



# Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland

## Press Release

### Welsh “Domesday Book” of plants is world’s first

Wales has become the first country in the world to have a complete record of its rare flowering plants and ferns.

The project, which started almost 40 years ago, has painstakingly compiled a county-by-county register of every single rare plant in that country.

No such detailed account of a nation’s flora exists in any other country in the world.

And now this “Domesday Book” of the plant world will be celebrated at an event at Aberystwyth University today (27 March 2017). The project was started by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and had been supported by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and its predecessor bodies.

Dr Polly Spencer-Vellacott, BSBI Welsh Officer, said:

“Wales came up with the idea of County Rare Plant Registers in Cardiganshire in 1978, and it has now spread to all parts of Britain and Ireland. But this is the first time that any country has achieved this kind of complete coverage and it’s wonderful that volunteers across Wales have done all this work.”

People working in plant conservation can now identify sites for rare plants in all the counties in Wales.

Over the years the register has progressed from hand-written lists through typescripts and spreadsheets to databases on home computers to, finally, a web-based picture of the rare plants for the whole of Wales.

During this time, the work of BSBI volunteers has been supported by grants and staff support from NRW and its predecessor organisations.

The register confirms that Wales has an extraordinary diversity of natural features.

It shows that it's possible, in plant terms, to walk from the Mediterranean to the Arctic - from golden samphire at Newborough on Anglesey to purple saxifrage on the Carneddau mountains in Snowdonia.

Emyr Roberts, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, said:

"NRW is proud to support such a monumental project. Over the years, we have provided funding for BSBI to continue this important work. While many of these rare plants are in decline, every single species plays an important role in the fabric of our natural environment - they are an important part of our environment, our identity and our economy. It is vital that we work to protect our wildlife and halt these declines. The register gives us comprehensive and accurate evidence, which in turn means that NRW can provide the best possible advice on rare plants and the issues that could affect them."

Dr John Faulkner, BSBI President, said:

"Completing the full set of county Rare Plant Registers for Wales is an important landmark. No other country has such a complete assessment of the state of its wild flowers. The authors and contributors are to be congratulated on this magnificent achievement."

The county Rare Plant Registers are online and can be viewed at <http://bsbi.org/rare-plant-registers>

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

**The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI)** has supported the study, understanding and enjoyment of wild flowers in Britain & Ireland since 1836. We record and map what grows where and use this knowledge to assist in the conservation of our wild plants. BSBI's research, training and outreach programmes benefit professional and amateur botanists at all skill levels.

For more information see: <http://bsbi.org/>

**Natural Resources Wales'** purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

For more information see: [www.naturalresources.wales](http://www.naturalresources.wales)