

Scottish Vice-county Reports for 2014

Here is a collation of annual reports for 2014 that Scottish Recorders have sent me. It is a fascinating account of botanical endeavour by BSBI Recorders and members across Scotland, which leaves me feeling truly humbled. I am sure that recorders and members alike will be interested to read of these achievements.

Jim McIntosh, BSBI Scottish Officer

Dumfriesshire, vc72, Chris Miles

Recorded in 31 tetrads or monads in 2014. In all 5,520 records were made and amongst them there were a number of significant new finds including:

- First vc records for *Alchemilla glomerulans* (Clustered Lady's-mantle) and *Dryopteris expansa* (Northern Buckler-fern). Jeremy Roberts had noted them in 2013 on a visit to the NTS enclosures on White Coombe. Derek Ratcliffe noted a fern probably of this species in 1987 on another part of the Moffat Hills but this was not confirmed at the time. Now it is official.
- A second vc record for *Chenopodium polyspermum* (Many-seeded Goosefoot) on gravels in the River Nith.
- A new tetrad record (in NT20D) for *Thalictrum alpinum* (Alpine Meadow-rue).
- Refound *Carex aquatalis* (Water Sedge) on the River Nith, for the first time since 1976. It was subsequently also refound in two places lower down the river; one site, with *Bidens cernua* (Nodding Bur-marigold), where it was last recorded in 1896.
- Refound *Orobanche rapum-genistae* (Greater Broomrape) at Maidenbower Craigs, for the first time since 1972.
- A new *Salix* hybrid confirmed by the *Salix* referee was: *Salix x meyeriana* Rostk. Ex Willd. – (*S. euxina* I.V.Belyaeva x *S. pentandra* L.) first vc record.
- Casuals: A second vc record and the first since 1991 for *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed) on an old coal bing and a second vc record for *Catapodium rigidum* ssp. *rigidum* (Fern-grass) in a disused quarry.

Other activity: Led a Plantlife walk on the Caerlaverock Merse in July and gave two talks to local Wildlife Societies at Eastriggs and Lockerbie. Much time was spent working slowly through records to produce a Rare Plant Register (RPR) which should be finished in 2015.

Kirkcudbrightshire, vc73, David Hawker

Collected and digitised just over 7,000 records in 2014, of which there were:

- Several New County Records, most notably: *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's Tresses), *Filipendula vulgaris* (Dropwort) and *Callitriche palustris* (Narrow-fruited Water-starwort)
- Many new hectad records, including *Pyrola media* (Intermediate Wintergreen), *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge), *Carex acuta* (Slender Tufted-sedge), *Umbilicus rupestris* (Navelwort) and *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle).

Other activity:

- Formed the Kirkcudbright Botany Group and organised eight meetings between March and October. The group has a total membership of 42 and the meetings were attended by 10-12 on average including Nick Stewart who has recently arrived in Kirkcudbright. The group collected 1500+ records from eight sites, including a few new county records, and they have been sent to the local Environmental Records Centre (ERC). Consequently we have got three new recruits to Atlas 2020 recording. One extensive sand dune system severely eroded by previous winter's storms was re-surveyed to assess damage to rare and scarce plant populations.
- Led botany groups at two BioBlitzes organised by ERC. Plant records to ERC and MapMate.
- Updated the MOD Kirkcudbright Training Area Rare Plant Register.
- Almost completed the Kirkcudbrightshire Axiophyte list, after consultation with Nick Stewart and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Extracted data from several local wind farm applications that including several new hectad records from reliable recorders and ecologists.

Wigtownshire, vc74, Alan Silverside

Due to poor health very little recording was done in 2014. However I did manage to visit the two least recorded hectads in the late summer, significantly improving the post-2000 totals, and making other incidental records. My most notable find was *Parapholis strigosa* (Hard-grass), by pools on cliffs just south of Portpatrick, first record from the western (Rhinn) coast. Hopefully 2015 will be a much more productive year - with improving health, retirement and cheaper petrol!

Ayrshire, vc75, Dave Lang

Our small recording group (of three) adopted a more strategic approach in 2014. We organised recording days throughout the season to target tetrads with few or no post 2000 records. We also compiled a number of other more *ad hoc* lists for various sites and locations. But that is about as much as our jobs and other commitment allow us to do. Continuing at this rate we would almost certainly fail to obtain adequate Atlas coverage by 2020. It is therefore somewhat encouraging that we have a full recorders' week in the Vice-county to look forward to in 2015.

The recording carried out was none-the-less rewarding. We obtained new county records for a number of taxa, including *Tilia cordata* (Small-leaved Lime) and *Hypopitys monotropa* (Yellow Bird's-nest). The latter was a particularly welcome find on an old bing site that had already proved itself to be one of the County's botanical gems even before that find. We have suggested that the site is recognised and protected as a Local Nature Conservation Site to the planning authority.

Work is progressing well with the draft Ayrshire Rare Plant Register. I am adding the detail for the species alphabetically to a 'skeleton' provided by the BSBI, and have reached the letter 'R' so far. It will therefore soon be finished and we will then need to decide whether to upload to the BSBI website straight away or await the results of the 2015 site (re-)visits that are planned for 2015.

Renfrewshire, vc76, Keith Watson

Only a very limited amount of recording took place in 2014. In total a 1,000 new field records have been added to the database. It is disappointing that during the first full season since the Flora of Renfrewshire was published no 'new' records were received. I would greatly appreciate it if local BSBI members would contact me and offer to help with Atlas 2020 recording.

Lanarkshire, vc77, Peter Macpherson

Recording cards for thirty-four 1 km squares were completed as a result of 30 field days in Lanarkshire during 2014. The records have all be entered in MapMate and sent to Bob Ellis. A dot map has been produced which shows all the 1km squares in which recording has been done in the VC since 2010. This gives an indication of where further recording is required for Atlas 2020. The text for a Flora of Lanarkshire is with a publisher.

Selkirk & Roxburgh, vc79 & 80 Rod Corner & Jeff Waddell

Jeff Waddell has been recording tetrads diligently through-out the two vice-counties, covering about 20 during the year and collecting about 3,350 records in total. Several of these tetrad recording days involved taking out small groups of local beginner/improver botanists (between 1 and 4 others) for tuition in botanical identification. Most of the participants work in the nature conservation sector including a countryside ranger, local authority ecologist, forestry commission ranger and retired SNH area officer.

Rod Corner has followed up records of some of the more local species. Michael Braithwaite completed an impressive fine scale study of the Flora of Hawick reported in BSBI News 128:16-19. A very successful grass identification weekend was held at the Whitlaw Mosses NNR and by the Tweed at Newtown St Boswells in July, led by Arthur Copping and Jim McIntosh. In total about 10,000 records were collected from all sources and digitised during 2014; the bulk of which were from Roxburghshire with only about 600 records from Selkirkshire.

Berwickshire, vc81, Michael Braithwaite

Recording: Seventy-one records were submitted by recorders other than myself and were entered in MapMate. These included a first VC record for *Orobanche alba* (Thyme Broomrape) by Robin Cowe, an excellent colony of 40 flowering spikes. I re-determined one herbarium specimen to yield a first VC record for *Allium roseum* (Rosy Garlic) by Luke Gaskell. I revisited the site in the early spring and leaves were found which confirmed that it was not *A. carinatum* (Keeled Garlic) as previously determined by me. I did no other fieldwork in VC 81.

A short Flora of Berwickshire: was published privately as a hardback book in full colour in 2014. Feedback has been most gratifying. A few copies are still available for sale.

Berwickshire Botanical Site Register (CBSR): was updated in 2014 using an excel format which is readily converted into a CRPR format. It is, in effect, an annual update of the CRPR.

Archiving: I am in the progress of indexing and otherwise preparing Berwickshire paper records for commercial scanning. I plan to have scanned all field cards and associated route maps, many site reports and similar material and also selected literature of a more general nature. I have requested input from the Scottish Officer re criteria for herbarium sheets to be useful.

Other: I contributed various articles to the *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club* and *BSBI News*; exhibited at the Scottish Annual Meeting and gave a lecture to the Melrose Literary Society.

Retiral: I will retire as Recorder at 31 December 2014 as I have no plans for further fieldwork or research relating to Berwickshire. I have indicated my willingness to carry on the data inputting of records submitted to me for a limited period and I am always glad to identify specimens submitted. I will do all I can to help a successor.

East Lothian, vc82, Helen Jackson

I didn't manage to do so much recording in 2014, but continued a steady trickle of maintenance: receiving and checking records, replying to queries, allocating squares to volunteers, exchanging information with neighbouring Recorders and TWIC, attending Scottish Annual Meeting and TWIC Recorders' Conference, buying relevant new publications, discussions with Jim McIntosh (BSBI Scottish Officer). Alan Silverside has continued to add records to MapMate. A current problem is that records digitised by other routes need to be brought back to MapMate, enabling us then to have a clearer picture of recorded monads and under-recorded hectads.

A substantial set of valuable, verifiable vc82 records was extracted from iSpot by Alan and added to MapMate ; including a notable new record for *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Orchid) and a large population of *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia), new to the vice-county but no doubt introduced with grass seed. One excellent photograph alerted us to the fact that a *Lycium*, long in the vc. records as *L. barbarum* (Duke of Argyll's Teaplant) , is actually the rarer *L. chinense* (Chinese Teaplant). We verified this in a late season visit, also finding the *Lycium* powdery mildew, *Arthrocladiella mougeotii*, seemingly new to Scotland. With care, iSpot can be a valuable source of records, and of recorders.

Midlothian, vc83, Barbara Sumner

The field season was blessed by wonderfully hot, sunny weather. Thanks to enthusiastic recorders, 11,254 records were collected. These have been entered into MapMate and sync'd to Bob Ellis.

Particularly notable in 2014, were records of species not seen for many years in VC 83 including: *Carex spicata* (Spiked Sedge) at Arthur's Seat (previous record 19th century), *Malva parviflora* (Least Mallow) at Saughton Mains allotment (previous record 1968), *Reseda alba* (White Mignonette) at Musselburgh (previous record pre-1934), *Persicaria campanulata* (Lesser Knotweed) near Nine Mile

Burn (previous record 1943) and *Picris hieracioides* (Hawkweed Oxtongue) at Forckenford (previous record pre-1970).

The Rare Plant Register (RPR) was completed in late March and published online. In addition, 40 copies were printed. Of these, 20 were distributed as complimentary copies, one was kept by the VC recorder and 19 were available for sale in aid of BSBI funds. Four remain for sale (£10 each).

A web page was set up for VC 83 by Alex Lockton, for which material was supplied by the VC recorder. The RPR and other documents are linked to this web page.

West Lothian, vc84, Jackie Muscott

VC84 is a small but varied vice county and is recorded in monads. After a couple of years of relative inactivity due to health problems the recorder managed to visit 29 scattered monads with few or no post 2000 records (and incidentally added records from a dozen other squares). These records are currently being entered in MapMate by my new volunteer, Katherine White. There still remain a few scattered squares to be dealt with, but most now have a decent number of post 2000 records.

Interesting vice-county discoveries include the first record of *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort) since 1934, and a row of trees identified as *Alnus japonica* (Japanese Alder) planted on a newly developed industrial estate.

Fife & Kinross, vc85, George Ballantyne & Sandy Edwards

2014 was a good recording year, after which we just have ten tetrads to survey before all hectads will have at least five well-recorded tetrads. There were two new vc records: *Elodea nuttallii* (Nuttall's Waterweed) and *Cymbalaria pallida* (Italian Toadflax) and an interesting casual, *Echium pininana* (Giant Viper's-bugloss). And a number of other rarities were re-recorded including: *Berula erecta* (Lesser Water-parsnip), *Atropa belladonna* (Deadly Nightshade), *Ceratophyllum demersum* (Rigid Hornwort), *Potamogeton x angustifolius* (Long-leaved Pondweed), *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort), *Juncus filiformis* (Thread Rush) and *Dianthus deltoides* (Maiden Pink).

Other activity by Sandy:

- Lead botanical groups on three BioBlitzes. Helped lead two excursions for National Trust of Scotland staff, tutored beginners at the St Andrews BSBI Plant Families Workshop and university students at a Kindrogan weekend.
- Participated in various BSBI & PSNS field meetings including a *Euphrasia* Workshop.
- Exhibited a poster at the BSBI Scottish Annual Meeting.
- Participated in BSBI Outreach and BSBI Scottish Committee meetings.
- Gave the Annual Lecture to Friends of the St. Andrews Botanic Garden on the work of the BSBI in Fife. (This resulted in two botanists volunteering to help with recording).

Although George has done little fieldwork owing to continuing poor health, he continues to work on his flora and has drafted various articles. We have also been busy digitising the records that George

made in west Fife from 2000-2008. This is a time consuming task as they were recorded at 5x5km resolution and we are retrospectively upgrading the sites to at least tetrad (2 x 2km) resolution.

Stirlingshire, vc86, Philip Sansum & Ruth McGuire

Recording: We collected 1,939 records in 2014 - all of which are now in MapMate and in the DDb. Most were made by the VCRs or resulted from the field meeting run by Ruth McGuire and Angus Hannah. Philip Sansum's 2014 surveying was unfortunately, as last year, very much limited by being overseas and amounted to 7-8 days in the field. However Philip returned to live in Scotland in November and hopes to get much more recording done in 2015.

As a result of a call to local BSBI members for data we also received c.1500 2011/12 records from Roy Sexton. They were from 'Bioblitz' events held at Stirling University.

A few 2014 botanical highlights:

- *Vicia tetrasperma* (Smooth Tare) was found in undeveloped grassland on an industrial estate near the Forth. This may be the first record for vc86 and may well be native.
- *Melica nutans* (Mountain Melick) & *M. uniflora* (Wood Melick) first records for hectad NS69.
- *Linaria purpurea* (Purple Toadflax), new record for NS77 and 1st post 2000 vc86 record
- *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* (Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage), first record for NS77.
- *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort) was found in a new hectad in the Endrick valley
- *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway), a new site and hectad in the county in an unimproved wet meadow, far from its main distribution in vc86 around Loch Lomondside.

Aquatics: A tentative start was made on the challenge of recording aquatics, which resulted in the first post 2000 county records for *Potamogeton alpinus* (Red Pondweed) and, in a previously unrecorded 10km square, *Elodea nuttallii* (Nuttall's Waterweed).

New Webpage: The aim of the new page is to encourage plant study and recording in the county and, in particular, to encourage people to contribute to the Atlas 2020 fieldwork. Please take a look!

West Perthshire, vc87, Liz Lavery & Jane Jones

We visited approx 60 tetrads and collected 6,200 records. Many of these tetrads had no or very few records. We had three nice finds which always add to the pleasure of recording: *Juncus filiformis* (Thread Rush), *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern) and a new site for *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid). *Lathraea squamaria* (Toothwort) was surveyed in Dollar Glen and is doing well.

Work continues with a draft RPR and hopefully that will be completed shortly. Both Recorders helped with the Plant Families days organised by Faith Anstey.

Mid-Perthshire, vc88, Alistair Godfrey & Jim McIntosh

- AG: Field work was undertaken to improve understanding of *Taraxacum* (Dandelions). Specimens were photographed and pressed. Most of this was carried out with Dr. Leslie Tucker, who also attended John Richard's *Taraxacum* workshop in Bangor.
- Clarified position of *Trichophorum* (Deer Grass) on Tulach Hill with records determined by Jeremy Roberts, providing several locations for *T. cespitosum* & some for *T. x foersteri* as well as presence of *T. germanicum*. Also sampled several ponds in the area for charophytes.
- Visited site, initially with Tony Church, to look at the *Dryopteris affinis* complex, which Tony is very familiar with. *D. borrieri* is mainly in woodland; *D. cambrensis* is mainly upland, either in shade or in the open; and *D. affinis* s.s. is the rarest, requiring the greatest humidity and restricted to around 100m aod or below. New sites were discovered for *D. affinis* s.s. and its distribution across the vc is now better understood.
- Provided field excursions for BSBI members and other botanists through a programme provided by the Botanical Section of the Perthshire Society of Natural Science, including leading one excursion on *Rosa*, with specimens pressed and determined by Roger Maskew.

JWM collected and digitised 3,700 records in the vc – some at tetrad but most (85%) at monad resolution or better. A concerted effort was made to get to high points in otherwise low hectads and low points in otherwise upland squares. This strategy led to many new hectad records and records for species not recorded for a long time. The remote Munro, Meall Buidhe, near Loch Rannoch, was particularly productive; it is at the corner of four hectads and the highest point in three of them of which two had little other high ground!

East Perthshire, vc89, Martin Robinson

3,503 records were made during the year, slightly below the mean for the last 10 years of 3,748. Most of these were within 20 main tetrads. Apart from those covered by the VC recorder, Faith Anstey revisited four that she had recorded in 2013, Jim McIntosh recorded one for the Cairngorm National Park recording project, one was covered by the PSNS, and some systematic recording was carried out in four tetrads during the BSBI Annual Summer Meeting based at Birnam. Six tetrads were recorded within the Cairngorm National Park for the CNP recording project.

The best discovery during the year was of *Callitriche palustris* (Narrow-fruited Water-starwort) at Marlee Loch by Nick Stewart during the Annual Summer Meeting. This was a new VC record, and only five other sites are recorded in Scotland. A second VC record was of the rose hybrid *Rosa mollis* x *sherardii* (fxm) found in Glen Brerachan and confirmed by the referee. *Hieracium subcrocatum* (A Hawkweed) was recorded for the first time since 1892. Some *Taraxacum* (Dandelion) specimens still await identification. A very strange record was of a single plant of *Phyteuma spicatum* (Spiked Rampion) at the Soldier's Leap view-point in the Pass of Killiecrankie, found by NTS staff.

Apart from regular tetrad recording and participation in the Annual Summer Meeting the other main event was Site Condition Monitoring in Craighall Gorge and Milton Wood, with Jim McIntosh and Les Tucker. The main target species, *Polygonatum verticillatum* (Whorled Solomon's-seal), was refound in its three sites in Milton Wood but has disappeared from one of its three sites in Craighall Gorge.

A batch of 60 records was submitted to the New Journal of Botany (NJB) for publication, including 22 *Taraxaca* from 2013.

David Welch, Kincardine & North Aberdeenshire, vc91 & 93

General recording across both vcc was the main activity. A batch of 16 new records was sent off to Mike Porter for publication in the NJB as a result of this and several months' recording in 2013. Included was a find of *Dipsacus strigosus* (Yellow-flowered Teasel), which had never previously recorded in Scotland; this species has most of its few UK occurrences around Cambridge where it is believed to have escaped from the Cambridge Botanic Garden.

Digitised records from both my vcc reached DDb, via MapMate and Bob Ellis.

I led a one-day field meeting for SWT centred on Haddo House. I did the bi-annual monitoring of a Cabrach population of *Saxifraga hirculus* (Marsh Saxifrage), finding more flowers than in any of my previous counts there.

I produced a short article on species extinction rates in vc91 for the *BSBI Scottish Newsletter*, and have already submitted an article for the 2015 *Scottish Newsletter*.

A considerable amount of time was spent on advising on the suitability of sites for the Aberdeenshire SINS list (sites of interest to natural science) with regular meetings in council offices, and I also attended two meetings at the Hutton Research Institute when several local botanists drew up a list of species to be protected in the region.

Non-local activity

A visit was made to confirm the presence of a population of *Myosotis x bollandica* (*M. secunda* x *M. stolonifera*) in flushes in vc78, and maps were made of the hybrid and its parents there; a report was sent to Luke Gaskell, the Peebles recorder. Several specimens came to me to determine as the *Myosotis* (Forget-me-not) referee. I hunted for brambles in several Scottish vice-counties, and reported the finds to Alan Newton and Rob Randall.

Ian Francis, South Aberdeenshire, vc92

Most recording effort in vc92 during 2014 was focused in the Cairngorms National Park, with some 4,306 records collected via Andy Amphlett's CNP project. Many of these came from Eric & Aileen Meek. 8,753 older records for vc92 from the North-East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NeSBReC) were imported, again coordinated by Andy Amphlett. These mostly related again to the western half of the vice-county. Elsewhere, some 400 other records can from outside the Cairngorms NP area, during 2014. The eastern half of the vice-county remains a top priority for more thorough coverage for the remainder of the Atlas recording period. A wide range of records from earlier years was also collated, ready for import to the DDB.

Several requests from Environmental Consultants were processed, and a contribution made the local register of notable plants, being developed for use by Aberdeenshire Council. The vc92 web page on the BSBI web site was updated, and communication maintained and developed with the very small number of local plant recorders.

Andy Amphlett, Banffshire, vc94

5,501 records were collected in vc94 in 2014. The great majority (85%) were made by Ian Green (VCR for vc95), who carried out surveys in the eastern part of the vice-county; especially useful to me as that is the area most distant from my home. All records were supplied to BSBI via MapMate sync, and are on the DDb. Every effort was made as the season progressed to check record grid references against the vice-county boundary, and as of 22nd January 2015, all records (except two) have been confirmed / validated on the DDb.

Records were made of 537 species and hybrids, in 25 hectads, 107 tetrads and 180 monads. 302 new hectad records were made (of 242 taxa) and 2,607 new tetrad records (of 490 taxa). New tetrad records accounted for 47% of all records. *Corallorhiza trifida* (Coralroot Orchid), Nationally Scarce, was recorded in a new hectad (NJ46).

Most of my field work in 2014 was spent recording in vc96, which is less well recorded than vc94, and in facilitating a very successful project recording plants in the Cairngorms National Park. While I only collected 888 records in vc94, I collected 6,036 in other vcc, in particular 95, 96 and 97.

I am fairly close to completing validation of all vc94 records on the DDb. It is interesting to note that most of the problem records are from pre-2000, and that post 2000 MapMate records are generally much more reliable.

Ian P Green, Moray, vc95

A good amount of recording was done in Moray in 2014. Andy Amphlett arranged recording in the CNP area of the vc. I did recording scattered around the vc. Plus one local botanist did recording in four monads and there were a handful of records by other botanists. In all 7,303 records were made in 2014 for vc95.

One new native species to the UK was found in vc95 in 2014 - *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort). However I do not believe it is native locally – it is more likely to have arrived amongst dumped garden waste.

I organised six local botany meetings. Three were held in Moray, two in Banff and one on the boundary between the two counties! The aim of these meetings is mainly to record. But it is also a chance to show people interesting plants and to attempt to re-find interesting records (which we failed to do this year!) The number of people attending the meetings varied from 8 to 19.

Westernness, vc97, Ian Strachan & Ian Bonner

- IB - Atlas recording week at Strontian in June and Ardnamurchan in August, focusing on poorly recorded squares. c.2,000 records made and entered in MapMate by IB.
- IS - Atlas recording in various new and remote areas, notably canoe/camping trips to islands near Arisaig and up Loch Morar, also visits to Inchree & Glen Spean. 2,200 records collected.

- BSBI recording week at Shielbridge – jointly with vc105 – to be reported separately. >3,000 records gathered from 37 monads, including many previously unrecorded squares. Majority of records entered in MapMate by IB.
- Ben Nevis North Face project, in August – see separate report. Highlights include new locations for *Saxifraga cespitosa* (Tufted Saxifrage), *S. nivalis* (Alpine Saxifrage), *S. rivularis* (Highland Saxifrage) and *Poa flexuosa* (Wavy Meadow-grass) as well as *P. alpina* (Alpine Meadow-grass), *Veronica alpina* (Alpine Speedwell), *Cerastium nigrescens* (Arctic Mouse-ear), *C. cerastoides* (Starwort Mouse-ear), *Carex saxatilis* (Russet Sedge) and *Sibbaldia procumbens*.
- Various records/lists received from other botanists notably Jenny Ford, Andy Amphlett (in CNP), Jim McIntosh and Faith Anstey. Jenny entered over 2,000 of her records from 2013-14 into MapMate.
- New sites for *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's Tresses) from Kilchoan and Loch Morar reported.
- Talk given on Ben Nevis North Face project at SAM (also EUNIS manual), also to Lochaber Geopark group.

Carl Farmer, Main Argyll, vc98

Not a lot of botanical excitement this year but about 7,000 records were added!

Pam Murdoch, Dunbartonshire, vc99

Recording progressed slowly; another 40 or more monads now have records with additions to others. *Carex magellanica* (Tall Bog-sedge) and *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) were re-found; the *Hypopitys monotropa* (Yellow Bird's-nest) did not re-appear. Verified records for *Trichophorum cespitosum* s.s. (Deer Grass) and *Trifolium micranthum* (Slender Trefoil) were forwarded to me – both new to the vc. I remain amazed at the speed with which land and potential sites are lost through development of one kind or another.

Angus Hannah, Clyde Isles, vc100

The main event was a recording week I organised and led on Arran, with 11 attending for at least part of the week. Useful inroads were made into some of the less well recorded areas of the island. A full account was published in the 2015 Yearbook.

Otherwise, my work was mainly on Bute, gathering monad abundance data and preparing maps for my proposed Flora of the island. I also made a first foray into brambles, encouraged by my predecessor as recorder, Tony Church, who made a brief, preliminary survey of Bute brambles in 1998, and Scottish referee, George Ballantyne. Tony continues to use his expertise in brambles and *Dryopteris* species to good effect in Arran.

Another significant event was the take-over by FSC of the old Marine Station at Millport. This will open as a field centre in 2015 following major refurbishment, and should help raise the profile of the vice-county, and the Isle of Cumbrae in particular, as a prime location for botanical study and enjoyment.

Kintyre, vc101, Dave and Pat Batty

Continued progress in Atlas recording and helped considerably by a small group of keen people in the Campbeltown area. Still have a couple of remote coastal hectads to visit but otherwise we now have tetrad records from all hectads. The majority have had more than one tetrad recorded with a seasonal spread of visits.

New VC records included *Primula veris* (Cowslip) along c100m of forestry track in Kintyre and several *Rubus* (Bramble) records from Tony Church reflecting a Kintyre visit in 1997 (*R. septentrionalis*, *R. hybridensis*, *R. boudicca* and *R. hylochoris*) and 2014 (*R. dasphyllus*).

There was an intriguing record of *Agrostemma githago* (Corncockle) from Achamore Gardens on Gigha. One flower appeared in a raised bed where the soil had come from a nearby agricultural field, raising the strong possibility that it was from a seed bank.

Kew Gardens came up to collect *Najas flexilis* (Slender Naiad) material for their seed bank and germination trials. It had not been seen at Tangy Loch for several years but the visit found large amounts suggesting a good year in 2014. A visit to another site at Loch nan Gad found no sign of the plant.

Parentucellia viscosa (Yellow Bartsia) is known from four hectads in the VC and more sites were found in two of these. One site was a field with horses and the plant was found over half the field.

Refinds of some uncommon species in the VC included *Spergularia rupicola* (Rock Sea-spurrey), three sites, *Valerianella locusta* (Common Cornsalad), two sites and *Pimpinella saxifraga* (Burnet-saxifrage), one large colony across the boundary of two tetrads, only discernible with GPS. Searches for alpine species in Knapdale produced more mixed fortunes even with grid refs and the area will need to be checked again.

South Ebudes, vc102, Malcolm Ogilvie

Eight orchid sites were monitored as usual, including those for *Epipactis palustris* (Marsh Helleborine) and *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine).

Pete Stroh, Kevin Walker, David Pearman and Owen Mountford paid their first of what they intend to be annual recording visits to Colonsay – an extremely valuable commitment as, although the island was intensively surveyed in the 1990s, there are comparatively few more recent records.

A limited number of casual records were received. All records made or received have been computerised.

Mid-Ebudes, vc103, Lynne Farrell

We recorded 25 tetrads on Tiree and 10 on Mull. All data was entered in MapMate and the entire vc103 database resynched with the centre.

Other activities

- Liaised, mainly by e-mail, with various visitors and locals on botanical sightings and requests for information. ID'ed many plants by e-mailed images.
- Collected *Euphrasia* specimens, which Chris Metherell has identified and is helping with his island records for the Handbook.
- Wrote, illustrated and published booklet 'Wildflower walks on Mull', and launched it in Tobermory in June 2014. It's selling reasonably well and we hope to have it available on Calmac ferries. Positive feedback received to date and more have been reprinted.
- Helped John Sawyer (CE of NBN) develop his website on Mull www.wildmull.com
- Helped Steve Nagy, new warden on Mull, with ideas for wildflower walks - these have been well received and more planned for 2015.
- Searched for fern hybrids previously found by AC Jermy on Mull, with Mary Gibby. We found a few and also discovered from notebooks at the NHM that several were taken into cultivation, and grown on, but are no longer extant in the wild or in cultivation!

North Ebudes, vc104, Stephen Bungard

Over 14,000 records were made. Nine species were new to vc104, two of which native: *Saxifraga cespitosa* (Tufted Saxifrage) on Skye and *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's-tresses) on Rum and one potentially the beginning of an invasion: *Senecio inequalidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort).

More detail is given elsewhere in this newsletter (assuming it is accepted and included) and the *Spiranthes* find is the subject of a short note by Mike Ingram in BSBI News No. 129. A longer report of activities in vc104 is posted in two parts (January-June and July-December) on the vc104 webpage at http://bsbi.org.uk/north_ebudes.html

West Ross, vc105, Duncan Donald

Undoubtedly the highlight was the BSBI Recording Week based at Glenshiel Lodge. A detailed report is published in the 2015 Yearbook.

The Inverness Botany Group has visited twice this year, to Strath Kanaird and Dirrie More; Ro FitzGerald accompanied me to the lower slopes of Slioch in (albeit unsuccessful) search for *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid) at its original British site; Jim McIntosh "on holiday"(!) discovered *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) near Mellon Udrigle; Peter Wortham surveyed some overlooked fragments of boundary squares; the Evanses found non gibbous *Lemna*

gibba (Fat Duckweed) in vc105 for the first time; and Stephen Bungard joined James Merryweather in finding a mystery *Arabis* (Rock-cress) species on a wall at Courthill. I thank them all sincerely, and remain glad to receive further records from them and other visitors in future.

For my part, I have continued to make excursions as time allowed. I found new sites for local rarities such as *Radiola linoides* (Allseed), *Cytisus scoparius f. andreanus* (Blotched broom) and *Hypericum humifusum* (Trailing St John's-wort); and it was good to rediscover *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea club-rush) at Aultbea whence it apparently hasn't been reported since Druce's 1929 Flora. I have also continued my project to map the distribution of the invasive alien *Cotula alpina* (Alpine cotula) with a view to working out how best to eradicate it before it can spread.

I have also now digitized about half of the outstanding 'paper' records I inherited, and during 2015 shall start to get my backlog of records transferred to the DDb. I should also like to establish an informal recording group, to use some of the local talent which is currently untapped or unfocused. I am also looking forward to the BSBI Field Meeting to be based in Glen Carron in late June: another area that badly needs re-recording.

East Ross, vc106, Brian Ballinger

Recording has progressed well in 2014 with many previously unrecorded areas being visited. Once more I am particularly grateful to Peter Wortham for his major contributions, particularly in the mountainous west of the vice-county.

Mary Dean and I organised a successful two day BSBI field meeting in July, visiting the Dornoch Firth area. The Morrish More forested dunes have been partly cleared and *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail) appears to have recovered well. *Centaurium littorale* (Seaside Centaury) has also been found again. On the second day we viewed the large population of *Carex recta* (Estuarine Sedge) near Bonar Bridge and there was a new vice-county record for *Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint) in the shingle of the River Carron.

The Inverness Botany Group paid visits to Inver, Loch Kinellan and the Fannich Dam. At the latter site we were pleased to find a new site for *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid), only the third recent record in Easter Ross. Other groups and individuals also made valuable contributions during 2014.

I reviewed plants in some urban settings and new finds included the first recent record for *Sherardia arvensis* (Field Madder) in VC106 at Alness Station. It was later also found at Inver.

During the year there were two new 10km square (hectad) records for *Betula nana* (Dwarf Birch) and one each for *Vaccinium microcarpum* (Small Cranberry) and *Arctostaphylos alpinus* (Arctic Bearberry). The persistence of several plants of *Oxytropis halleri* (Purple Oxytropis) at Nigg was confirmed and discussions continue about the management of the sites of this plant.

A similar programme of activities is planned for 2015.

East Sutherland, vc107, Mick Crawley

Steady progress, with 47,751 records since 2010. Most of the land within 2km of a road, and the entire coastal strip is complete, but there are vast areas of the interior that have no records at all. The botanical rewards for trekking to these isolated sites are low and most of the vegetation is unrelieved wet heath (there are no summits and very few rocky outcrops). There is complete coverage post-2010 at 10km scale, but it is unrealistic to expect complete tetrad coverage in this kind of country.

West Sutherland, vc108, Pat & Ian Evans

Outstanding discoveries included *Pyrola media* (Intermediate Wintergreen) by Gordon Rothero at Inveruplan (NC12; only 3rd recent VCR), and *Fumaria capreolata* (White Ramping-fumitory) at Oldshoremore (NC25; 1st record since 1948). We also had *Plantago media* (Hoary Plantain) in a garden at Achnacarnin (NC03; 1st VCR), *Lemna gibba* (Fat Duckweed) in garden ponds at Drumbeg and Kinlochbervie (NC13; 1st and 2nd VCR). Soil imported in builder's bags to Clashmore (NC03) yielded 18 species, including *Amsinckia micrantha* (Common Fiddleneck), *Matricaria chamomilla* (Scented Mayweed) and *Vicia hirsuta* (Hairy Tare), all 1st VCR; the species mix suggests a source on the east coast.

We recorded six new tetrads in the north-west, four of which had to be accessed by sea and made the first records since 2000 for some six others. In addition, Ro Scott recorded four new tetrads on the Cape Wrath peninsula (NC27, 36, 37) and Eamonn Flood one or more on Foinaven (NC35). It is becoming difficult to reach previously unvisited tetrads more than two hours driving from our home.

Caithness, vc109, Ken Butler

The County Recorder finally submitted his resignation. After a stroke 3 years ago he has not recovered sufficiently to make the necessary field excursions still required. The position now is vacant. An important file – the index to past records – became corrupt and was backed up in a corrupt state so all was lost. A five year old copy was eventually found and brought up to date from paper records. This was a long job and shows that simple back-up is not the answer. We now have an electronic document archive updated annually so that things never get more than one year adrift. Recording continued in places where the recorder could access. Some (published) work was done on bramble records with a view to encouraging others to take an interest.

234 new records were made during the year.

Western Isles, vc110, Paul Smith

It's been a busy year in vc110, with the Uist Botany Group getting underway and making records in a series of tetrads as well as having fun, engaging local people (unusual in the Outer Hebrides where a lot of the botanical recording has been done by visitors rather than residents), and feeding records through to the Outer Hebrides Biological Recording Project. Thanks to Flora Donald for getting this organised, and look out for more meetings in 2015.

The visitors were not outdone, however, and the VC recorder made a spring trip to look at *Taraxacum* around Stornoway, surprisingly under-recorded for dandelions given that it has more concentrated ruderal habitats than the rest of vc110. Eight new county records resulted, thanks to John Richards's determinations, including the uncommon introduction *T. obliquilobum*.

In the summer the regular botanical house party recorded a chunk of central Lewis, away from the coast, with generally short species lists, though a few more interesting species emerged, including a new county record for *Epilobium roseum* (Pale Willow-herb) several sites for *Carex lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge) and one for *Rumex longifolius* (Northern Dock). An excursion into the North Harris hills refound and localised *Luzula spicata* (Spiked Wood-Rush), not seen for around 30 years - probably because few people have looked!

Other visitors continued surveys of *Hammarbya* (Bog Orchid) on North Uist, and added records from a number of localities. Please *do* pass records to the recorder if you happen to be visiting!

Orkney, vc111, John Crossley

Recording for Atlas 2000 is proceeding well, but there is still much to do in the more remote corners of the islands. Total count of records for the year was just short of 5,000, all entered in MapMate.

Nearly 2,000 of these records were collected during a BSBI recording field meeting in July. We chose sites which had a dearth of recent records and looked botanically promising. Islands visits were particularly enjoyable: they always lend a sense of adventure and discovery. *Euphrasias* (Eyebrights) figured highly thanks to the presence of two visiting aficionados, who shed much light on local species and hybrids, which include some of the rare coastal ones such as *E. marshallii*.

There were several new VC records, including both native and alien species. Among the former were *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Narrow Buckler-Fern) and *Drosera x obovata* (*D. rotundifolia* x *anglica*, Obovate Sundew). One might suspect the latter of being overlooked in the past, but for the close attention paid to the flora of the island of Hoy in the last 100 years or so. *Rosa canina* s.s. (Dog Rose) was another new one. This reputedly southern species may be more frequent in the north than has been thought. Among the newly recorded aliens, otherwise mostly common garden throw-outs, *Epilobium ciliatum* (American Willowherb) has proved to have found its way to the islands, also the very unwelcome *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pigmyweed). SEPA has been informed of the latter and is looking at ways to eradicate it.

Work on sorting and digitising the papers and records of the previous VCR is nearly complete. This has opened the way to producing a Rare Plant Register, which is on course to be produced by the end of March 2015.

Shetland, vc112, Walter Scott

Two very scarce plants turned up in vc112 in 2014, *Crambe maritima* (Sea-kale) in two places and *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* in one place – the first record ever for Sea Beet.