10 people per day, so book early!
[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Irish Autumn Meeting and AGM

The BSBI Ireland Autumn Meeting and AGM will be held at the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin, on Saturday, 21 September. Members in Ireland should receive a formal invitation by post in the next week or so. We've got a great programme for the day including an update on Atlas 2020 progress, reports from the Clifden Field Trip, Rough Crew, and the new Leitrim Local Group, and of course the AGM. We also thought it'd be great to link to the Aquatic Plant Project with a talk on the importance of Irish Wetlands and an aquatic plant identification workshop. Details will be added to the webpage soon at bsbi.org/irish-autumn-meeting-agm. We hope to see you there!

[Sarah Pierce](#), BSBI Ireland Officer

Annual Summer Meeting

We've just had a very successful [Annual Summer Meeting](#) at the Field Studies Council centre at Malham Tarn. The FSC centres are ideal for botanical meetings, with all the facilities needed and we certainly enjoyed ourselves. It will be a month or more before all the records from over 25 tetrads and several sites are in. Next year we are planning to hold the ASM in Scotland, then we have been invited to Guernsey in 2021.

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

Ticks & Lyme Disease

One of the participants on a recent field meeting in Scotland ended up with a tick that went un-noticed until three days after the event when his wife noticed it on his buttock. No bullseye rash developed but a week later he developed profuse feverish night sweats, headaches and muscular pain. He was persuaded to go and see a doctor and took this [NHS leaflet on Lyme disease](#) to show her. Lyme disease was suspected and tested for but even before the results came back, he was put on a course of antibiotics and is now expected to make a full recovery. There are two points to make about this. It is essential that you always do a *full* body inspection as soon as possible after being out in the field and remove any ticks you find as per the guidance. If you do end up with a bullseye rash or have any of the flu-like symptoms described in the linked leaflet then go and see your doctor straight away. There have been reports of people with these symptoms being fobbed off by doctors who are unaware of the symptoms of Lyme disease – so taking the NHS leaflet with you is a good idea.

Field Meeting organisers should also remember to mention this advice as part of their safety briefing before field meetings.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Field Meetings

If you've encountered any issues during your meetings that are not covered by our [guidance for leading field meetings](#), do let me know, so that any advice can be incorporated. One aspect may be how to describe the terrain that is likely to be covered during a meeting – what is easy for some members might be moderate for others. Perhaps like climbers we should have a scale that is reasonably consistent – the Rough Crew will be the ones to try v. diff!

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

County Recorders

Last month, I wrote asking if County Recorders could find time to thank people who contribute records. “There is nothing more dispiriting for contributors than never getting a reply. Conversely helpful feedback and kind words might enthuse and encourage the next generation of botanists! So, it is always time well spent.” Of course, there is always a flip side, and that is that members need to remember that County Recorders are volunteers often trying to squeeze in a huge amount of work for the BSBI (for which we are very grateful) around busy working and family lives – and sometimes it is just not possible to answer every query and acknowledge every communication.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

County Recorders on BBC Countryfile?

Since the BSBI’s New Year Plant Hunt was featured on BBC Countryfile last year, we’ve kept in touch with the programme’s production team and they are now asking if BSBI has any stories suitable for a short feature on the programme this autumn. Locations they are particularly interested in are: Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Fife, Herefordshire, Brecon Beacons, Forest of Dean, Suffolk, Essex, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire. They would want to work with both me and a County Recorder to find a suitable location, a practical activity that would yield 5-10 minutes of footage, and a suitable person to interview on camera. That could be either the County Recorder or somebody they nominate, so don’t worry if being on the telly yourself doesn’t appeal to you! If interested, please let me know so I can offer more guidance and put you in touch with the relevant people at the BBC.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

British & Irish Botany: first two issues online

The first two issues of volume one of *British & Irish Botany*, BSBI’s scientific journal, are [now available](#) to view or download free of charge, whether or not you are a BSBI member. In the first issue there are papers on the distribution and population size of *Hieracium stenolepiforme* (Cheddar Hawkweed); the taxonomy of Dog-roses (*Rosa* sect. *Caninae*); the response of moorland vegetation to 20 years of conservation management; Oaks parasitised by *Viscum album* (Mistletoe) and the population dynamics and life history of the rare arctic-alpine plant *Sagina nivalis* (Snow Pearlwort) on Ben Lawers. You can view or download all these papers [here](#).

The second issue contains papers on the changing status of *Blysmus compressus* (Flat Sedge) in the Sefton Coast sand-dunes; whether *Bolboschoenus laticarpus* (Pedunculate Club-rush) is an overlooked native or a spreading neophyte; long-term monitoring of *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) at Upwood Meadows NNR, Huntingdonshire; the overlooked woodland grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* subsp. *parviflora*; achene morphology of British and Irish Mayweeds and Chamomiles: implications for taxonomy and identification and five new species of *Taraxacum* section *Celtica* from Britain and Ireland. You can view or download all these papers [here](#).

Many thanks to all the County Recorders who have submitted manuscripts – please [keep them coming](#)! If you’d like to discuss a proposal before submitting, please email and arrange to have a chat or phone me on 07725 862 957.

[Ian Denholm](#), BiB Editor-in-Chief

Invasive Aliens

Botanical recorders may be interested in an important new book 'Invasive aliens: the plants and animals from over there that are over here'. Author [Dan Eatherley](#) consulted County Recorders and BSBI's Head of Science Kevin Walker as part of his research. You can read my interview with Dan [here](#) and there is also a competition about alien plants running throughout August, so you have a chance to win your own copy of 'Invasive Aliens'. Good luck!

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

New on the BSBI website in July

A quiet month on the website with very few updates!

- The [Altitudes page](#) has been updated, with a revised spreadsheet provided by David Pearman.
- County pages for North Ebudes and Lanarkshire were updated with reports on recent meetings. Link to all the county webpages via the [Local Botany page](#) where you will also find the interactive map for Britain & Ireland.
- The [Recording Cards page](#) was updated with a reminder that you can order print versions of cards for your vice-county to be sent to you from the Biological Records Centre.
- The [Aquatic Plant Project](#) is being updated regularly (see above) and now links straight through to online booking forms for forthcoming training sessions.
- The [Welsh AGM webpage](#) was updated by Barbara Brown, BSBI's Wales Officer, and now features images of some of the event's star plant finds.
- Country pages for [Scotland](#), [Ireland](#) and [Wales](#) are all being updated regularly. Don't forget to contact your Country Officer if there's anything you think should appear on the page.
- The [News page](#) is also updated weekly so please let me know if you've spotted an interesting scientific paper or job opportunity for a botanist.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

On the News & Views blog in July

Throughout July we brought you a grand total of seven daily blogposts from the BSBI Summer Meeting, illustrated by some fabulous photos. The bloggers and photographers who contributed range from County Recorders to first-timers at a national BSBI meeting to the organiser of the week's proceedings. Huge thanks to all of them! Links to all the blogposts can be found on the [Summer Meeting webpage](#). We also reported about the very popular [grass ID workshop in Stirling](#); our monthly blogpost about Byron's Gin and its ingredients focused on [Melancholy Thistle](#); and we featured a [full-length report](#) on how a [BSBI Science & Research grant](#) helped MRes student Jenn carry out research on Saltmarsh Sedge (*Carex salina*) at six sites across the Scottish Highlands.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer