

Scottish Officer Report for 2018

Atlas 2020 Recording

Scottish BSBI Recorders had another very busy year recording for Atlas 2020. So far, 220,000 records have been added to the BSBI database for 2018, with more to come.

For the first time ever, we held **three** recording weeks in the year to help plug gaps in under-recorded areas. Angus Hannah organised another very successful week in Argyll – this time based at Carrick Castle, during which some 5,000 records were collected. The Scottish Officer organised a recording week based at Lagafater Lodge, Wigtownshire with the help of Ayrshire Recorder, Carol Crawford. 16 BSBI members collected a total of 7,400 records in Wigtownshire and in the south of Ayrshire. The third Recording Week was organised with the help of Westernness Recorder, Ian Strachan, and Easternness Recorder, Adam Fraser at Kingie Lodge in Glen Garry. Remote mountains and glens were surveyed by some 14 members who collected over 10,000 records.

The Scottish Officer organised an Atlas recording long-weekend at Haddington, and helped recorders Jeff Waddell with one based in Kelso and Phil Sansum & Matt Harding with another at Drymen. Those participating at Haddington formed a local group and went on to collect (and digitise) a huge number of records over the remainder of the year. Thanks are due in particular to Marion Moir and Sue Jury. Local groups were also set up during the year in Fife by Sandy Edwards and in West Lothian by Jay Mackinnon.

We are planning two recording weeks in 2019; one in Argyll and another in Easternness. The long-weekend format has been particularly successful and six similar events are planned this year – in [Haddington](#), [Dunfermline](#), [Fintry](#), [Hawick](#), [Orkney](#) and [St John's Town of Dalry](#). I'd be very grateful if members would give all recording field meetings their full support in this final Atlas 2020 field season.

Particularly notable feats of recording this year include Ian Green collecting an astonishing 17,000 records in his vice-county (Moray), while Andy Amphlett collected 8,000 records in neighbouring vice-county, Easternness and Audrey & Bob Turner collected over 5,600 records in Moray and Easternness. Many recorders would warmly welcome such contributions from BSBI members and if you are able to help – even on a much smaller scale - please offer to do so.

Of course, success is not all about numbers of records. Many great (re-) finds have been made across Scotland and some of these are featured in the Scottish Botanists' Conference exhibition [abstracts](#) or mentioned in Vice-county Annual Reports. Thanks are due to all Recorders and members involved with Atlas recording in 2018.

Data Issues

We received 362,000 records in an exchange of data with the NE of Scotland Biological Recording Centre. The data has largely been collected as part of an extensive habitat survey and has significantly helped plug many gaps in our Atlas coverage in Banff, Aberdeen and Kincardine.

The Scottish Officer recovered 125,000 records from the Renfrewshire Recorder's now defunct recording system and uploaded it to our database with the help of Recorder, Keith Watson. Over 40,000 of the records are post 2000 and will contribute to Atlas 2020.

Work has begun on a major project funded by SNH to extract records of Nationally Rare or Scarce species from Site Condition Monitoring reports before the end of the 2019.

Recorder Network Support

Two one-day recording conferences were organised and held in April 2018, at RBGE and Strathpeffer – with the same programme repeated. A total of 52 folk participated in the two events. The theme was (of course) Atlas 2020 recording, digitisation and validation. The programme included two very popular mini-workshops – one on Deerglass by Jeremy Roberts and Andy Amphlett and another on Bladderworts by Nick Stewart and Claudia Ferguson-Smyth. The presentations are [available online](#).

This year's call for Vice-county Annual Reports has resulted in reports for 37 (out of 41) counties. I respond to each report individually and the reports are collated and published in the Scottish Newsletter and on the BSBI Scotland page. Take a look – they are a great read!

The Scottish Officer continued to produce and publish the monthly electronic newsletter [BSBI eNews](#). It aims to provide support, encouragement and news for Recorders and Referees it is really for everyone in the BSBI recording community across Britain and Ireland.

We advertised two Recorder vacancies in 2018 – one in Berwickshire after Michael Braithwaite retired four years ago and another for a joint recorder in Stirling to help Phil Sansum, who has moved to England. As a result, we did find a recorder for Stirling in Matt Harding but there has been no interest shown in Berwickshire. We also appointed David Elston as joint recorder with David Welch for Kincardine and North Aberdeen. During the year Carl Farmer resigned as joint recorder in Argyll, leaving Gordon Rothero, who would like a joint recorder to help him. Also, Andy Amphlett said he'd like to stand down as Recorder for Banffshire after the Atlas. All three vacancies are currently advertised. If you are interested in being a recorder for any of these counties, please let me know.

Training

The 2018 training programme for complete beginners included two one-day Plant Family Workshops held in Dumfries and Aberdeen, led by Chris Miles and Aileen Meek respectively. A total of 29 beginners participated. Two follow-up field days were arranged by Faith Anstey for workshop students and anyone else who was interested.

For intermediates, the Scottish Officer held an 'Introduction to Recording' workshop at RBGE in May and Faith Anstey led a grass identification workshop at Milngavie in June. For the more advanced, Angus Hannah organised a workshop on Brambles at Ballachulish in August.

Thanks are due to all the volunteer organisers, leaders and tutors who helped and to our partners this year – Plantlife Scotland, SRUC, Mugdock Country Park and Aberdeen City Council.

Scottish Botanists' Conference

We changed the title of the BSBI/BSS Scottish Annual Meeting to the Scottish Botanists' Conference in 2018, as RBGE joined us as a collaborator and to broaden the event's appeal. That change seemed

to have been successful with a record 175 botanists attending. During the day 140 folk each attended two of seven mini-workshops on a variety of topics – introductions to conifers, grasses, horsetails, the Vegetative Key and the BSBI Database. There were also more advanced workshops on separating difficult species-pairs in the herbarium and on oaks. Feedback was very positive – particularly about the mini-workshops and the main talk, which was entitled *When will we ever learn? A History of Tree Disease* by Professor Richard Ennos. All the talks are [available online](#) and there is a [virtual exhibition](#).

Thanks

Thank you to all the speakers, facilitators and volunteers who made the Scottish Botanists' Conference such a success. More widely, thanks are due to all the BSBI Recorders, members and volunteers who contributed so magnificently to the BSBI's work in 2018. As always, we are very grateful to SNH and RBGE who continue to support the BSBI in Scotland.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer, March 2019