



Recorder eNewsletter

- *for the botanical recording community*

December 2020



Recorder eNewsletter

Welcome to this Christmas issue of Recorder eNewsletter – the new name for BSBI *eNews*. The newsletter will continue to focus on all aspects of BSBI recording and will generally be published monthly, at the beginning of each month. Well it is not every day that a glacier is named after a regular contributor to this newsletter (and BSBI County Recorder)! [Read more here](#). Well done Jonathan. We hope you enjoy reading this issue and wish all our readers a restful and relaxing Christmas.

[Jim McIntosh](#), Senior Country Officer

BSBI eNewsletter

A new monthly electronic newsletter – entitled “BSBI eNewsletter” will launch this month and will contain articles that are of general interest to the wider botanical community. It will be published mid-month and you will need to actively [opt-in to receive it](#). The new newsletter will be edited by Louise Marsh who will be happy to hear your suggestions for contributions.

Once BSBI eNewsletter is established we will avoid duplication of articles, although we may report the same events from different perspectives of County Recorders and “ordinary members”.

[Jim McIntosh](#), Senior Country Officer, [Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

BSBI Exhibition Meeting

Our first ever virtual Exhibition Meeting was held on Saturday 21st November: it attracted hundreds of attendees from across Britain and Ireland, as well as from Canada, Australia and China!

Follow the links on the [AEM website](#) so you can:

- Browse 37 [exhibits](#) on subjects of interest to recorders, such as the [discovery of Creeping Marshwort *Helosciadium repens*](#) in West Suffolk; a [site flora from south Wales](#); the [special flora of Teesdale](#); an exciting [Sorbus discovery on the Isle of Arran](#); [ancient grassland on road verges](#); and how [allotments are contributing to plant biodiversity in Warwickshire](#).
- View videos of all the talks including [Fred Rumsey talking about specimens in the NHM herbarium](#); Kevin Walker summarising the [results of the Garden Wildflower Hunt](#); the [‘More Than Weeds’](#) project about urban street flora; the [first year of Plant Alert](#) and the [first five years of data from the National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#).
- Check out the video from our [panel discussion](#) on the subject of [wildflower seed-mixes](#): should we sow only native species?

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

Scottish Botanists' Conference 2020

We held our first ever virtual Scottish Botanists' Conference this year. It was great being able to welcome so many members who find it hard to get to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh – like those in the north, on islands and in England. Obviously, we all missed not being able to meet in person. But next year – hopefully!

Follow the links on the [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#) website to view:

Recordings of all the [talks](#): I'd particular recommend the excellent keynote marking [RBGE's 350 years](#) by Peter Hollingsworth, Dan Watson's [Expedition to St Kilda](#), Chris McNerny on [Bee Orchids](#) and John Grace on [Urban Flora](#). You might even like to hear me on what the [BSBI has been doing in Scotland](#) over the past year! You can even watch the [BSBI Scotland AGM](#) again

- Recordings of the four [workshops](#): including [Introduction to Conifer ID](#), by Matt Parratt, and [Introduction to Winter Tree ID](#), by Mark Duffell (now with improved sound).
- The [exhibition](#) – including several on the botanical highlights of 2020 by recorders in [Dumfries](#), [West Perth](#) & [Kincardine](#). There is an interesting exhibit on [Distributions of species pairs](#) by Michael Braithwaite and another on [Recording in the time of Covid](#) by Luke Gaskell.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

New Year Plant Hunt 2021

The [New Year Plant Hunt](#) (NYPH) will go ahead between 1st and 4th January 2021 but with one very important proviso: local [Covid-19 restrictions](#) **must** be followed.

The aim of the Hunt is to find wild or naturalised plants in bloom across Britain and Ireland and record them using the BSBI's NYPH app, which can be used either on your phone while you are out in the field, or you can use the app on your computer once you get home. More information [here](#) about how to do this. Results will be displayed on our interactive [map](#) and will be stored in a separate area on the BSBI Database until they have been checked. Email us at nyplanthunt@bsbi.org if you have any questions about the app or the data.

We won't be promoting any group Hunts this year and – this is so important that it's worth saying again - it's **essential that you follow local Covid-19 restrictions**. Please check them before you start planning your Hunt and again just before you head out, in case there have been any changes. Plant data are important but it's even more important that our botanists stay safe!

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

Vice-County Annual Reports for 2020

We will call for Vice-County Annual Reports early in the New Year. It will be interesting to hear what has been happening in the vice-counties in this very strange year. Guidance on the format, content and number of words will accompany the Survey Monkey link to collect and collate responses. But so you can start thinking about it now, you should include brief details of any projects - field or desk based – that you were involved with. That would include following up on any private passions, work to complete Atlas 2020, and progress with RPRs, Checklists, Floras, etc. Normally we would ask for brief details of local group activity, and any workshops or talks given, but with so many cancellations, do please try and keep it as upbeat as possible. Finally, it is always interesting to hear about exciting botanical finds (or refinds) but keep them brief!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Checklists & Rare Plant Registers

After 20 years of intensive Atlas 2020 fieldwork and months validating records, there has never been a better time to begin a new Checklist or County Rare Plant Register – or updating any that already exist. Especially with long dark evenings and horrible winter weather. There are guidelines on how to draft a Rare Plant Register and examples of Rare Plant Registers from 45 counties across Britain and Ireland on the [Rare Plant Register](#) page. The [BSBI Database](#) is an incredibly powerful and helpful tool. [Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

First and last dates in the BSBI Database (DDb)

One of the great joys of the DDb is how easy it is to generate lists of first and last recorded dates. Earlier generations of County Recorders would spend months going through their card indices and records extracting this sort of information, which can now be done at the touch of a button. Simply change the Vice-county [in this query](#) to yours and click the ‘display results’ button to see all the taxon recorded in your VC with first and last dates.

It is really interesting looking through the alphabetic list of taxa. But it is even more interesting to click the ‘earliest date’ header to view the list from oldest to newest earliest date. Of course, if you haven’t entered all those historic records from literature and herbarium sources your first dates won’t be always be correct. Likewise click the ‘latest date’ to sort that from oldest to newest.

You can make the list more manageable by only [listing those taxa that have been recorded at least \(say\) 10 times](#) so it isn’t dominated by casuals, rare microspecies and neophytes. Finally, to see the underlying records for a taxon, just click the number of records in the ‘total freq’ column.

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

MapMate

Three snippets for MapMate users:

1. Remember to back-up your MapMate database after every data entry session by copying “My MapMate” onto an external drive (e.g. a pen drive). From time to time I get requests for help where there was no recent back-up and that can entail tears and a lot of data re-entry.
2. So, if it is a while since you last backed up, do it now!
3. As soon as you are up to date with data entry, remember to do your annual reset sync (Replicator > Special > Reset Sync Record) and create and send a sync file that includes all your 2020 records to the BSBI DDb.

Many thanks!

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

Site Names in Records

Site naming systems vary widely, but as a general principal it is good to use names that at least appear on the 1:25,000 OS map (and not names that are only locally known) and please follow the OS spelling, capitalisation and punctuation which is I admit tricky with many Scottish Gaelic names! But it all contributes to a tidy dataset – and helps others locate your finds.

Most County Recorders will have systems for qualifying site names with words like near, opposite, above or below etc. So please apply those rules consistently. But if you are a new Recorder then it is something to think about. But I generally recommend the format “Site, near” rather than “near Site”, for example, so any list will make sense when sorted alphabetically.

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

Field Meetings

The field season has nearly come to an end, though I’m still doing some local recording, very often noting over 100 species in a monad with over a third of them still in flower. What will happen with field meetings in 2021 is still very much “looking through a glass darkly” but hopefully some will take place. Country Field Meeting Secretaries have been contacting prospective organisers and I have details of seventeen meetings, mostly in England and Scotland. I need full details for any others fairly urgently as the deadline for the Yearbook is now! If there are any meeting reports I would also welcome those, along with lists of local meetings for the 2021 diary. I look forward to some “face to face” meetings during the year.

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

Country Newsletters

There was a great poster about [BSBI periodicals](#) at the Exhibition and Scottish meetings. The editors of the four Country Newsletters – Irish Botanical News, the Welsh Bulletin, English Botanical News and the Scottish Newsletter are always looking for interesting articles and the deadlines for submission are this time of year. So, if you have a piece that would be of interest to fellow botanists in your Country, please drop the editors a line:

Welsh Bulletin	Richard Pryce , Sally Whyman & Katherine Slade	(1 December)
Irish Botanical News	Paul Green & Alexis Fitzgerald	31 January
English Botanical News	Jonathan Shanklin	28 February
Scottish Newsletter	Angus Hannah	28 February

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer