

BSBI eNews – May 2017

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

Irish BSBI Conference

Following on from the note in the last [BSBI eNews](#) on the Irish BSBI Conference (held in March in the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin) we can now report that most of the talks and hand-outs are either online or about to go online. These include a stunning photographic tour of the activities of the ‘Rough Crew’ all across Ireland; ID tips and a key for the genus *Veronica*; detailed notes on identifying rushes (*Juncus* spp.); assessing your Atlas 2020 coverage and tackling validation using the DDb (the BSBI’s ‘big database’) amongst many others. Check them out on the [Irish Conferences](#) page.



We had great feedback (over 40 feedback forms were returned - not bad out of an attendance of 75!) Some of the more innovative parts of the day – the short flash talks and the Q&A session – seem to have gone down very well indeed and so we’ll definitely use similar formats again. Many people also commented that they loved the variety of talks/sessions – some were in-depth, detailed and technical, while others were more illustrated. Again, this seems to have hit a chord, with something to please all tastes and levels.

Ian Denholm commented “I enjoyed the day tremendously. Thanks for the chance to participate. Fantastic to see a lot of people seemingly new to BSBI events and whatever measures are being taken to attract and entuse newcomers are unquestionably working!” And my favourite bit of feedback from another participant.... “Scandalously good value!”

[Maria Long](#), BSBI Irish Officer

Irish Red List

Last year a Vascular Plant Red Data List for Ireland was published by [The National Parks & Wildlife Service](#) (the conservation agency in Ireland). You can download it [here](#). We have just uploaded the list of species along with their threat category to the BSBI Database, where it is available as a search constraint. The threat categories used are: Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Regionally Extinct (RE) and Near Threatened (NT). You can see the Red Data List itself (even without logging into the BSBI DDb) by going to the [DDb webpage](#), clicking Tools > [Checklists](#) > and scroll down to “Conservation Status” and finally click [Irish Red List](#) (IRL). Then click the Items tab where you can sort by taxon or category (item) by clicking those headers.

The list can be used as a search constraint by typing “Irish Red List” in the checklist/linked attribute field in the normal search window, to compile a list of records for a given area (for example, a VC, hectad, tetrad or monad for IRL species. But be aware that of the 1211 taxa on the list, 886 are listed as Least Concern (LC) and if you don’t want your queries to return records of LC taxa you will have to specify which threat categories you ARE interested in. [Here](#) is an example. You will need to login first before clicking this link.

We have already put the list to good use to help the Recorders who attended Jim McIntosh’s DDb Workshop at the Irish Conference to highlight important records to validate amongst their most recent uploads.

[Maria Long](#), BSBI Irish Officer

Atlas 2020 – Gap Filling

Now the third last [Atlas 2020](#) field season is well truly underway – I thought you would be interested in this DDb query developed by [Andy Amphlett](#) which returns a list of common species that are missing from a hectad, tetrad or monad. Log into the DDb and then click [this](#) link. Here is a screenshot:-

The screenshot shows two query panels in the DDb interface. The top panel, labeled 'search for', has a dropdown menu set to 'Records (specimens or observations)'. It contains several fields: 'county/region' with the value 'North Ebudes', 'group by' with the value 'species (excluding higher ranks)', 'distinct' with the value 'tetrads', and 'frequency (min/max)' with 'total frequency' and 'at least 200'. The bottom panel, labeled 'join with', also has a dropdown menu set to 'Records (specimens or observations)'. It contains fields for 'join using taxon' (checked), 'grid reference' with the value 'NG44W', 'county/region' with the value 'North Ebudes', and 'group by' with the value 'species (excluding higher ranks)'. Both panels have a 'more options' button.

It was developed for [North Ebudes](#) and the County Recorder, Stephen Bungard, chose presence in 200 or more tetrads as his definition of ‘common’ in his vice-county.

To adapt the query for your VC:

- Enter the VC name in both parts of the query.
- Decide the minimum number of tetrads in your VC that equates to 'common'. This is not an exact science, so experiment with different values.
- Enter the tetrad you want to check for missing common species.
- The query can be modified to find common species missing from a monad.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

Rare Plant Register Species Lists

Thanks to [Polly Spencer-Vellacott](#) and [Andy Amphlett](#), 11 Welsh and 18 Scottish Rare Plant Register Species lists have been uploaded to the BSBI DataBase along with the various categories they use. They can be inspected and used in a similar way to that described above for the Irish Red List. You can see the species lists themselves by clicking Tools > [Checklists](#) > and scroll down to “County Rare Plant Registers” and looking for the VC are interested in. When searching for records of RPR species for a particular VC, just type in that County’s number, e.g. “VC111” in the Checklist/linked attribute field.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

MapMate’s Species Dictionary

I’m often asked by MapMate users how they can get the MapMate Species Dictionary updated so they can record a taxon that doesn’t appear to be listed. Sometimes this question arises after the MapMate user reports a species has ‘gone missing’. I’m responsible for updating the MapMate species dictionary via patches. But because I now only work one day a week I don’t have much time to devote to it. If you would like to have taxa added to MapMate it would be very helpful if you would first:

- check that your MapMate is fully up to date with BSBI Vascular Plant patches and, regardless,
- re-run *View > My Configuration* (remember to tick “Optimise my Species Checklist to chosen taxa” and “Include synonyms”), finally
- check the taxon you are proposing isn’t already there as a synonym or in another form. e.g. as a “sens. lat” or as an “agg.”

Then, if you are still sure it ought to be added to MapMate, could you please identify the authority (which may be mentioned in the Flora you used to identify the species) and whether this is the accepted name and not a synonym. (Check on [The Plant List](#)). Then let me have details.

[Bob Ellis](#), BSBI Project Officer

Snippets: Axiophyte Survey

[Chris Couldrey](#), an MSc student at Manchester Metropolitan University on the [Biological Recording programme](#), is conducting research for his dissertation on [axiophytes](#). He would like to get a better understanding of how they are implemented and used, or any criticism or praise of them and would be pleased if County Recorders would complete this short (seven question) [survey](#). He has agreed to set out his findings in a future BSBI News article.

Snippets: identification courses

Details of several beginners’ ID courses have been posted on the [BSBI Scotland](#) page – there are two on plant families and one on Grass ID. For details of courses in England, Ireland and Wales, the best place to look is still [here](#) and for FISCs, details are [here](#) but please note that most spaces for FISCs in 2017 are now filled so you’ll have to be quick if you want to book!

Snippets: new county webpage

Only one new county webpage went live in April: it's for [South Lincolnshire](#) and, like many other county webpages, it gives details of this year's local field meetings in the vice-county. You can find a list of all county webpages (with links) on the [Local Botany page](#) or on the website's [Site Map](#). Many local field meetings are also listed in the [Meetings Diary](#), whereas the [Field Meetings page](#) is just for national meetings.

Snippets: Countryfile

Researchers at BBC Countryfile are looking for stories, speakers and locations for filming this year. If you have a plant story that you think would be of interest to viewers, please contact me, [Louise Marsh](#), with details and we can work up a pitch and try to get you on the television.

Snippets: Botanical folktales

Lisa Schneidau is an ecologist and traditional storyteller living in Devon. She writes "I'm currently collecting British folk tales for a new book called 'Botanical Folk Tales of the British Isles', due to be published by the History Press in spring 2018. The book will be a valuable resource for storytellers, and I hope it will be used in the field by environmental education organisations and practitioners.

"If you know of a story, ancient or recent, that originates from somewhere in the British Isles and where plants have a key role – and you would be willing to share it as part of this project – then get in touch! I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me through my [Tales from the Wild](#) website."

2017 Annual Meetings

I know it seems like a long way off now, but here are some dates of Annual Meetings for your diary! The 2017 [Annual Exhibition Meeting](#) will take place on Saturday 25th November at the Natural History Museum, London and the [Scottish Annual Meeting](#) will be held on Saturday 4th November at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (where we will have a great main talk - on Mountain Flowers, by Michael Scott). Flyers will appear in the September issue of BSBI News and details will also be posted online.

BSBI News & Views

In BSBI News & Views in April: the [last of three reports](#) about Rare Plant Registers in Wales and media appearances by Welsh Officer Polly promoting them; a note about the recently-published Scottish saltmarsh survey national report and the [huge contribution made by County Recorders in Scotland](#); feedback from the [hugely successful Irish BSBI Conference](#); notes about the publication of the [2017 Scottish Newsletter](#) and the [April issue of BSBI News](#); an advert about a [cottage to let in Andalucia](#) (tying in with a paid advert in a forthcoming issue of BSBI News); an alert about a [new Species Account](#) from the [Science Team](#) (this one is for *Orobanche reticulata*); and a note about an [article promoting herbaria](#) (including [Herbaria@Home](#)) by me and Chris Metherell, commissioned by [Annals of Botany Blog](#). And on the 1st May, we published a note about [five million BSBI Scotland records going live on the NBN Atlas Scotland](#).

[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