

BSBI / BSS Scottish Annual Meeting 2017– Abstracts

The Natural History of Upper Teesdale project 2017/18

Steve Gater

Backed by generous funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Durham Wildlife Trust is running a project with three elements that may appeal to attendees.

While south of the border, the magnificent flora of Upper Teesdale has many parallels with vegetation in the wilder parts of Scotland. The 'Teesdale assemblage' is widely renowned for its ice-age relic that even the building of the largely unwanted Cow Green reservoir in the midst of key habitats has not destroyed - yet. As elsewhere, pressures on habitat and wildlife from increasing human activity and demand put rare species at further risk. Are there parallels with similar species in Scotland? How effective are active conservation measures for these rarities? What does research tell us or what is needed?

This project brings together existing and new authors to review and update the content and format of 'The Natural History of Upper Teesdale', last published and edited by Dr Margaret Bradshaw MBE in 2003. Margaret is responsible for rewriting two chapters on flora, using data from her continuing surveys and information culled from other work. Chapters also cover heritage, geology, fauna, climate and weather, freshwater biology and conservation. The book will inform talks, guided walks and school-based activity. As editor of the new, 5th edition, of the book I welcome your comments, data, photographs that may inform this new edition, as well as general interest and queries.

Botanical Highlights from Dumfriesshire in 2017 (v.c.72)

Chris Miles

Specimens of :-

Melilotus altissimus (Tall Melilot) - A first record for this species in Dumfriesshire was quickly followed by a second. *Radiola linoides* (Allseed), the first record for Dumfriesshire for at least 120 years (currently listed as extinct in the RPR). *Filago vulgaris* (Common Cudweed), this is only the second record since the nineteenth century for this species in Dumfriesshire. *Calamagrostis canescens* (Purple Small-reed) is from one of only 2 sites currently known in Dumfriesshire. *Parentucella viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia), last seen by Anna White in 2002 in the south of Dumfries.

Photographs of :-

Equisetum pratense (Shady Horsetail), this is a new species for the Moffat Hills. *Scleranthus annuus* (Annual Knawel) found in two places on forest tracks, near Ae village and south of Lockerbie, these are the first records for 32 years. *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* (Wilson's Filmy-fern), last recorded at this site by Rod Corner in 1968. *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn), a first record for Dumfriesshire, on the edge of a plantation on peatland so almost certainly planted. *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort), some re-finds and extensions to range recorded for this species this year. This specimen from Gilnockie is a new location on the Esk just north of Canonbie.

I have again attempted to record in the less visited squares across Peeblesshire and I am exhibiting some of the new records made this season.

Milium effusum (Wood Millet) from Netherurd house policies. This grass was probably planted as food for game birds before the house was acquired by the Scouts and Guides.

Calamagrostis epigejos (Wood Small-reed): Found in a former Forestry Commission spruce plantation. The wet site has been replanted with mixed broad-leaves and *C. epigejos* may have arrived with the new trees.

Trifolium resupinatum (Reversed Clover). Flowers of this clover appear to be upside down with the keel above the standard. It is a Southern European species which is unlikely to do well in Scotland but is sometimes included in agricultural mixes.

Malva pusilla (Small Mallow): A probable seed impurity, there was a single plant growing in a field of swedes near Lyne. It is rare with only one record for Scotland in the current date class.

Pilosella caespitosa (Yellow Fox-and-cubs) illustrates how persistent some non-natives can be. It was recorded at this single site near Peebles town dump up to 1978. Since then the dump has closed and the area extensively landscaped with shrubs and trees. Housing and a re-cycling centre have been built and the Fox-and cubs has re-appeared on a verge. It doesn't seem to be spreading but it is not going away either.

Interesting plants of Roxburgh and Selkirk (v.c.80 & 79), 2017

RWM Corner

v.c.79

- *Calamagrostis x gracilescens* (*C. canescens* x *stricta*, Purple x Narrow Small-reed), a further large scattered population of this rare hybrid grass was found to the east of Clearburn Loch.
- *Myosotis stolonifera* (Pale Forget-me-not), from the upper Douglas Burn, Yarrow. Limited to the south-east corner of Scotland reaching as far north as the Pentlands. Relatively common in v.c.79 but less so in v.c.80.
- *Sisymbrium orientale* (Eastern Rocket), in area of sown grass just within the Selkirk v.c. boundary. L. W. Gaskell 2017. First v.c. record since Miss Hayward's of 1909.

The following were seen at Bowhill on the BSBI Selkirk meeting:

- *Brachypodium pinnatum* (Tor-grass), a strong trackside colony first noted in 1994. It appears to be the commoner ssp. *rupestre* which has hairless upper leaf surfaces.
- *Festuca heterophylla* (Various-leaved Festuca), an introduced densely tufted woodland grass with both fine basal leaves and broader culm leaves. The hairy apices of the ovaries are diagnostic.
- *Lepidium didymium* (Lesser Swine-cress), an annual species of disturbed ground of casual occurrence. Not seen in the vice-county since Ida Hayward's record of 1908.

v.c.80

- *Polygonum rurivagum* (Cornfield Knotgrass), a second vice-county record from a stubble field at Jedfoot.

Denholm's Flora through the ages (leaflet) (v.c.80)

Michael Braithwaite

The range of plants cultivated in Denholm has changed from generation to generation and some of those which have found a home 'over the garden wall' are so well naturalised that it is hard to recognise that they were ever cultivated. The leaflet exhibited was prepared for an exhibition of the village's history to present light-hearted accounts of five of these incomers in the hope of giving an insight into their histories in the village.

Highlights and Progress in Midlothian (v.c.83)

Barbara Sumner

The highlight of 2017 was a new species for v.c.83, *Blackstonia perfoliata* (Yellow-wort). A few plants were spotted on the eastern sea wall at Leith Docks on 28th May by Stuart Maxwell, on a TWIC/RBGE excursion. On 18th June Stuart found hundreds more plants further along the wall. Had they come from East Lothian, or further afield? Another highlight is the discovery of a second plant of the rare hybrid spleenwort, *Asplenium x murbeckii* (*A. ruta-muraria x septentrionale*) at a new site on Arthur's Seat, not far from the first site. Although small on 1st March 2009, when found by David Soden, the new plant now has >20 fronds. (See photos.)

Progress towards Atlas 2020 is shown by a coverage map (in monads), and by distribution maps for selected taxa (showing presence in monads). Distribution pre-2000 is compared with distribution from 2000 to 2017. *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell) has apparently occupied fewer monads from 2000 to 2017, whereas *H. x massartiana* (*H. non-scripta x H. hispanica*) has become more widespread. *Silene dioica* (Red Campion) appears unchanged, but *S. vulgaris* (Bladder Campion) has decreased. In contrast, *S. latifolia* (White Campion) and *S. x hampeana* (Pink Campion) have increased. Are these local or general trends?

Records for Fife and Kinross (v.c.85)

Sandy Edwards

Trifolium incarnatum subsp. incarnatum (Crimson Clover) is a new record for vc85 (Fife & Kinross). Crimson clover used to be widely grown as a protein-rich forage crop for cattle and other livestock. In Great Britain it was mostly grown in the south as it is less successful in northern regions. It is commonly grazed by domestic and wild ruminants. In the wild it can typically be found in forest margins, fields and roadsides, but in Scotland, and particularly in the north, it is rarely found (only 3 other records north of the Forth-Clyde line).

Cymbalaria pallida (Italian Toadflax), an overlooked plant? It was first recorded in vc85, Fife & Kinross, two years ago as a small patch in a wall in Craighrothie village. This *Cymbalaria* is not trailing and forms a small clump with large flowers. Its habitat is the same as *Cymbalaria muralis* (Ivy-leaved Toadflax) but only seems to appear as a few very small plants. All these areas have a very large population of *C. muralis* as do many old walls and sides of buildings, so unless everywhere is searched *C. pallida* is probably missed. This year two more sites were found, both incidentally whilst out on a walk, at Cupar and Ladybank, a matter of scrutinising walls as you pass by!

***Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn), is it native in Scotland?**

Philip Sansum

Many Scottish recorders will be unfamiliar with Alder Buckthorn (Rhamnaceae: *Frangula alnus* Mill.). In Scotland it is a scarce plant of damp, acidic (and often peaty) soils. Its habitats include lochshore carr, scrub on the margins of raised bogs and valley mires, wet heath and open woodland. The native distribution of this small, 'seldom recognised' (to quote the forester, H. L. Edlin) tree is said to have been masked by historical planting and the species has conventionally been regarded as 'introduced' in Scotland. This exhibit aims to draw the attention of Scottish recorders to the plant, raise the question of its status and identify a need for more information. Currently, evidence against *Frangula alnus* being a rare native on some of its Scottish sites seems inadequate and this may have implications for its treatment and that of its habitats.

Eighteen years of vegetation change in a tall-herb community free from large herbivores at Ben Lawers (v.c.88)

Dan Watson, NTS

The NVC type U17 tall herb community is an important refugia for rare upland calcicoles but is usually restricted to cliff ledges because of grazing. In 2000 a fence was erected around Creag an Lochain (Ben Lawers) to remove large herbivores from an extensive montane site containing outcrops rich in tall herbs. Vegetation data collected in 1999 during a baseline survey of plots in the ground below the crags has been compared with a re-survey in 2017. Species diversity has not changed although total species richness has declined slightly and tall herb species richness has risen. There has been an expansion in the cover of tall herbs from 4% to 34%, smaller increases in the cover of bryophytes and small herbs, a reduction in bare ground and a large decrease in grass cover by 26%. The community composition has shifted significantly from species typical of upland grassland NVC habitats CG10, CG11 and U4 towards those found in U17 tall herb communities. Grazing tolerant grasses and low-growing or rosette-forming herbs which require gaps in the vegetation have declined, while tall and shade-tolerant species have increased. Competition for light, rather than resilience to herbivory, now has a major influence on the vegetation.

***Sedum villosum* L. on Ben Lawers (v.c.88)**

Dan Watson, NTS

Sedum villosum (Hairy Stonecrop) is Nationally Scarce and Near Threatened, with declines attributed to drainage, burning, under- and over-grazing and possibly atmospheric pollution. A survey of this plant at Ben Lawers in 2017 aimed to re-find old records and make new ones. It was found to have disappeared from a number of locations but there were also a number of new records. However, it became evident that extant populations are all at a high altitude and mostly in areas of long snow-lie whereas many of those not found were at lower altitudes and less likely to be in areas of long snow-lie. The lowest population found was discovered to be higher than any other recorded *S. villosum* in Britain. The evidence that climate change is responsible for the losses on Ben Lawers raises the possibility that the plants here may be of a different ecotype.

***Cirsium x wankelii* (*C. heterophyllum x palustre*), a distinctive hybrid (v.c.89 & 90)**

John Edgington

In July 2017 Fred Rumsey showed me this hybrid between perennial *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) and biennial *C. palustre* (Marsh Thistle) at Kindrogan Field Centre, where it has been known for many years, behaving as a perennial but otherwise intermediate in stem, leaf and inflorescence characters. The differences are so distinct that in August I had no difficulty in finding two colonies of *C. x wankelii* in damp birch wood (NVC W11c) beside the River North Esk in Angus (v.c.90). Both parents were abundant, as was *Filipendula ulmaria* (Meadowsweet), *Conopodium major* (Pignut) and *Melampyrum pratense* (Common Cow-wheat). In the past *C. x wankelii* was recorded quite widely in Scotland, but there are rather few records this century, with only half-a-dozen or so since 2010. It seems to be largely absent from northern England (the southern part of *C. heterophyllum*'s range). According to Kevin Walker in *The hybrid flora*, *C. x wankelii* is partially fertile and may be overlooked. It should be searched for wherever the two parents grow together.

Photographs of whole plants, samples of basal leaves, and a table comparing the hybrid and its parents are shown.

A new tip for Scaly-male ID from Tony Church

Angus Hannah

Specimens and photographs demonstrate an additional character to help with identification in the *Dryopteris affinis* complex. The technique confirms *D. affinis subsp. affinis*, and offers some help with the other taxa. It is especially useful for otherwise indeterminate young plants. Pinnule venation viewed through a lens against the light provides valuable diagnostic information. A single pinna (preferably infertile) should be viewed with the upper surface towards the eye. In *affinis subsp. affinis* the pinnule midrib and all lateral veins appear perfectly translucent and of consistent breadth to the margin of the lamina. In *borreri* and *filix-mas* only the midrib is semi-translucent, and often becomes obscure towards the tip; lateral veins are hard to see for much of their length because rows of green cells within reduce the area of translucency. *Cambrensis* is intermediate in these respects, but laterals usually appear to reach the margin, often broadening out there into an obovate translucent area. They also fork more freely, the basal lateral on the side facing the rachis having generally five or more segments, while normal *affinis* has at most four and usual forms of *borreri* two or three.

Towards a handbook of Scottish Brambles

Angus Hannah

Most recorders tick off *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and then ignore brambles for the rest of the day. Why? Because they believe they are too difficult and best left to experts. I do not agree. Only about 30 species are frequent anywhere in Scotland, and with a little help any competent recorder can learn to identify the handful common in their own area. This exhibit looks at ways to overcome the obstacles which discourage folk from making a start.

Lack of a Scottish handbook, or online equivalent, is a major hindrance. Edees and Newton's monograph is 30 years old, expensive and difficult to obtain, illustrates less than a third of species, and is 80% irrelevant in Scotland. So, what can be done instead?

The following are exhibited:

1. Sample pages towards a reference guide to Scottish Rubi, with text and photos illustrating diagnostic features for each taxon.
2. A spreadsheet of confusable species pairs, listing distinguishing characters, for use in the field.
3. A card for completion in the field on encountering an unidentified bush, to complement or substitute for photos.
4. A reference spreadsheet of character states for all Scottish taxa.

Recording Strategy – a Summary of the experience of one recorder Brian Ballinger

- Winter/Summer: Ten sites were visited in winter and summer and supplementary winter recording appeared to be worthwhile.
- Monad/Tetrad: A survey of 4 sites suggested that an examination of one monad may yield more than a visit of the same duration to the corresponding tetrad.
- Duration of Visit: 2 shorter visits to 4 sites indicated that more species may be found than on a single visit to the same sites of the same total duration.
- There and Back: 6 linear sites were recorded and extra species were seen when returning to the starting point.
- Notebook or Form: Four locations were assessed for a half hour using a notebook and recording sheet alternately and more species were recorded in the notebook.
- Single or Group: A retrospective review of one monad which had been recorded by several single recorders and groups suggested the groups may spot more taxa.

These projects report the limited experience of one recorder and others may obtain different results. I suggest that it is important to assess our recording methods.

West Sutherland (v.c.108) 2017

Ian Evans and Gwen Richards

Recording during 2017 focussed on the eastern part of the vice-county, from a temporary base at Tongue. This yielded some 3500 records from remote monads, with a further 1400+ from nearer home. Noteworthy finds have included the following:

- Probable *Salix phylicifolia* (Tea-leaved Willow) on an island in Loch Urigill (NC2409); if confirmed, the first recent record for v.c.108.
- A flourishing population of *Goodyera repens* (Creeping Lady's-tresses) at Tongue (NC5959) previously recorded in that vicinity in 1897 and 1958.
- Large stands of *Vicia sylvatica* (Wood Vetch) on the sandy cliffs at Melvich Bay (NC8865).
- A new site for *Lemna gibba* (Gibbous Duckweed) in a 'natural' pool on the outskirts of Lochinver (NC0822).
- Phil Smith also provided photographs of hybrid orchids found at Faraid Head (NC3970) and Oldshoremore (NC1959/2059), together with other records.

Thanks also to Bill Badger, Stephen Moran and Ro Scott for their contributions.

Vivipary in *Holcus lanatus*

John Grace

We report the appearance of a pseudoviviparous form of *Holcus lanatus* in Scotland. Although there are many cases of pseudovivipary in the Poaceae, the only previous report in *Holcus* is from Arber (1934) who found a specimen in a hedge at Lyme Regis, Dorset.

***Baldellia* (Lesser Water-plantain) species/subspecies**

Richard Marriot

The differences between the two species/subspecies of *Baldellia* (*B. ranunculoides* subsp. *ranunculoides* and *B. ranunculoides* subsp. *repens*) are shown with drawings, photos and live specimens. The two taxa are considered to be separate species by Arrigo et al (2010) with differing ecology and different life strategies. They have recently undergone a serious decline across their whole range and are classed as "Near threatened" in GB and "Vulnerable" in England. The U.K. has a significant responsibility for their conservation; so it is important to identify them as to their individual taxa - be it species or subspecies. So far in Scotland *repens* has proved to be the rarer taxon, being found only in the Tay catchment, with an 1893 well-documented report from the Beaulieu River (possibly still present 1947).

Deergrasses, *Trichophorum* species

Jeremy Roberts

Deergrass identification: two distinct species, *Trichophorum germanicum* and *T. cespitosum* s.s., but a confusing, abundant hybrid, *T. x foersteri*.

Hybrid Ivies

Alison Rutherford

Vigorous hunting failed to find a hybrid ivy for the 'Hybrid Flora' despite a US researcher publishing her finds in 2005.

The same hybrid Irish Ivy (*Hedera hibernica* 'Hibernica group' x Common Ivy *H. helix*) was found in the Soroksar Botanical Garden, Budapest, now named *H. x soroksarensis*.

Hugh McAllister saw a likely cross between Irish Ivy and Algerian Ivy, *H. algeriensis*, in California in 2013. In 2015 he spotted a colony over gravestones near Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. It is named *H. x sepulcralis* (graveyard ivy).

Living samples of the hybrids and the species are displayed.

Taraxacology: trending on social media!

Leslie Tucker

May 3rd 2017, heading west for BSBI's annual 'Dandyfest' in Rothesay, I paused at Aberfeldy for a 150th anniversary meeting of PSNS. BBC Radio Scotland reporter Mark Stephen caught me studying wayside *Taraxacum* (Dandelion, P-a-bed) flowers and elicited *ad hoc* observations. Of course, he also gathered other members' diverse contributions; but, the subsequent Out of Doors broadcast most spectacularly promoted taraxacology. Weeks later, digitally-adept relatives revealed many favourable on-line comments: print-out displayed.

On Bute we encountered pastoral landscapes remarkably lacking *T.* section *Ruderalia* (D. Weed Sorts); consequently, nicer species typical of biodiverse, wild, habitats were prominent,

like *T. celticum* (Celtic D.) and *T. saxorum* (Rocks' D.). Jizzes fixed, more were identified back home later, in unkempt herbage on Dundee Riverside - all new records for Scotland!

Background to Facebook photo includes *T. polyodon* (Common D.): "terminal lobe on early (outer) leaves ... small and triangular, ... later (inner) ... larger, dentate and divided: ... heterophyllous." Diagnostically, whilst *T. saxorum* (Rocks' D.) leaves stay patently and laxly dissected - homophyllous, *T. celticum* (Celtic D.) lobes attenuate, "narrow ... forward-pointing", contrariwise.

Pot plants and herbarium specimens exhibit distinctions; but more coherently descriptive terms are needed.

Edible Mountain Plants

Alan Walker

The obvious example of an edible plant to be found on moorlands and mountains of Britain and Ireland is the *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Bilberry) but what about the other ". . . berry" plants that botanists and hill walkers come across? Are cowberries different from crowberries, are either of them edible, and so on? This poster provides photographs and text to show the easily recognised differences between fruits, flowers and leaves of bilberry, cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), and cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*). Some of these species grow so prolifically in parts of their range in Europe that they are part of the local cuisine, so a few tasting notes are provided, but no recipes.

New data on the distribution of polyploid *Campanula rotundifolia* in Britain & Ireland

Julia Wilson and Chris Jeffree

There are two cytotypes of *Campanula rotundifolia* in Britain and Ireland. Broadly, these are eastern tetraploids (68 chromosomes) and western hexaploids (102 chromosomes), that correspond with *C. rotundifolia* subsp. *rotundifolia* and subsp. *montana* respectively (Stace 2010). This year, about 250 new samples have added detail to the Scottish distribution maps and identified extensive new hexaploid populations in VC 106 and 107.

Our molecular studies demonstrate that most hexaploids on the Scottish mainland and islands, western England and Wales, and Ireland are similar to each other and distinct from the British tetraploids. This indicates that establishment of these hexaploid populations preceded separation of these land masses by sea level rise c 16000 years BP. Invasion of tetraploids from the continent could have continued until about 8000 years BP, when Britain was finally isolated from Europe by sea-level rise.

The two cytotypes do not usually co-exist, possibly because the patterns laid down by post-glacial colonization events 8 – 16000 years ago are now maintained by geographic isolation and reproductive barriers, but climatic or geological factors may also be involved. However, hexaploids from the lead mining areas of Alston, Teesdale and Wensleydale in England and Wanlockhead in Scotland co-exist with tetraploids and are genetically similar to them. These hexaploids should probably be considered as distinct from *C. rotundifolia* subsp. *montana*.

BSBI / Plantlife Plant Families Workshops 2017

Faith Anstey

We held three workshops this year, two Plant Families with the same format as before, at Eglinton Country Park and Glasgow Museums Resource Centre. We had mainly new tutors this year, but the format is well enough established that they had no difficulty in doing the same great job as ever in teaching and motivating the participants; as always, the evaluation responses were overwhelmingly positive.

We also held a new Grasses workshop at Holyrood Education Centre aimed at people having a basic knowledge of field botany but not confident identifying grasses, one main problem being '*kleidophobia*' – a fear of keys! So the approach was to confine it to the 20 most common grasses of neutral grassland, using lots of hands-on practice and this proved very successful.

Next year we hope to hold two Plant Families and two Grasses workshops, in different parts of Scotland from before.

The British Pteridological Society for fern enthusiasts

Heather McHaffie

The British Pteridological Society has a Scottish group that both visits ferns in the wild and enjoys cultivating them in our gardens. A sign-up sheet is provided for people who are very welcome to join in our visits. Specimens and ID assistance are provided for some *Dyopteris* species.

The BSBI / iRecord plant card: Capturing data from square-bashing online

Oliver Pescott

This poster will introduce a new interface to iRecord, developed by the BRC with BSBI input. The format of the data entry system is designed to capture the results of “square-bashing” or similar activities. Options for capturing indicators of survey effort and plant status are also integrated into the system.

Three years of the NPMS in Scotland

Oliver Pescott

This poster will overview the impressive efforts of Scottish plant surveyors in contributing to our knowledge of Scottish habitats and plants through the BSBI/CEH/JNCC/Plantlife National Plant Monitoring Scheme.

Plantlife Scotland and NPMS (National Plant Monitoring Scheme) Contact - scotland@plantlife.org.uk and (01786) 478509.

Robin Payne

Scottish Natural Heritage: Habitat Map of Scotland

Iain Macdonald

RBGE Library

Lorna Mitchell, Head of Library, Archives & Publications

The Library of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) is Scotland's national reference collection for specialist botanical and horticultural resources. With more than 60,000 books, the earliest of which dates back to the 15th century, 150,000 journal volumes, maps, nursery catalogues, botanical art, photographs and hortus sicci the RBGE Library is one of this country's largest research libraries. Subjects covered include systematic botany, floras, plant biodiversity and conservation, economic botany, medicinal plants, botanical illustration, plant collecting and botanical history and biography.

The RBGE Archives holds manuscripts, images and photographs relating to the history of the Garden from its beginnings in 1670 to the recent past. The collection also includes correspondence and diaries relating to plant collecting in India and China in the 19th and 20th centuries, for example papers relating to George Forrest and Joseph Rock.

The Library is open for anyone to use on a reference-only basis from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Access to the Archives and Special Collections (Rare Books collection, Illustrations, Nursery Catalogues, etc) is by appointment. The Library catalogue is available to search at <https://rbge.koha-ptfs.co.uk/> and a collection-level listing of the Archives can be found at <http://atom.rbge.info/>.

RBGE Herbarium

Elsbeth Haston, Deputy Herbarium Curator

The Herbarium of RBGE currently houses 3 million specimens, of which we estimate that over 500,000 were collected in Britain and Ireland. These specimens are an incredible resource for botanists for a wide range of scientific research and we have many researchers from UK and from around the world coming to work with the collections. They represent over 300 years of plant and fungal diversity, including many rare or extinct species. We welcome more Scottish botanists to use these collections and we are also working to make them more accessible through digitisation. There are now over 100,000 specimens catalogued from Britain and Ireland of which nearly 26,000 have been imaged. They are available on the Herbarium Catalogue at <http://data.rbge.org.uk/herb>. If you are interested in coming to use the collections please contact us at herbarium@rbge.org.uk. You can also follow us on Twitter @RBGE_Herbarium.

Botanical Society of Scotland

Julia Wilson

The BSS is Scotland's national botanical society and promotes the study of non-flowering plants and algae, fungi and lichens as well as flowering plants. In this broad scope we are unique among British botanical societies.

We run a programme of monthly lectures from September – May, together with a summer programme of field meetings. We also publish a twice-yearly newsletter, BSS News, and a scientific journal, Plant Ecology & Diversity. Our current field project is the BSS Urban Flora project, in which we are recording wild plants occurring in urban Scotland.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in plants, whether professional or amateur. Come to our stand to find out more about the Society and our activities, and purchase some botanical cards and gifts. Check out our website at <http://www.botanical-society-scotland.org.uk/> and our Facebook page.

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI)

Jim McIntosh

The BSBI is the leading organisation for amateur and professional botanists in Britain and Ireland.

- We promote the study of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant flora
- We support and encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of our flora.

If you are not already a member of the BSBI - and would like to support and participate in our work – please join us! Pick up our membership leaflet and ask me, Jim McIntosh if you have any queries about joining. There is no better way to improve your field skills than by going on our field meetings & workshops. BSBI membership is also a great line in your CV if you are looking for related work.

A range of leaflets, including the most recent BSBI Annual Review and BSBI News are available to take away; and recent issues of BSBI Scottish Newsletter, New Journal of Botany and other BSBI publications are displayed. I would be pleased to supply promotional material to anyone who plans to go to events, such as conferences or workshops, which potential new members might attend. Check out the BSBI Scottish webpages on www.bsbi.org/scotland.

BSBI Photographic Competition

Natalie Harmsworth

A fantastic 117 entries to the 2017 BSBI Photographic Competition are on display. Vote for your favourites in each of the two categories: “Plants in the Landscape” and “Archaeophytes”. The winning photographers will be announced after the main talk and, if present, will be awarded their prizes. The winning photographs will be displayed at the prize giving and will also appear in future BSBI publications.

BSBI Plant Identification Table

Douglas McKean

A great opportunity to get expert help with identification with so many experts in the audience! Remember to bring your specimens and handlens!

BSBI New Year Plant Hunt

Louise Marsh

A summary of what we have learned from six years of BSBI's New Year Plant Hunt, which takes place across Britain and Ireland. We flag up under-recorded areas in Scotland and reveal the dates for New Year Plant Hunt 2018.