



Recorder eNewsletter

- *for the botanical recording community*

January 2021

BSBI Projects in 2021

Welcome to the New Year issue of Recorder eNewsletter. Post Atlas project planning was completely derailed in 2020 by the lockdown. So, we ended up with a gap year - but for the [Garden Wildflower Hunt](#) - which wasn't entirely unwelcome as I think everyone was exhausted after Atlas and, well, quite shocked by the lockdown. But we do need to get back to planning ahead. In addition to BSBI wide schemes like the [National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#), each country committee has been asked to come up with its own project(s) in time to be considered at a meeting of Records Committee towards the end of January. Hopefully I'll be able to report further in February.

Meantime we look forward to reading your Vice-County Annual Reports for 2020 (see below) and finding out what you did get up to during the year!

Finally, remember for more general news of interest to all BSBI members and supporters – sign up for the new monthly [BSBI eNewsletter](#): the next issue will be published mid-January.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2021!

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

New Year Plant Hunt starts on New Year's Day!

The [online recording form](#) or "app" has been checked and is good to go, the volunteers are all set to offer support and answer enquiries from the [Help Desk](#) and now all you have to do is check the guidance and restrictions for your area to see if you will be able to [go out plant hunting for up to three hours between 1st and 4th January](#). A reminder that the aim is to hunt down any wild or naturalised plants blooming in midwinter: [your records](#) are helping BSBI build up a clearer picture of how our wildflowers are responding to changes in autumn and winter weather patterns. Don't forget to check those local guidelines again just before you set out in case of any last-minute changes: plant data are very important but [the health and safety of our botanists](#) is even more important!

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

Vice-County Annual Reports for 2020

The call for Vice-County Annual Reports will go out to County Recorders out very shortly. It would be great if as many would complete their reports as possible. Remember to carefully read and follow the guidance on the format, content and number of words (200-250). This year we have a new system and you will be able to report your botanical find highlights in a separate section – and even upload images which can be used to illustrate the report. Details about your exciting botanical finds (or refinds) must be kept very brief and you must follow the guidance on the format of scientific and common names and check spellings in Stace! Thankyou!

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

Checklists & Rare Plant Registers

Since my piece on Rare Plant Registers (RPRs) last month, we have posted updated RPRs for [Dumfriesshire](#) and [Midlothian](#) and I know several others are in the pipeline. As I said, there has never really been a better time to begin or update a Checklist or County Rare Plant Register – with 20 years of carefully checked [Atlas](#) data in the BSBI Database.

The first essential step in producing an RPR, is to generate a list of candidate locally rare & scarce species. Andy Amphlett posted a very helpful article on how to do that with links to a spreadsheet and instructions a few years ago on the [BSBI DDb Message Board](#). There is more general guidance on producing RPRs (updated in 2017) on the BSBI website along with examples of Rare Plant Registers from 45 counties, on the [Rare Plant Register](#) page.

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

BSBI Database Searches

While most of the searches that [BSBI Database](#) users perform are for records, it is easy to overlook that other types of searches are possible. Click on the down-arrow in the very topmost box in the search window, and you get a choice of different searches – Grid Square Status, Taxa, Localities, Areas, Parties, Datasets, References, Literature. It is worth exploring each of these in turn to see exactly what they can do, using your own VC and its flora as a source of test material.

Perhaps one of the most interesting searches is for Taxa. You can access the huge range of information held in the DDb for each taxon – everything from Common names in Welsh, taxon hierarchy, native status, geographical and elevational distribution, Ellenberg values to red data list status. For example, [here is a search for “*Bartsia alpina*”](#) – explore all the tabs and try it out on another taxon that interests you.

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

Scottish Spring Conference

After the cancellation of the 2020 Spring Conferences, the 2021 [Scottish Spring Conference](#) will be held on 20th March by Zoom. The major theme will be Scottish Post Atlas plans. I am also hoping to arrange for the speaker who gave the talk on Carrifran Wild Wood at the [Scottish Botanists' Conference](#), not entirely successfully for technical reasons, to re-present his talk. More details next month.

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

BSBI YouTube

We have had to hold all our [2020 workshops and meetings](#) online and, I'm afraid, will have to continue to do so well into 2021. While there are many downsides, the great upside is that recordings can be made available afterwards. Nearly all the talks and workshops from our 2020 meetings and initiatives are available on the [BSBI's YouTube channel](#).

It is worth bookmarking and exploring the [BSBI YouTube channel](#). The talks and workshops are organised into playlists for events like [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) and the [Scottish Botanists'](#)

[Conference](#), or by initiative like the [Irish Grasslands Project](#) while others are on themes like [Plant ID training](#) and a [history of botany](#).

A fun thing is to [sort the videos by popularity](#) – to find out which are the most popular (an ID workshop recording has over 2,800 views). You can “Subscribe” to be notified when new recordings are added.

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

British & Irish Botany: December issue published

In the [latest issue of BSBI’s scientific journal](#), botanical records feature in a [paper by Hill *et al.*](#) which offers a preview of how recorders will be able to exploit Atlas 2020 datasets to gain further insights into the structure of our flora; there are several papers by current or former County Recorders, including [Michael Braithwaite on plant migration](#) into the Scottish borders, [Michelin Sheehy Skeffington on the Kerry Lily](#) and [Mick Crawley on the description of a new Open Vegetation plant community](#); papers by [Clive Stace on *Juncus* hybrids](#), and by botanists from Trinity College Dublin on the [ground flora of boundary dry stone walls in The Burren](#), complete the final issue of 2020. Read the whole issue [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer

BSBI Handbooks in the pipeline

Our [Handbooks](#) for difficult plant groups are invaluable for botanical recorders so you will be pleased to hear that there are no fewer than ten BSBI Handbooks in the pipeline, with two due for publication early in 2021: firstly, another in the series of monographs on sections of Hawkweeds (*Hieracium*) and soon after, a new Handbook on Broomrapes (Orobanchaceae) by Chris Thorogood and Fred Rumsey. Find out more [here](#) and don’t forget that [BSBI members](#) can look forward to substantial [savings on Handbooks](#). So if you haven’t already done so, this is the ideal time [to renew your membership](#) or to take advantage of our [new Paperless Direct Debit facility](#) - the quickest, easiest way to pay your sub and get on with enjoying all the benefits of membership in the year(s) ahead!

[Louise Marsh](#), Communications Officer