

From Jim McIntosh, Senior Country Officer, [jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org](mailto:jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org)

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### Presidents' Award for 2016 goes to Tom Humphrey

Tom Humphrey, BSBI's Data Officer, is this year's winner of the [Presidents' Award](#). The Award is made annually for the most useful creative contribution to field botany made available in the preceding year. Usually, it had been given to the author or authors of a book, but this time the award has been made for the BSBI's database, generally known as the DDb. The decision is made jointly by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society. Tom was presented with his prize by BSBI President, John Faulkner, at the Welsh AGM held during the Annual Summer Meeting at Holywell, Flintshire. Congratulations to Tom!

[John Faulkner](#), BSBI President

### Atlas 2020 Recording

I recommended the little-and-often approach to data entry, synching with the DDb and to validation, in the June edition of BSBI eNews. It is by far the best approach, as it prevents the build-up of daunting backlogs over the summer and means that when you do come to enter and validate data the field trip is still reasonably fresh in your mind. A good ploy is to wait until the first wet day after your field work, then spend some time at your computer. (You probably won't have to wait long this summer!)

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

### Atlas 2020 Validation: 1: Grid references

The validation I was referring to in June, is that of the data you have just entered and sent to the hub. So even if you have a big validation backlog – it won't get any bigger! There are several validation checks that are useful to do. One of the most important is to ensure that all your recently entered sites are where they ought to be in your VC (and not in the sea, or in neighbouring VCs!)

First devise a search query which will return a list of all the records on the card(s) you are trying to validate. Enter the exact date, VC, and your name in the Recorder field. Click "Display results" and then select "Zoomable map". Use the zoom, pan and satellite map option to check your sites. You can also manually plot the grid references on [Streetmap](#) or [Cucaera](#) – which have the advantage of 1:25,000 maps and the latter will also display VC boundaries.

Make sure that your detailed records are exactly where you think they should be and that you haven't mis-entered a GPS reference. A small error can make a big difference in how easy it is to re-find records. For example, GPSs aren't very accurate in gorges and the grid reference might place a site on the wrong side of a river. Remember that if you do find an error – correct it in MapMate and resynch.

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

## Validation using the BSBI Database

One final point; if you investigate and resolve the errors listed in the “Grid-reference – vice-county boundary matching” table on the Data Validation tab in the BSBI Database’s [My County](#) in each error category, so that they all read zero (or at least low numbers) it will then be much easier to spot any new errors that appear after records are added to the DDb.

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

## The Vegetative Key

I now take the *Vegetative Key*, by John Poland, with me every time I go out into the field. It is incredibly helpful when identifying species that you are perhaps not 100% sure about - typically because they are not flowering, but sometimes even if they are. Often the additional information (which is so well observed and specific) in the species description is enough to clinch it and remove any lingering doubt.

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

## *Festuca filiformis* (Fine-leaved Sheep's-fescue)

Since 2000, *Festuca filiformis* has only been recorded in 37% of its total recorded hectad range in GB and Ireland. See this [DDb map](#). Apparent losses are especially marked in Scotland. These may reflect changing recording practices (it is very tempting to just record *Festuca ovina* as the aggregate), the species may genuinely have declined or some earlier records may be mis-identifications.

The account in the BSBI grasses Handbook is recommended. Note that plants with shortly hairy lemmas previously included within *F. filiformis* are now contained within *F. ovina* s.s. Whilst reliable identification of this species does require accurate measurement of leaves and spikelets (see page 55 of the grasses Handbook for details), these are relatively straightforward with the right equipment. Look out for an article on 'Accurate measuring of plant specimens' in the next edition of BSBI News (No. 136)!

[Andy Amphlett](#), BSBI Recorder, Banffshire

## *Subularia aquatica* (Awlwort) – collection request

[Monique Burrus](#), a [lecturer](#) at the university Paul Sabatier Toulouse in France is studying the genetic diversity of *Subularia aquatica* in the Pyrenees, to inform reinforcement experiments. She is looking for *Subularia* samples outside France, as outgroups, and has asked me if I could collect some. She has sent me three collecting kits. Can I forward two of them onto others who might be able to collect some dry samples (whole plants or leaves) elsewhere? If you can help, please get in touch with me and I will forward you a collecting kit. (Best avoid collecting in SSSIs, I think.)

[Stephen Bungard](#), BSBI Recorder North Ebeudes

## BSBI Journals – long runs available

Michael Braithwaite writes “I have complete runs of *Watsonia*, *New Journal of Botany* and *BSBI News* available from 1973 (hopefully complete but not warranted so) to give away. After advertising in the June issue of *eNews*, my British Wildlife journals went to a good home, but I have had no offers for the complete runs of the BSBI journals and can now offer individual issues before the rest are destroyed. Single issues post free, larger orders carriage negotiable.”

[Michael Braithwaite](#), Clarilaw Farmhouse, Hawick, TD9 8PT

## Botanical activity in Co. Kerry

The Kerry Recording Event was held over five days in June and was a huge success. 45 people, including many newcomers to BSBI, took part and between them collected more than 5,700 records. Click [here](#) to follow the #KerryBSBIevent as it happened or read [this short report](#) by local botanist Jessica Hamilton and VCR Rory Hodd. Jessica has also been a driving force in the formation of a new local botany group for Co. Kerry. They already have a full programme of recording meetings planned for this season – the inaugural meeting is on 16<sup>th</sup> July and have set up their own Facebook group to coordinate local activity. A new county webpage has also been created for [Co. Kerry](#).

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

## New on the BSBI website in June

Three new webpages were created in June: one outlining the history of the [Presidents' Award](#) and some of the previous winners; a [new county webpage for Co. Kerry](#); and a page reproducing a letter, to which BSBI was a signatory, published in The Guardian on [National Clean Air Day](#).

The interactive map of Britain and Ireland on the homepage has been updated. You can now click through from the map to all the new county webpages created this year. These cover East & West Norfolk, Pembrokeshire, South Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Lanarkshire, East Lothian, South & North Kerry and East & West Donegal. A grand total of eleven vice-counties have just 'turned green' on the map, making information more easily accessible to website visitors keen to find out about botanical activity in their local area.

Reminder: It's quick and easy to set up a new county webpage so any Vice-County Recorders who don't yet have a page and would like one are encouraged to get in touch.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

## BSBI News & Views

On the News & Views blog in June: nine posts about the [BSBI Summer Meeting](#) including one about the presentation of the [Presidents' Award](#); a report on [training events](#) for [the National Plant Monitoring Scheme](#); a note about the [NBN Awards for Biological Recording](#); booking details for the forthcoming [Grassland Conservation Conference](#); a report about the [Kerry BSBI event](#) and finally a [first-person piece](#) by volunteer Shane Brien who, under the expert supervision of [Maria Long, BSBI Irish Officer](#), is learning to digitise botanical records.

[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 feel free to forward it to anyone (including non-members) who you think 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