

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

BSBI Recorders' Conference 2016

The Recorders Conference will take place this year in Shrewsbury from Friday 2nd until Sunday 4th of September. It is for County Recorders and all those interested in botanical recording in the UK and Ireland and is designed to share views from experts and peers and develop best practice in fieldwork and reporting plant data.

The theme of the event is “*Hybrids and Allies. Recording and Surveying*” and it offers an exciting programme of talks and workshops. We will hear from Clive Stace on hybrids and allies, Andrew Cherrill on field recording pitfalls and solutions, Martin Rand on European Floras and many others. There will be a variety of workshops to choose from, covering topics such as Charophytes, Conifers, Crucifers, *Euphrasia* and *Myosotis*, and there will be a site visit to Llanymynech Rocks. Of course, there will also be the usual opportunities to meet and socialise with fellow botanists and recorders!

The conference itself will take place in the centre of Shrewsbury, at The Gateway, and accommodation will be provided at FSC's Preston Montford Centre. The costs to attend the event are £200 for a single room, £300 for a shared room (based on two sharing) and £100 as a day delegate. For more information, including a draft programme and information on how to book your place, please click [here](#).

MapMate & Windows 10

MapMate *Alerts* Newsletter 110 dropped any recommendation that MapMate will run on Windows 8 or subsequent Windows versions. While it is outside the BSBI's remit to recommend which Operating System recorders use, we are deeply committed to supporting Recorders with MapMate. We therefore offer the following information to help you make the right decision.

Windows 10 is widely regarded as a worthwhile upgrade and many people have MapMate working perfectly on Windows 10. All new computers normally come supplied with Windows 10 and we have heard of very few people experiencing problems. MapMate was concerned that a future update to Windows 10 may upset MapMate and it may not be possible to uninstall the update that causes the problem (unlike previous versions of Windows). However it does appear that you *can* uninstall updates that cause problems. And you can also uninstall any new Windows 10 builds that upset MapMate – *as long as you do so within 30 days*.

Many folk have MapMate working fine on Windows 8.1. However a few MapMate users experienced a problem with MapMate's Analysis not working properly. Guidance was published in [Newsletter 110](#) on how to uninstall some Windows updates which were implicated and this seems to work. If you use Windows 8.1 and plan to update to Windows 10 it is essential that you get MapMate working properly in Windows 8.1 first. A number of folk with Analysis problems on Windows 8.1 computers have imported exactly the same problem into Windows 10 and once there it seems impossible to repair. MapMate is currently working on a version update to fix this issue.

If you plan to upgrade to Windows 10, you should do so before the end of the free period (i.e. before 29 July 2016). However, if you have MapMate working fine in Windows 7 or 8.1 then my personal recommendation would be *not* to update to Windows 10. Your operating system will continue to be supported by Microsoft until 2020 or 2023 respectively, and the chances are your PC will need replaced before then. You can Google how to stop Microsoft's irritating update reminders.

Support for Vista will expire in 2017 and your machine is probably so old it is not worth upgrading, especially as the update will not be free, so you should aim to replace it before then. Support for XP has already expired and you should probably not even connect it to the internet and consider buying a replacement immediately.

Please direct any queries on any of this to me, [Jim McIntosh](#), and report any new problems that arise with MapMate to [Polly Spencer-Vellacot](#), our Welsh Officer.

MapMate for regular contributors

BSBI members who are regular contributors of records to County Recorders are very welcome to have a BSBI supplied and licensed copy of MapMate. This could help County Recorders by reducing their data entry or importing workload. It is very easy to learn to use and there is great support on the [BSBI MapMate](#) website. County Recorders should get in touch with [Bob Ellis](#), BSBI Projects Officer, if they would like to nominate a regular contributor to receive a copy of MapMate.

MapMate Importing Spreadsheets

However, it is only worth learning MapMate if a significant number of records are *regularly* contributed. For smaller and less frequent contributions, members should be directed to the [BSBI Resources](#) page, where there is a section entitled "MapMate Importing Sheets" at the bottom of the page. Here spreadsheets are available to download which will expedite data entry for the contributor and data importing for the County Recorder. The quickest way to enter records is to use the spreadsheets that use BRC codes to enter taxa. They are only suitable if contributors use [BRC standard recording cards](#) or [BSBI customised recording cards](#) which include those codes. If contributors use notebooks, then they should use the "Species names sheets" and type the full species name out – at least for the first occurrence. Excel will auto-complete subsequent instances.

Generate Taxon Lists

I mentioned last month that you can very simply generate a list of all the taxa recorded in a grid square using the [BSBI DataBase \(DDB\)](#) by clicking *Tools* > [Grid Reference Lookup](#), typing the square reference, clicking *look-up grid reference* and clicking *View taxon list for...* What I forgot to mention is that this feature is available even without logging on – at least at hectad resolution. You may like to point this out to folk who are helping you with Atlas 2020. They will find it useful to see which taxa have not been recorded post 1999 in the hectad by clicking *sort recent records separately* – and may wish to print them off for reference when recording.

GPSs

Chris Preston asks if it is possible to make it easier to distinguish '3's and '8's on his Garmin GPS readout. Well of course you can adjust the brightness and contrast – which might help a bit. However I've just updated the [GPS Advice](#) on the [Resources](#) page of the BSBI website to point out that you set the Garmin eTrex 10 series Trip Computer page to display the grid reference (and other fields) in twice the normal font. This is very handy if you are a spec wearer like me!

***Ophioglossum* (Adder's-Tongue) Project**

Distinguishing *Ophioglossum vulgatum* and *O. azoricum* can be difficult where they both occur. A DNA test seems to distinguish them, but we're running a small project to evaluate its effectiveness. We are therefore keen for people to collect *Ophioglossum* (and optionally some extra data), including from areas where only *O. vulgatum* occurs (where we can have some confidence in the identification). Please contact [Paul Smith](#) for details of how and what to collect and record if you can help. It would be great to unravel this corner of taxonomic confusion!

***Trichophorum* (Deergrass)**

Andy Amphlett writes "The three *Trichophorum* taxa can be most readily distinguished now. The two species *Trichophorum germanicum* (Deergrass) and *Trichophorum cespitosum* (Northern Deergrass) are fertile, and if you find plants with fruits then you have one of these two species. *T. cespitosum* has very narrow stems, and a short sheath opening. I have found it at two new sites so far this season; one a stony calcareous flush, the other flushed wet heath. It also grows on bogs.

The hybrid, *Trichophorum x foersteri* (*T. cespitosum x germanicum*), is sterile, and the spikelets soon fall off leaving a wispy tip. I still check stem cross-sections of *T. cespitosum*, but so far have never made an ID error when plants are fruiting. I also check the hybrid's stem section too. If you have not seen it yet, take a look at Jeremy Roberts' fantastic [website](#) for lots of information and pictures!"

Crepis mollis* and *Hieracium

Jeremy Roberts also reports that *Crepis mollis* (Northern Hawk's-beard) and *Hieracia* (Hawkweeds) are perhaps being confused by some recorders and has written a note about it on the excellent [Cumbria Botany](#) website - [here](#).

Taxon Identification

There is an entire page on the [BSBI](#) website devoted to links to help with [Identification](#). Tim Rich has kindly made available many of the Plant Crib's sections and there are links to several useful resources (like those mentioned above).

***Euphrasia* (Eyebright) Referee**

[Chris Metherell](#) notes that last year too many records of "*Euphrasia* agg." arrived at the DDb (rather than full species records) and as the new *Euphrasia* referee, he would warmly welcome specimens of *Euphrasia* for confirmation or determination. Please follow the instructions in the Yearbook, preferably dropping him an email first so he knows to expect your specimens. Also, Chris reports that the new BSBI handbook on *Euphrasia* will be published this winter.

Specimens

The aquatics referees have been in touch to endorse what I said last month about the Referee network being a great but underused resource. [Richard Lansdown](#) would particularly like to see more *Callitriche*, *Ranunculus* subgenus *Batrachium*, *Sparganium* and *Zannichellia* specimens as he is currently receiving very few. [Claudia Ferguson-Smyth](#) and Nick Stewart make a similar plea for more *Charophyte* specimens. Please do collect specimens and use the Referees.

Communications Officer

BSBI is pleased to announce that Louise Marsh has been appointed as our new Communications Officer. She beat stiff competition for the 3-day-a-week post, which will be responsible for day-to-day communications and for developing and implementing a communications plan for BSBI.

Contact [Louise](#) for help with:

- any changes to the website, ideas for improvement or if you can't find what you want;
- promoting and reporting on any recording, training or outreach events in your vice-county, via the [BSBI News page](#), the [News & Views blog](#) or via social media ([Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#));
- providing you with BSBI membership forms, BSBI bookmarks and any other display materials you require, e.g. Atlas 2020 poster, BSBI banner etc.;
- promoting and supporting the activities of local groups;
- publicising potential news items - interesting finds, recently published papers or books, etc.

Insurance

BSBI provides insurance cover for its activities in Britain and Ireland and recorders might be interested to know a little of the detail and how it relates to them. On occasion, land owners have requested a copy of BSBI's insurance policy in order to allow access to their land for plant recording purposes.

BSBI takes out public and employers liability insurance (which includes professional indemnity), which covers all (legal!) recording activity directed by and for the benefit of BSBI, e.g. as described in the Recording Strategy (2010) or activities set out in VCR or Atlas 2020 guidelines etc. If you require any further detail on this, or would like to request a copy of our policy note to help with land access requests, please contact [Jane Houldsworth](#).

BSBI eNews

BSBI *eNews* is circulated to BSBI Recorders, Referees, Staff and Committee members. Please forward it to BSBI members who would be interested. I'd welcome short contributions from anyone on topics of interest and relevance to fellow readers. It is generally published on the 1st of each month so contributions should ideally arrive around the 21st of the preceding month. Please send them to me, [Jim McIntosh](#). I'd also be pleased to have any comments or corrections to BSBI *eNews*.

Let me know if you'd prefer not to receive BSBI *eNews*, or would like me to use another email address.