
July 2016 – for Vice-County Recorders in Wales

Atlas 2020 coverage and dataflow to the DDB

There are now over 2 million records from Wales on the DDB, more than 1 million of which are since 2000, and 93,000 for 2015. As at the beginning of July there were over 9000 2016 records. This is great as it enables anyone in the BSBI to see the progress we've made in Wales. I am hoping to work with the remaining counties to get more up-to-date records by the end of 2016.

For the 2000+ date classes there are currently 145,000 "smarties" – that is 10k dots on the map, unique hectad-taxon combinations, compared with 165,000 for 1987-1999. I am sure when the remaining counties upload data, and with an additional four recording seasons to go, we will exceed the previous coverage by a considerable margin. This is the only comparable measure; in fact we are recording at much more detail, with no records at less than 2km resolution, and our tetrad coverage will be unprecedented.

Recorders' workshops/ training

We had a second MapMate workshop at Coed y Brenin which was attended by some of the Merioneth recorders and Hugh Knott from Anglesey. I think it was useful to the attendees.

Chris Metherell came to Treborth (Bangor) in March to lead a pair of workshops on *Euphrasia* for beginners and improvers. These were very useful and left the beginners itching for summer to get out and identify some *Euphrasias* in the field.

There will be another Recorders' Conference in September in Shrewsbury, which I'm sure will be a very valuable weekend. The theme is Hybrids and Allies: recording and surveying, and there will be a talk from Clive Stace among others, as well as workshops on charophytes, conifers, euphrasias and more! Book now – for more information see <http://bsbi.org/recorders-conference>

The *Dryopteris* workshop in October with Fred Rumsey is now fully booked, and sounds like it should be a great weekend. We'll hope to repeat it next year, to give some of the people who haven't been able to attend this time.

Please let me know if you have any specific ideas for workshops/ training you would like next year. I'm wondering about willows, mints...

Rare Plant Monitoring

After a slow start (due to starting the job at the end of August – hardly time to plan anything for the field season) I am now getting to grips with the rare plant monitoring part of the project. I feel that I am finally getting some really useful contacts with NRW staff who are interested in us looking at some SSSI features, and the TPP forms for this year are beginning to stack up – thanks to everyone who has filled in one (or more!). The species I am most interested in remain *Trollius europaeus*, *Antennaria dioica*, *Vicia orobus* and *Hammarbya paludosa*, but any species that are features of SSSIs, or even if they are off SSSIs, but rare (listed in Red Book or Section 42) would be welcome. I am of course passing copies of these forms to the relevant VCRs, but the aim will be that they will be available to NRW staff via GIS. I think it's useful to understand that these forms are one of the "deliverables" for the grant that funds my position, and so anyone helping by filling them in allows me to continue to support VCRs in whichever ways they prefer.

Meetings 2016

I have spent a couple of days at Glynhir, then the Welsh AGM, and Caerdeen – with family in tow! I gather the grasses workshop was a success thanks to Julian (unfortunately Arthur Copping was injured and unable to lead it in the end). I haven't managed to get to as many local meetings as I hope, but I do keep hearing of new records. Perhaps the best so far is *Hammarbya* found during the Caerdeen weekend – first county record since 1975, and first for the 10k square since 1935.

Wales Biodiversity Partnership – Vice-County Recorder book fund

This fund is still operational, but Sean McHugh tells me all claims for the financial year 2016-17 must be submitted by **16th September 2016**. You may claim up to £25 towards books or other recording resources (maps, lenses, GPS etc). If you have any questions about where to send your receipt etc, please let me know.

Website

You will probably be aware by now that Alex Lockton is no longer employed by the BSBI. This has led indirectly to a change of software/ host to the BSBI website (which is now maintained mainly by Louise Marsh and Jane Houldsworth). It also means that I should soon be able to manage the Welsh pages myself as the new software makes it much easier for different people to edit pages. Radnorshire has a new page, with some lovely photographs. It should be very easy to change the content of your county pages, so if you have anything you would like uploaded, please just drop me an email. It is very easy to upload photographs, insert text, and add links to any documents you would like – for example local newsletters, local field meetings, reports, and County Rare Plant Registers. Four counties already have a link to a pdf of their Rare Plant Register, and I would love more to be available. If you would like your Rare Plant Register to be available in this way please discuss it with me – we may be able to address any concerns.

BSBI staffing

- Clive Lovatt will be officially retiring on 2nd September, but will remain our Company Secretary (so his house will remain our registered address) and he will of course remain as VCR for VC34.
- Julie Etherington will be our new Finance Officer, and will start on 5th September (although there will be some flexibility as Clive will hand over duties to Julie and will work for a few days/ weeks during September).
- Bob Ellis is reducing his hours (preparatory to retiring) and will only be working one day a week.
- Louise Marsh (as you probably know) is now the Communications Officer, three days a week, with a permanent position (instead of temporary contracts).

Social Media(!)

I am continuing to write a blog article once or twice a month, just to let members and others know what I have been doing (and a chance to share some photographs of plants!). The address is <http://bsbicymru.blogspot.co.uk/> and if you are not a regular user of such things you can sign up to receive an email alert for a new article. Louise Marsh coordinates BSBI News & Views <http://bsbipublicity.blogspot.co.uk/> which is usually more frequently active! John Crellin blogs regularly about botanical activity in Brecknockshire at <http://floralimages.blogspot.co.uk/>. If you want more on the computer (and I do know most of you don't!) there is BSBI on Twitter (**@BSBIbotany**) and Facebook (**Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland**) – and I am trying to remember to post my blog entries on those. There is a Facebook group called **Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland** with a number of familiar faces, and **Monmouthshire Botany Group** also – if you are on Facebook why not join a group or two. If you are just not interested in spending any more time on the computer, feel free to ignore this entirely. But if you would like to set up a blog to post a few photos, a Facebook group, or a Twitter account, I would also be happy to help you.

Finally

This newsletter is being sent to all Welsh Vice-County Recorders by email and hard copy. It will also be available on the [Welsh webpage](#). I'd be really pleased to have any feedback on the newsletter.

I'm always happy to have a chat on the phone, but if you would like me to visit you to discuss anything over the next few months do let me know by phone or email.

Polly Spencer-Vellacott, BSBI Welsh Officer