



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

BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting and AGM

This year's Annual Exhibition Meeting (AEM) was held on 25th November at the Natural History Museum in London and proved a great success. 237 visitors came along, making it the best attended AEM ever! They were able to enjoy 38 exhibits, eight speakers and two behind-the-scenes tours of the NHM's Sloane Herbarium, led by Dr Fred Rumsey. All the speakers' presentations can be downloaded from [this page](#) and during December we hope to upload electronic versions of as many as possible of the exhibits. You can read about the AEM on the News & Views blog [here](#) and to find out what some of the visitors to the Annual Exhibition Meeting had to say about the event, click [here](#).

We set aside an hour during the AEM for BSBI's Annual General Meeting, during which five new trustees and two new Council members were elected – details [here](#) – and the presidency passed from John Faulkner to Chris Metherell. Read an interview with John [here](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Scottish Annual Meeting

We had a record 151 book on the BSBI / BSS Scottish Annual Meeting at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh last month. That probably makes it the biggest meeting of botanists in Scotland EVER! And judging from the feedback forms it was one of the most enjoyed. The excellent main talk on Mountain Flowers by Michael Scott and the ID mini-workshops were the most frequently mentioned highlights. I particularly liked the mini-workshop that looked at similar species-pairs or groups such as *Circaea lutetiana*, *C. alpina* & *C. x intermedia*, and *Quercus robur*, *Q. petraea* & *Q. x rosaceae* using specimens from the herbarium. However, I fear the mini-workshops might be too much of a distraction from the excellent exhibition which recorders and members put so much work into – so expect a tweak in next year's programme. The exhibition abstracts and the presentations as pdfs are on the [Scottish Annual Meeting webpage](#) – take a look!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

New Year Plant Hunt

We hope that you will participate in our seventh New Year Plant Hunt which will take place between 30th December 2017 and 2nd January 1st 2018. Last year, almost 900 botanists across Britain and Ireland recorded 492 taxa in bloom so it will be interesting to see what we find this year. We will once again be using our New Year Plant Hunt mobile phone app, developed for us by BSBI Database Officer Tom Humphrey working with colleagues at the Biological Records Centre. Records, once verified, will appear on our [New Year Plant Hunt website](#), where there is an interactive map and – a new feature for this year – we are setting up an events page. So, if you know of, or are leading, a New Year Plant Hunt in your vice-county, please [email the New Year Plant Hunt Team](#) with details.

For more details on how to take part this year, or to see the results from previous years' New Year Plant Hunts, click [here](#). You will also be able to follow 2018 results as they come in each day via [BSBI News & Views](#), [Facebook](#) and this New Year Plant Hunt feed from [Twitter](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI Field Meetings

Thank you to everyone who offered field meetings for members to enjoy. The details, where available, are on the [BSBI Field Meetings](#) web page, with information on dates in the [Meetings diary](#). Details will also appear in the Yearbook as usual, with any arriving after the publication deadline appearing on the meetings web page. Do take part in one or more of them and see what surprises you can find.

We plan to report highlights of meetings in BSBI News, with the full reports in the Yearbook as usual. For this reason, it would be really helpful if you could send me the meeting report as soon as possible after the meeting. I will then extract a synopsis, and send the report to the Yearbook editors.

I will be missing flowers for most of the next three months as I will be working at the British Antarctic Survey Halley station (the one that was moved because of crevasses), making ozone, weather and climate observations, and in particular calibrating a new automated ozone measuring instrument. Provided that the crevasses don't join up in the wrong place, the automated instruments should then run through the winter and monitor the ozone hole as it grows next Antarctic spring.

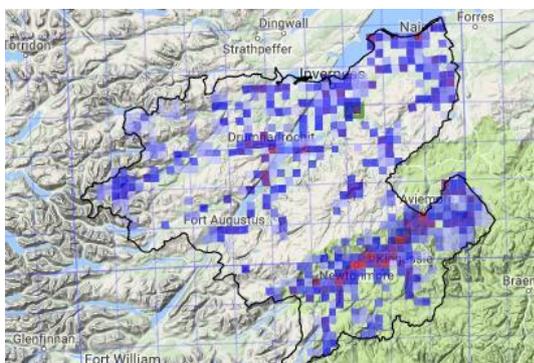
I should have email, so can post updates to the meetings information as necessary, but will have to miss John Poland's Introduction to Winter Twigs. I suspect that buds will be beginning to burst as I return.

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

Atlas 2020 monad and tetrad coverage maps

We recently sent links to Atlas 2020 monad and tetrad coverage maps to all County Recorders. Andy Amphlett produces these nicely formatted maps complete with hectad labels, lochs/loughs/lakes and road networks, every three or four months. However, you can produce similar maps very easily, directly from the DDb. Because formatting options for DDb maps are more limited they won't look quite so nice, but they do show the same data. This is handy if you want to check your Atlas coverage after entering a big batch of records!

We recently sent links to Atlas 2020 monad and tetrad coverage maps to all County Recorders. Andy Amphlett periodically produces these nicely formatted maps complete with hectad labels and road networks. But it is a lot of work so he doesn't do it very often. However, you can produce similar maps very easily, directly from the DDb. They perhaps won't look quite so nice, but they do show the same data. This is handy if you want to check your Atlas coverage after entering a big batch of records!



You need to run a query grouping by tetrad or monad; filter to exclude dates before 2000 and exclude records above species level. E.g. like [this](#). Then click "zoomable map". Alternatively, [this](#) option adds a frequency clause to the query, in this case restricting the map to tetrads with more than 25 taxa since 2000 (but you can change to whatever you like.) Personally, I like faded heatmap style of map: (Go to marker styles > heatmap (faded)).

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

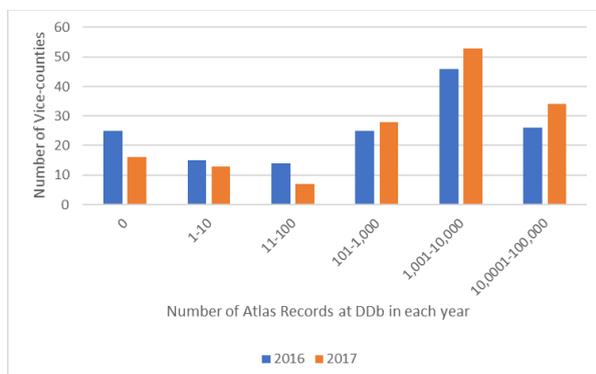
Unexpected Gaps in Atlas 2020 coverage maps

A few Recorders have reported unexpected white gaps in their coverage on the coverage maps we sent out recently. Andy points out the maps only include taxa recorded *from 2000*, excluding pre-2000 records, and that tetrads or monads with zero taxa recorded are white, while squares with 1 - 10 taxa are also white but with a black border. But in some cases, this border is not very clear. Andy will tweak the maps the next time he updates them.

In other cases, records have not been successfully synched from the Recorder's MapMate to the DDb. The solution is always the same: a Sync Reset. We recommend Recorders do this periodically and since it is over a year since we last asked you to do so, NOW would be a good time for EVERYONE to reset sync with the BSBI hub as their partner, create a new sync file and send it off. This is quick and simple to do, but if you need help then click [here](#). Look out for the two confirmation emails. If you don't receive the first within an hour, your sync has NOT reached the DDb and you must investigate.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Atlas 2020 Data Entry & Validation



So far 1.09 million 2017 records have been added to the BSBI DDb that have tetrad or better resolution by 135 Vice-counties. An amazing achievement! (The equivalent figure this time last year was only 780,000.) But of these, 20 VCs forwarded fewer than 100 records. And 16 have yet to forward *any* records! So, it would be great if you'd make a real push to get your backlog of records digitised and sent through to the BSBI Database

by the end of December if possible. The chart shows the number of records grouped by the number of contributing VCs for both 2016 and 2017. With just two years to go this is a crucial point in Atlas 2020, and we would like to assess progress across UK & Ireland early in the New Year – so we can direct scarce resources to help Recorders where most needed.

If you are already fully up to date with your data entry – then well done! This would be a good time to make a start on data validation, if you haven't already done so. We realise that this is a bit daunting for many, however Andy Amphlett has offered to help individual recorders get started. Please let me know if you'd like to take up this kind offer.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Vice-County Annual Reports

We had great feedback from members who enjoyed reading the Vice-County Annual Reports that County Recorders filed last January. They were published on the BSBI website and appeared in the country newsletters. Take a look - [England](#), [Wales](#) & [Scotland](#). They are a fascinating account of botanical endeavour by BSBI Recorders and members across the UK. I think many recorders enjoyed drafting them – and saw it as a chance to take stock. So, let's repeat the exercise for 2017! I'll call for a *short* summary Annual Report for 2017 from all Recorders in next BSBI *eNews* – complete with guidance on the format, content and number of words.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Adding new taxa to MapMate or the DDb species dictionaries

I am often asked by Recorders about how to have new taxa added to MapMate or the DDb. This often refers to new aliens, or to varieties or forms. A recent request led to me learning that there is a new procedure now in place that involves adding an 'issue' to a GitHub site. And so, your first question might well be.... what is GitHub?! It is a web-based system used a lot by techie people, most often to help keep track of versions of things (e.g. computer code). BSBI will use it slightly differently, and don't worry, you won't need to know the first thing about computer code! You do need to register though, but that's not complicated and it's free. To get started, visit this web address: <https://github.com/BSBI/mapmate-taxon-requests> and read the guidelines carefully.

Once registered, click on the 'issues' link on the toolbar. You will see examples of other plant name issues there – have a look and see what type of information others have provided. There are currently 21 on the list (as of 29th November 2017).

These requests will be reviewed periodically by BSBI's Head of Science, Dr Kevin Walker, and by Dr Oliver Pescott at CEH, and then used to compile a list to pass on to MapMate. As this process is step-wise, it is not immediate. Please send a copy of the actual record(s) which prompted the 'issue' to Tom Humphrey, so that he can ensure that these are also included in the DDb species dictionary.

[Maria Long](#), BSBI Irish Officer & [Tom Humphrey](#), BSBI Database Officer

Deergrass (*Trichophorum*) records

[Jeremy Roberts](#) mounted an excellent exhibition at the Scottish Annual Meeting with the title “Two distinct species, *Trichophorum germanicum* and *T. cespitosum* s.s., but a troublesome, abundant hybrid, *T. x foersteri*.” A short description is included in the Scottish Annual Meeting Abstracts, and there is further information on Jeremy's excellent [website](#).

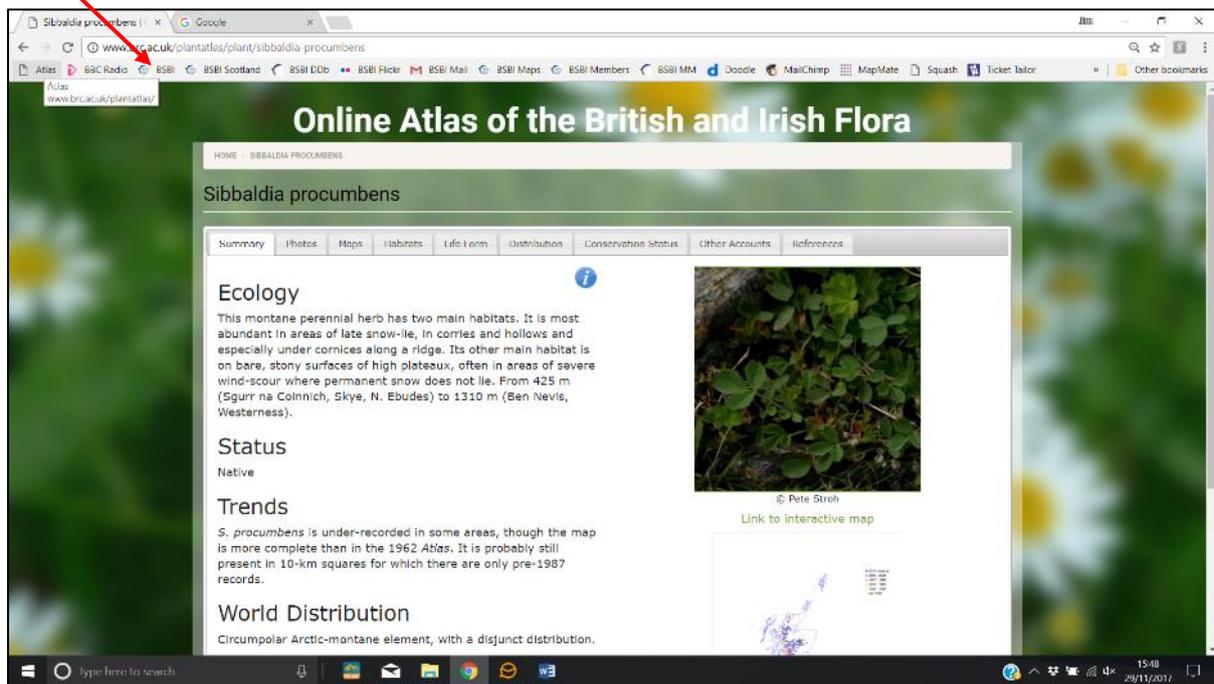
Jeremy writes “Many records wrongly attributed to *T. cespitosum* s.s. (i.e. Northern Deergrass) are entering the Distribution Database, when *T. germanicum* agg. (or *T. cespitosum* agg. in some lists) was intended. Entering the familiar “*Trichophorum cespitosum*” for either the aggregate or Common Deergrass will generate spurious Northern Deergrass records requiring later correction! Some database import algorithms still generate such errors, and I would ask VC Recorders to please keep this problem in mind when checking incoming records. Thanks!”

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Bookmarks Bar

It is very useful to have websites that you frequently visit saved to your Bookmarks Bar. Then, with a single click, you can go directly there. I have [The Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora](#), the [BSBI website](#), [BSBI DDb](#), [BSBI maps](#), the [BSBI MapMate](#) support website and the MapMate website on my bookmark bar, for example. You could also have email accounts or any other webpages you frequently visit. If the bar does not appear on your browser (see below) click the box with three dots (or bars) in the top right of your browser, go to settings and switch on “Show Bookmarks bar”.

To save a page to your bookmarks bar, simply navigate to the page (CTRL+click the links above if you would like to bookmark any of those sites), and click the star in the top right of your browser, click the down arrow on the folder box and select Bookmarks Bar, you may also like to shorten long names like the *Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI)* to just *BSBI*, for example. Then click *Done*.



[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

BSBI News & Views

On the News & Views blog in November: Roger Horton tells us about his [quest to refind Black Poplars](#) as part of a wider project by Cambridge Natural History Society; Debs Wallace explains how a [BSBI Training Grant](#) allowed her to [improve her aquatic plant identification skills](#); we serialised the story of how Dave Steere from Kent went from beginner botanist to active Atlas 2020 recorder and mainstay of his local botany group in just four years: read parts [one](#), [two](#) and [three](#); we featured the [Kent Botanical Recording Group](#) who supported Dave and helped him hone his ID skills; Jessica Hamilton reported on the [third meeting of the BSBI Kerry Group](#), set up this year and going from strength to strength; we offered some [background on the new Code of Conduct](#) and [reported on the Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) (see above); and we featured a [full-length interview with outgoing President John Faulkner](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

And finally...

BSBI Code of Conduct 2017

It has taken seven years to pull all the information together, but the BSBI Code of Conduct 2017 is now available to download [here](#). It lists all scheduled plants in Britain and Ireland, offers guidance on how to sample and should prove invaluable for ecological consultants, foragers and botanists at all skill levels. The new Code is the work of Sarah Whild (BSBI) and Fred Rumsey (NHM) along with colleagues from Natural England and JNCC. Sarah and Fred would like to acknowledge funding support from the Natural History Museum and from the British Pteridological Society.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

Identiplant

If you know of any beginner botanists who are keen to improve their ID skills, why not direct them towards [Identiplant](#), the online ID course supported by BSBI's [Training](#) Team? Applications open on 1st December and spaces fill up very quickly. Any botanist who feels they have the time and the skills to be an Identiplant tutor in 2018 should take a look at the [Identiplant](#) website and contact course co-ordinator [Brenda Harold](#) as soon as possible.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

BSBI eNews

The current and recent back issues of BSBI *eNews* are available on the [Publications](#) page of the BSBI website. An email with a link to BSBI *eNews* is circulated to BSBI Recorders, Referees, staff and committee members. Please let me know if you wish to unsubscribe or amend your email or forward it to anyone else who might be interested. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. BSBI *eNews* is generally published on the 1st of each month (unless it happens to be a bank holiday!) so contributions should ideally reach me by the 21st of the preceding month. I'd also be pleased to have feedback on any of the articles appearing in BSBI *eNews*.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Thank you!

I'd like to thank all readers and contributors for their contributions to BSBI *eNews* – and indeed to the BSBI in 2017 - which are **much** appreciated. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer