

British Bryological Society

A Charity Registered in England and Wales – No. 228851



Annual Report of the Trustees 2023

Annual General Meeting 2024

Annual General Meeting 2024

The next AGM will be held at 4.30 on Saturday 7th September 2024 at Reed Hall, University of Exeter

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on Saturday 9th September 2023
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Report of the Trustees for 2023
5. Accounts and Treasurer's report for 2023
6. Report from Council
7. Election of Officers
 - a. Bulletin Editor (Joint)
 - b. Bulletin Editor (Joint)
 - c. Meetings Secretary
 - d. Website Editor
 - e. Education Officer
 - f. Conservation Officer
 - g. Elected member
 - h. Elected member
8. Proposed change of name from 'British Bryological Society' to 'British and Irish Bryological Society'.
9. Changes to the Rules – Membership to commence on the date the subscription is paid and not be limited to 1st January. Family membership to be discontinued.
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Accounts.
11. Place and date of the next Annual General Meeting
12. Other future meetings
13. Any other business

**BRITISH BRYOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, RBG EDINBURGH 2023**

**Minutes of the Annual General meeting held at 4.30 p.m. on Saturday 9th September 2023 at Royal
Botanic Garden Edinburgh**

Present: Dr E.M. Kungu (President, in the chair) and 36 others

1. Apologies for absence were received from K.J. Adams, J.W. Bates, G. Greiff, O.L. Pescott, G. Quartly-Bishop, M. Rayner, D. Ryecroft, M. Watling, R. Whytock.

2. Minutes of the last AGM, held at Teesside University, on 10th September 2022.

Following a proposal by **P. Thompson**, seconded by **A. Baker**, the minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the President.

3. Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report of the Trustees for 2022

There were no questions on the Annual report of the Trustees; it was received by the meeting.

5. Accounts and Treasurer's Report for 2022

There were no questions on the Accounts and Treasurer's Report; they had been approved by Council and the Independent Examiner and were accepted by the meeting.

6. Report from Council

The President's Report from Council, which was given at the meeting, will be published as Council Newsletter 40 in the May 2024 issue of *Field Bryology* (No. 131).

7. Election of Officers

No nominations had been received from members as a result of the notice in *Field Bryology* for these or any other posts.

Council made the following nominations for officers who were willing to be re-elected:

Vice-president - Council had nominated **A. Branson** as the next Vice-President of the BBS (to take office from 1st January 2024). There were no other nominations. After a proposal by **Dr E. Kungu** seconded by **P. Martin**, **A. Branson** was elected with one abstention.

Council nominated the following officers for re-election:

General Secretary – D. J. Scott

Librarian – Dr K. J. Adams

Membership Secretary – C. Halpin

Recorder for Liverworts – N. Hodgetts

Recorder for Mosses – S. L. Pilkington

The meeting agreed to elect these *en bloc*. Following a proposal from **Dr D. Long** seconded by **G. Rothero**, these officers were duly elected by a majority vote (to serve for a 2-year period commencing 1st January 2024).

Treasurer - Gail Quartly-Bishop will be resigning as Treasurer at the end of 2023. Council nominated **David Adamson** to be the new Treasurer and take over from 1st January 2024. Following a proposal by **Dr E.M. Kungu** seconded by **Dr A. Burton**, **D. Adamson** was elected.

Recording Secretary - **Dr O.L. Pescott** will have served his full term of 10 years at the end of 2023. However, he has agreed to continue for a further two years only. The Rules provide for this if proposed from the Chair and seconded by the Vice-President or a past President. Following a proposal from **Dr E.M. Kungu** seconded by **G. Rothero**, **Dr Pescott** was elected for a further term of 2 years.

Elected member – Council nominated **C. Shaw** for election to replace **R. Whytock**. Proposed by **N. Hodgetts**, seconded by **C. Halpin** and elected unanimously.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Accounts

M. Murtagh had agreed to continue as independent examiner of the BBS accounts. **Dr E.M. Kungu** seconded

J.H. Bingley's proposal and **M. Murtagh** was unanimously elected.

9. Changes to the Rules

Council had agreed at the autumn meeting held on 9th September 2022 that two changes to the Rules should be made. Notice of the proposed changes was duly published in the BBS Bulletin (Field Bryology) N0. 129, May 2023 to be put to the vote at this, the next, AGM.

The Managing Editor of the Journal of Bryology had formerly been employed by the BBS and was paid out of BBS funds*. That is no longer the case. Although the Managing Editor could attend Council meetings, he or she was specifically debarred from being a full voting member.

Therefore, to remedy this anomaly, it was proposed that Section 5 Management of the Society (a) be amended as follows:

"The Officers of the Society shall be President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Editor or Editors (including the Managing Editor of the Journal of Bryology but excluding the Scientific Editors), Librarian and such others as the Society may appoint. The President and the Vice-President shall not be debarred from simultaneously holding one of the other offices of the Society apart from those of General Secretary or Treasurer."

Proposed by **EMK**, seconded by **PT**, unanimously approved.

***Clarification: Following the meeting it has been pointed out that this statement is incorrect. The Managing Editor was reimbursed editorial expenses from funds provided by the publishers, Taylor & Francis, and remitted through the BBS. The Managing Editor has never been an employee of the BBS.**

ii.) The Society's Rules state that there should be a quorum of 10 eligible members at Special General meetings or of Council meetings, but there is no mention of a quorum for AGMs. The Charity Commission's guidance strongly recommends that a charity's governing document should specify a quorum for both a trustees' meeting and an AGM. Therefore, it was recommended that the BBS Rules should be amended to include a quorum of 15 eligible members for an AGM.

Proposed by **EMK**, seconded by **PT**, unanimously approved.

10. Place and date of the next Annual General Meeting

This was yet to be confirmed but the Meetings Secretary, Philippa Thompson, was hopeful that it would be based at Exeter University in September 2024.

11. Other future meetings

There will be a spring meeting in Hungary in April 2024 as well as a UK spring meeting to be held in Lincolnshire / Nottinghamshire with the exact dates to be confirmed. In summer 2024, Sharon Yardy has undertaken to organise a meeting on Islay, also with the exact dates to be confirmed. Other possible meetings may be organised in 2025 in Germany and Ireland. A meeting in Slovenia is a possibility in 2026.

12. Any other business

a) D. Chamberlain has been in discussions regarding critical bryophyte species found on the SSSI Balerno Common which is owned by an angling club. He asked whether he was permitted to speak on behalf of the BBS in these discussions. After some discussion it was agreed that any initiatives should come from NatureScot and not the BBS.

b) D. Chamberlain asked whether the Society would like to have his full set of *Transactions of the British Bryological Society* and the *Journal* before he disposed of them. P. Stanley noted that the printer Taylor and Francis does not include the preliminary pages (lists of Editorial Board and of Council members) in their digitised version. So, they might be needed if there was not already a complete set held in the library.

Dr S. Grahame undertook to check what was there when she returned to the BBS library in Treborth.

c) Philippa Thompson announced the winners of the BBS photographic competition categories. They were:
Under-18s: Rafik Harrington '*Racomitrium lanuginosum* on the Caherconree Promontory Fort'.

Bryophytes in the Landscape: Scott Davidson 'Moss-covered boulders on Black-a-Tor Copse.

Bryologists in action: Michael Lüth 'Famous Scandinavian experts creeping over sand dunes'.

Bryophytes under the microscope: Claire Halpin '*Cephalozia curvifolia*'.

Close-ups of bryophytes: Claire Halpin *Bryum dichotomum*'.

There being no further business, the meeting ended when the President's gavel came down at 17.55.

D. J. Scott, General Secretary, September 2023

British Bryological Society

A Charity Registered in England and Wales – No.
228851

Annual Report of the Trustees for the year 2023

Address of Principal Office: 19 Abbots Grove, Peterborough, PE4 5BP

Trustees at the date this report was approved:

Dr. K.J. Adams (Librarian)
Mr. D. Adamson (Treasurer) *
Mr. A. Branson (Vice-President, Bulletin Editor, Joint)
Ms. M. Crittenden (Education and Training Officer)
Dr. E.S. Grahame (Elected Member)
Mr. G.R.L. Greiff (Elected Member)
Ms. C. Halpin (Website Editor, Membership Secretary)
Dr. R.I.L. Hodd (Elected Member)
Mr. N.G. Hodgetts (Recorder for Liverworts)
Dr. E.M. Kungu (Past-President)
Mr. P.G. Martin (President)
Dr. O.L. Pescott (Recording Secretary)
Ms. S.L. Pilkington (Recorder for Mosses)
Dr. C.D. Preston (Bulletin Editor, Joint)
Ms. M. Rayner (Elected Member)
Ms. K. Rogers (Elected Member)
Ms. P. Thompson (Meetings Secretary)
Mr. D.J. Scott (General Secretary)
Ms. C. Shaw (Elected Member) *

*Trustees in 2024, but not during 2023

In addition, the following served as Trustees during 2023

Dr A. Baker, Dr M.A.S. Burton, Dr E.M. Kungu, G. Quartly-Bishop, Mr. G. Rothero, Mr. R. Whytock

The Constitution of the British Bryological Society

The governing document of the British Bryological Society is The BBS Rules, adopted April 1963, amended 12 April 2003, 6 September 2003, 9 September 2006 and 9 September 2023.

Organisation

The British Bryological Society is managed by a Council which meets twice a year; Council members are the Trustees of the Society. The Council comprises the Officers of the Society, the immediate Past President, and six elected members.

Appointment of Trustees

Officers of the Society are elected at an Annual General Meeting for a term of two years. The six Elected Members each serve for three years, two being elected at each Annual General Meeting. Prospective trustees are asked to read the Charity Commission's publication *The Essential Trustee* as a check of their eligibility, and newly appointed trustees are asked to sign the Charity Commission *Trustee Eligibility Declaration*.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees have complied with the Charity Commission requirement for the BBS to provide identifiable public benefits, and have had due regard to the Charity Commission public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. Of the descriptions of charitable purposes set out by the Charities Act, the work of the BBS is covered by the following:

b) the advancement of education; f) the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science; and i) the advancement of environmental protection or improvement. Details of the ways in which public benefit has been delivered during 2023 are given in the account of BBS achievements below.

Objectives of the BBS

- (a) To promote and advance all branches of bryology throughout the world and especially in relation to bryophytes of the British and Ireland;
- (b) To facilitate the exchange of information among bryologists by organising field meetings, conferences, lectures and exhibitions, publishing the results of bryological study and research, maintaining a library, and other appropriate means;
- (c) To promote in every way possible the conservation of bryophytes.

Activities of the BBS

- (a) Publication of journals and books relating to bryology
- (b) Maintaining a website
- (c) Maintaining a library of bryological literature
- (d) Organisation of meetings and workshops
- (e) Promoting awareness of bryophytes, and providing advice and education
- (f) Gathering information about bryophytes and their natural habitats
- (g) Conservation of bryophytes
- (h) Sponsoring or supporting bryological research

The BBS is registered for Gift Aid.

The BBS neither owns nor leases any land or buildings.

Achievements during 2023

1. Membership and Volunteers

The Society membership continues to grow, with 785 individual members, up from 691 in 2022. To prepare for the future the Society has accepted a quote for the implementation of membership management software to automate the previous largely manual process. This should be more accurate and will free up valuable volunteer time for other tasks. As always with a voluntary run society we are extremely grateful to all those members who devote so much time to the successful running of the Society, and we need to use that time as efficiently as possible in the future.

We have some changes in personnel, our treasurer resigned and we were fortunate to have a professionally qualified accountant to take on this role from January 2024.

2. Journal of Bryology

The Society's publications continue to be very successful. The Journal is published regularly and the impact factor has been rising steadily over recent years, currently being 1.9. The Journal continues to publish a wide range of international peer reviewed papers, 24 research papers in volume 45 (2023). Notable articles in 2023 included the comprehensive molecular and morphological study of *Leucobryum* in Britain and Europe by Ottley *et al.*, a major paper on the frequency and distribution of Hungarian bryophytes by Erzberger *et al.* and an extensive study of *Schistostega pennata* on the Iberian Peninsula by Robla *et al.* The spread of article types remains diverse, with taxonomic and quantitative ecological and distribution papers being the most numerous. Seven new species were published, three from India, two from the USA mainland, and one each from Argentina and Hawai'i.

3. Field Bryology

Field Bryology is published twice a year and is very well received, and an excellent showcase for the Society.

4. BBS Website

The website is a very important resource for the Society and continues to be expanded with additional information, especially the small team that contributes to the species finder pages with new photographs, microphotographs and identification tips. In January 2023 it was 100 years since the British Bryological Society was founded by the merging of the two branches of the Moss Exchange Club. Much effort during the year was devoted towards celebrating this centenary, both in the continuing work of the Society and in focusing on public outreach to a wider audience to enthuse people both with the aesthetics of bryophytes and their vital roles in different ecosystems. Public outreach was focused around the inauguration of National Moss Day (NMD), and during the weekend of the 21 October there were over 30 NMD events held at a wide range of locations including Botanic Gardens, Nature Reserves, Community Woodlands and Museums and many in conjunction with partner organisations including Wildlife Trusts, local conservation bodies, and community groups. These NMD events were well attended and enabled the BBS to spread knowledge about and enthusiasm for bryophytes to a much wider audience. In addition, the Society organised a photographic competition to encourage further public involvement, with a range of categories including one for under 18s. There were a number of bryophyte art exhibitions with displays at botanic gardens in association with NMD and there is now a section on the website to celebrate Bryophytes in Art with 11 artists featured in News posts describing and illustrating their work.

5. Other Publications

The Field Guide still sells well, and the Society has just ordered another reprint to ensure continuous availability until the second edition is ready. The second edition will incorporate all the recent taxonomic changes in the new British and Irish checklist, as well as some additional species, many more drawings and a number of new photographs.

6. Library and Sales

The library continues to be housed at Treborth Botanic Gardens, and we are grateful for the use of the facilities provided there. There are continued sales of a number of small items of bryological equipment.

7. Meetings

As well as the NMD events held in October, there were four very successful national meetings, plus an additional informal meeting. The spring meeting in Cumbria was attended by 58 people,

and even though this is a relatively well-known area we recorded an additional 20 vice county records (VCR = species either new to the area or not seen there for over 50 years). The summer meeting was much smaller, and based around Galloway, an area of SW Scotland that is still relatively little known bryologically and during the meeting an additional 26 VCRs were found. The Centenary AGM was held in Edinburgh in collaboration with the Bryological Research Team at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, with a full day of presentation of scientific papers, followed by a one-day field meeting at a local site. The final national meeting followed immediately after the AGM and was held at Ben Lawes, a very rich bryological area, with the twin aims of recording some of the lesser-known sites in the area and enabling some newer members to learn to identify the important montane and calcicole flora found there.

As well as the national meetings, the BBS local groups continue to thrive. There are now 29 local affiliated groups, and most of them hold regular meetings, which enable members and potential members to meet and learn field identification skills whilst recording the sites of bryological significance in their local areas.

8. Education and Training

As well as the educational opportunities during all of these field meetings there was a beginners' workshop, and an advanced workshop on the identification of *Bryum* species, both in early 2023. Further training events are planned for 2024 and the intention is to advertise these through as many different channels as possible to ensure the widest participation. Nick Hodgetts has now completed a microscope-based keys to both mosses and liverworts. These are now available on the BBS website as PDFs and feedback is encouraged.

9. Recording Mosses and Liverworts

Two articles in Field Bryology by Sam Amy and Oli Pescott looked at the bryophyte data in iRecord, and the future of data handling by the BBS. To continue this discussion the Society has formed a working group to examine data handling in the future. During the field meetings at both national and local level, as well as members' individual recording efforts, the BBS generates a vast amount of scientific data, and we need to ensure that this data is handled as efficiently and accurately as possible. The four national meetings plus one additional meeting generated over 9,000 records in addition to those made by the local recording groups and individual members.

In total during 2023 there were 278 VCRs for mosses, and 49 for liverworts. Some highlights included *Seligeria calycina* new to Scotland found during the Galloway meeting. The second British population of *Didymodon tophaceus* subsp. *sicculus* was found in unprepossessing track habitat on Skye, 700km north of the first, on Lundy Island and *Microbryum starckeanum*, which was re-found in Ireland after more than 50 years. For the liverworts a meeting in the Corrour Estate in the central Highlands produced *Barbilophozia quadriloba*, **TEXT MISSING??**

Financial Review 2023

Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Amounts in this report are rounded to the nearest pound

Receipts and payments accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023

	General fund	Bequest fund	2023 Total	2022 Total
Receipts			£	£
AGM & Meetings income	0		0	5,433
Atlas sales	0		0	416
Bequest Fund grant repaid		750	750	0
Calendar sales	450		450	0
Census catalogue sales	15		15	183
Donations Bequest	0		0	500
Donations General	230		230	0
European Bryaceae royalties	562		562	6,427
Field Bryology	0		0	97
Field Guide sales	17,151		17,151	17,706
Interest & dividends Bequest		2,528	2,528	2,045
Interest & dividends General	8,017		8,017	4,936
Journal expenses from T&F	9,076		9,076	9,076
Journal royalties from T&F	13,319		13,319	11,719
Lenses & Forceps sales	437		437	456
Liverwort Supplement sales	60		60	1,524
Other publications	0		0	161
Subscriptions income	19,435		19,435	17,608
	68,752	3,278	72,030	78,287
Payments				
AGM & Meetings	-3,064		-3,064	-5,982
Annual report	-483		-483	-393
Calendar costs	-610		-610	0
Census catalogue	0		0	-391
Field Bryology printing	-9,369		-9,369	-6,640
Field Guide postage	-5,552		-5,552	-5,940
Grants Bequest		-2,142	-2,142	-1,500
Insurance	-914		-914	-85
Journal costs	-16,578		-16,578	-14,799
Journal editorial expenses	-9,076		-9,076	-9,076
Lenses & forceps	-2,018		-2,018	-250
Library purchases	0		0	-408
Liverwort Supplement grant	0		0	-1,250
Liverwort Supplement sales paid	-187		-187	-1,338
PayPal charges	-608		-608	0
Posts & sundries	-528		-528	-599
Website	-5,754		-5,754	-1,548
	-54,741	-2,142	-56,883	-50,199
Net increase in bank & cash	14,011	1,136	15,147	28,088

Statement of Balances as at 31 December 2023

	General fund	Bequest fund	2023 Total	2022 Total
Investments			£	£
CDIF Accumulation Bequest		17,298	17,298	15,393
CDIF Accumulation units	3,579		3,579	3,184
CDIF Fixed interest Bequest		21,594	21,594	20,512
CDIF Income Bequest		33,950	33,950	31,093
CDIF Income units	136,584		136,584	125,090
CDIF Property Bequest		7,019	7,019	7,487
CDIF Property Fund Income units	7,019		7,019	7,487
	147,182	79,861	227,043	210,246
Bank accounts				
CCLA deposit bequest fund		18,303	18,303	15,776
CCLA Deposit general fund	95,057		95,057	87,040
Natwest	57,543		57,543	56,267
PayPal account	14,931		14,931	11,604
	167,531	18,303	185,834	170,687
Net assets	314,713	98,164	412,877	380,933
Non-financial assets				
Field Guide	783		783	4,817
Census Catalogue	226		226	240
	1,009		1,009	5,057

Notes to the accounts for the Financial Year 1 January to 31 December 2023

1 Accounting policies	The accounts are prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis under section 133 of the Charities Act and in accordance with Charity			
	Type of activity or project supported	Individual / institution	Number of grants	£
2 Bequest fund grants	Attendance at courses	Individual	1	250
	Bryological research		3	1,891
	Research publication			
	Total			2,141
				£
3 Trustee payments & remuneration	Research grant to trustee (note 2)			750
	Other trustee remuneration			0
				750
		Number of trustees		£
4 Trustee expenses	Reimbursement of outlays on behalf of Society	2		753
5 Designated fund	Within unrestricted funds is the Bequest Fund, administered by the Bequest Committee with the objects of helping beginners to attend courses, promoting bryological research, and assisting the results of bryological studies to be published. Awards may only be made to members of the Society. Awards are normally limited to the amount of interest received			

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the British Bryological Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the British Bryological Society for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Respective Responsibilities of the trustees and the examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act') and that an independent examination is needed.

My responsibilities:

- to examine the accounts in accordance with section 145 of the Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



MT Murtagh FCCA
49 Farleigh Fields
Orton Wistow
Peterborough PE2 6YB
5th April 2024

Officers' Reports for 2023

General Secretary

The Society's 'Rules' were changed this year for the first time since 2006 – quorum for AGMs and making the holder of the post of Managing Editor of the Journal of Bryology a full voting member of Council – 'administrative' changes in the eyes of the Charity Commission. Even so, the wheels grind slowly to implement these changes owing to both our own rules for changing the Rules and the Charity Commission's procedures for approving these changes. This is how it should be, of course, and ensures that changes are not made lightly.

As Gail Quartly-Bishop stepped down as Treasurer at the end of 2023, we were fortunate that member David Adamson, a qualified accountant, was available and willing to take on the post from January 2024.

Jeff Scott, March 2024

Field Bryology Editors

Two issues were published in 2023, with the normal disparity in size. The May issue was the same length as that in May 2022 (96 pages). At one stage it looked as if we might struggle to find enough material for the November issue, but in the end it was 64 pages long, eight more than last year. We were pleased to receive an enlightening article on *Leptodontium gemmascens* in Belgium; otherwise the articles covered a range of topics from Britain and Ireland and the usual set of field meeting reports (now fully restored after COVID), new records and society business. We thank all contributors for their unfailing helpfulness when dealing with editorial queries, and our diligent proof-readers Agneta Burton, Sue Grahame and Mark Lawley.

Andrew Branson & Chris Preston, February 2024

Website Editor

Work on the website during 2023 was dominated by the BBS Centenary and National Moss Day:

- Over 30 meetings or exhibitions were advertised on the website to celebrate one or both of these events, and these were in addition to the regular local and national meetings.
- The BBS Centenary Photography Competition was advertised on the website, then all entries were uploaded so that members could view them and vote for their favourites.
- A new section was created to celebrate Bryophytes in Art and a number of artists were featured in News posts describing and illustrating their work.

Routine content maintenance continued in the background of course, and Sharon Pilkington, Sean O'Leary and Jonathan Sleath have continued to work on the Species Finder pages (photos and ID notes), whilst my focus was to process the hundreds of images in my library that are awaiting upload. Some of our local groups are now providing meeting reports and photos as well as advertising meeting dates, which will be a fascinating resource in years to come. Thank you to everyone who has contributed meeting details, images, news items and other information throughout the year.

Thanks also to Castlegate IT, who keep our website up and running. We have had a couple of minor problems again this year, but no major outages. Ambroise Baker resigned as Joint Website Editor at the end of the year, leaving the position open to anyone else who might be interested in getting involved. A couple of people have expressed an interest and will probably be helping out on an informal basis initially. There are no plans at present for any major enhancements to the website.

Claire Halpin, January 2024

Librarian

Sales:

Census Catalogue (update) 2008	-
Census Catalogue (update) 2021	1
BBS <i>Bulletins</i>	-
<i>Field Bryology</i>	3
English Names of Bryophytes	1 (on line)
<i>Practical Bryophyte Chromosomes</i> (Newton)	-
<i>Collecting Bryos. in the Tropics</i> (O'Shea)	-
Chinese x20 lenses	16
Chinese x30 lenses	-
Idealtek Stainless steel forceps	27
Mini-blade packs of 10	10
Micrometer Eyepiece Scales	5

Loans:

Micrometer calibration slide	1
Chinese Microscope	1

Free pdfs : Microscope techniques 1 & 2 6

There were just 16 standard sales orders in 2023. Only one additional copy was purchased of the updated 2021 Census Catalogue of British & Irish Bryophytes since its publication on line. A record number of 100 miniblades have been extracted from twin-bladed safety razors and supplied for cutting leaf sections. In addition to sales items, 6 beginners have taken advantage of the free pdfs of Microscope Techniques for Beginners and Bryophyte Microscopy tips during the year. We are continuing to exchange *Field Bryology* for the Belgian *Muscillanea* and Swiss *Meylania* and *J. Bryol.* for various Polish publications.

Ken Adams, February 2024

Membership Secretary

Membership continued to grow during 2023. At the end of the year, our membership stood at 785 individual members, up from 691 last year, broken down as follows (2022 figures in brackets):

Honorary: 11 (10)
Ordinary: 686 (610)
Junior: 8 (3)
Loyalty: 17 (17)
Student: 63 (43)

Institutional members remain unchanged at 8 subscriptions.

During 2023, changes to the membership can be summarised as follows*:

195 members joined
27 members either resigned or we were notified of their decease
77 members allowed their membership to lapse with no contact

* The sharp-eyed will spot that there is a slight discrepancy here; I suspect that last year's figure may have been inaccurate

As usual, there is a high turnover of members who join for a year but then allow their membership to lapse. Overall though, the membership is still growing, with a net gain of 94 members by the end of 2023.

76 members have now registered for Gift Aid since re-starting the register in 2022.

Looking to the future

Membership management has traditionally been a manual process. Although we do use spreadsheets

nowadays for our member database and to log payments, these have to be updated manually which is a time-consuming process (and potentially error prone). With numbers of members increasing therefore, it was agreed at the Autumn Council meeting that we should investigate membership management software. This was done, and 2 quotes obtained, one of which was from our current website providers, Castlegate IT. It was subsequently agreed by Council via email, that we should proceed with the Castlegate IT solution, which is to implement the MemberPress add-on to our WordPress website. Work started on this in December 2023.

Claire Halpin, January 2024

Education and Training Officer

This has been a busy year for bryologists in terms of public engagement which was geared very much towards a celebration of the Centenary of the BBS and National Moss Day on the 21st October 2023. The types of public engagement ranged from constructing bryophyte trails, relating the diversity of bryophytes in particular habitats to art, craft and sensory immersive projects. They took place in a variety of venues including Botanic Gardens, Museums and Nature Reserves with a range of partner organisations including Friends of groups, the RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Botanic Gardens and Universities. The hundreds of people who came to these offerings as well as the bryologists who led them show how much interest there is in this group of organisms. This demonstrates the work of the BBS in education and training for beginners through intermediates to advanced workshops such as that delivered by David Holyoak on the Bryaceae. Many of these events have led to further opportunities for public engagement. The purchase of hand lenses to use in these circumstances was very much appreciated.

In 2024 workshops are being held on the Pleurocarps as well as an intermediate workshop on Liverworts. It is our intention to organise beginner and intermediate workshops on *Sphagnum* in the near future, as there is a demand for this group. In addition, microscopy skills has been identified as an important area for training. Both the high-power microscopes and the newly purchased dissecting microscopes will give some flexibility to the choice of venue that the BBS can use. Wider publicity through Facebook, Twitter and possibly Instagram will be used to ensure equal access to information about workshops. These are well publicised on the website, but members sometimes do not think to access these pages. Additionally, the highly successful Members Newsletter produced by Claire Halpin will be used to inform members of up-and-coming workshops. The Species Identification pages on the BBS website continue to be an important educational resource not only for the excellent images but also for the in depth tips to identification that accompanies many of them. The Google Drive associated with education@ is slowly building the resource base that educators and trainers can use. Thank you to all contributors.

The BBS Book Box is now housed at Treborth Botanic Gardens under the guardianship of Sue Grahame. It has been somewhat slimmed down to allow it to be used in workshops. As Philippa Thompson attends most meetings and workshops, she has taken on the role of bringing microscopes and book box to those meetings. However, we must ensure that this is possible in future if Philippa were unable to store the microscopes and transport them. This will be a matter for ongoing discussion.

Nick Hodgetts has now completed his 'Watson-type' microscope-based keys to both mosses and liverworts. These are now available on the BBS website as PDF's. Feedback will be sort through as many channels as possible. When ready for publication, this will be sent to all members who purchase the 2nd Edition of the Field Guide when this is available. Mags Crittenden was involved in a discussion with other representatives from various Societies about the new GCSE in Natural History which is still in the very early days of preparation. Although it will not form part of the EBacc it will contribute to Progress 8. Both are used as measures of school attainment. It will be interesting to see what role bryophytes will play in this curriculum as well as what the uptake of a fairly specialised GCSE will be in future. The BBS will contribute where it can.

Margaret Crittenden, March 2024

Meetings Secretary

In 2023 the Society organized five national field meetings and one indoor meeting with an attached field day.

A seven-day Spring Meeting was held in the Lake district in March. It was attended by 58 people. There were 4480 records collected from 42 monads in two VCs, many of them new sites. There were 9 new VC records and 11 debrackets.

There was a three-day meeting held in Worcestershire in April attended by 24 people, designed to provide a training opportunity for novices. Just under 400 records were made of 128 species with 3 VC records.

There was a seven-day summer meeting held in Galloway in June attended by 12 people. New sites were visited and there was also a visit to Silver Flow providing an opportunity to update records for this NNR. 1536 records were collected in 27 monads with 22 new VC Records and debrackets.

The BBS were invited to record on the Corroir Estate in September. Numbers were strictly limited. Ten people gathered records from 20 monads from fifteen different sites. The estate is being actively managed to try and reconcile sporting interests with conservation interests. Over 1700 records were collected over five days contributing to the sum of knowledge that will help to inform the future management of this estate.

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) hosted the Centenary AGM and ran a joint indoor paper meeting with the BBS attended by 55 delegates. The next day 36 people congregated in Alva Glen. 195 records were made in two monads, a total of 170 species with three VC records and one debracketing.

The final meeting of the year was a four-day meeting in the Ben Lawers area following on from the AGM weekend. This was attended by 23 people. Nine sites were visited, three of those sites with no or few records and the others, high quality sites that provided a valuable training opportunity. Just under 1500 records were made in 15 monads with one VC record.

More than 14 regional groups held meetings during the year and four new regional groups were started over the winter. There were around thirty public engagement events throughout Britain and Ireland associated with National Moss Day.

Philippa Thompson, February 2024

Recorder for Liverworts

A total of 49 liverwort specimens have been processed this year. Only England has shown an increase on last year, with Scotland, Wales and Ireland all down. There has been nothing from the Isle of Man this year, and once again there are no new vouchers from the Channel Islands. The increase in England is substantially on account of the very well-attended spring field meeting in the Lake District, which yielded six vouchers. One species from England (*Calypogeia neesiana* in South Hampshire) has been placed in brackets. In addition, the record of *Pellia neesiana* from the Isle of Wight has been added; it was for some reason omitted from the 2019 account. Honours are fairly broadly distributed this year, with only Tom Blockeel on 5, Rory Hodd and David Long on 4 each, and Claire Halpin and Sharon Pilkington on 3 each. Several of these were collected jointly with others. Everyone else mentioned contributed one or two vouchers apiece.

There were a number of new records and debracketings resulting from the Lake District spring meeting. *Gymnomitrium alpinum* from Goldscope lead mines was a particularly pleasing find for Claire Halpin and Andrew Branson, and Sharon Pilkington had *Cephaloziella stellulifera* from the same site. Sharon also had *Anastrophyllum hellerianum* from a tree stump at Rydal Hall, with Tom

Blockeel finding *Harpalejeunea molleri* nearby. Otherwise, Nick Hodgetts and Tom squirreled out *Aneura mirabilis* from under *Sphagnum* in Nether Wasdale, and Chris Preston found *Cephalozia pleniceps* in a flush in Matterdale. Unrelated to the BBS meeting, Gary Lawrence found *Cephalozia loitlesbergeri* and more *C. pleniceps* in two separate bogs in Cumbria.

In Yorkshire, Tom Blockeel's record of *Calypogeia sphagnicola* from Thorne Moors is a considerable distance from any other recent records of this species. Further south still, John Norton found *Riccia crystallina* in an Isle of Wight campsite; is the spread of this rare species continuing as the southern English climate becomes increasingly Mediterranean? *Tritomaria quinquedentata* turned up on a wall-top in Devon, found by Lionel Pike. This is a rare plant in the south-west, and Lionel's record is apparently the first time it has been seen in South Devon since L.J. Cocks saw it on Dartmoor nearly 120 years ago. Robert Sharp found *Lophocolea fragrans* on a fallen tree straddling a stream in the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation, the first time this plant has turned up on the east side of the Dorset-Hampshire border. Des Callaghan had *Conocephalum conicum* on a brick wall in a suburban London park.

Two of the small Lejeuneaceae seem to have done well in 2023. The spread of *Myriocoleopsis minutissima* is well documented, and it has now turned up in Staffordshire, two southern Scottish vice-counties and the Irish Midlands. There are three new vice-counties for *Drepanolejeunea hamatifolia*, two from Mid Wales and one from the Irish Midlands. Is it too early to speculate that these plants are spreading as the climate changes? The only other Welsh voucher this year was Mark Lawley's *Plagiochila britannica* from Mid Wales.

In Scotland, the summer meeting in Galloway was productive, with a number of new records for VC73: *Kurzia pauciflora* (Claire Halpin and Rory Whytock), *Orthocaulis atlanticus* (Sean O'Leary) and, *Plagiochila bifaria* (Sharon Pilkington). A particularly outstanding find was Rory's *Sphenolobopsis pearsonii*, the first record of this species in south-western Scotland since the early 1960s. The Edinburgh/Borders team continue to turn up new things too, with *Diplophyllum obtusifolium* and *Kurzia trichoclados*, as well as *Myriocoleopsis*, near Moffat. A meeting in the Corrour Estate in the central Highlands produced only one new liverwort vice-county record, but a very good one: *Barbilophozia quadriloba*, found in flushed turf by David Long and Claire Halpin. Following last year's northerly record of the introduced *Lophocolea bispinosa* in Moray, Mark Lawley has now extended its range even further with a record from Sutherland.

Ric Else came up with a third Irish vice-county for the introduced (and still spreading) *Lophocolea semiteres*, in Co. Antrim, and Rory Hodd had *Tritomaria exsecta*, a fairly rare plant in Ireland, from Co. Donegal. But Rory's most outstanding find in Ireland was *Mesoptychia heterocolpos* on the Lough Navar limestone in Co. Antrim. This is only the second site for this species in Ireland; both sites are in the North.

Nick Hodgetts, February 2024

Recorder for Mosses

In 2023 there were 278 new vice-county moss records and amendments to the census catalogue. The well-attended spring and summer meetings in Cumbria and Galloway generated large numbers of new and updated vice-county records and a substantial number also came from the one-day excursion to Alva Glen after the AGM in Edinburgh. Around a third of all submissions were debracketings. An interim census catalogue published on the website in June 2023 incorporated all changes to the census catalogue up to the end of 2022 and introduced, for the first time, the distributions of 8 new or revised bryophyte taxa. Taxonomically, 2023 was a quiet year, without any major species revisions being published.

The year's highlights included 22 new/debracketed mosses from the summer meeting in Galloway in June, an impressive number under any circumstances and especially so given that temperatures in SW Scotland that week reached at least 28°C without rainfall. Significant finds included *Seligeria calycina* new to Scotland, *Schistidium agassizii* and *Hedwigia striata*.

Other highlights from Scotland included *Grimmia anomala*, discovered in three montane lochans in two vice-counties, and two rarities from Banffshire, *Cynodontium strumiferum* and *Lescuraea patens*. On Skye, the second British population of *Didymodon tophaceus* subsp. *sicculus* was found in unprepossessing track habitat, 700km north of the first, on Lundy Island.

Healthy numbers of new records came from Ireland, with the large majority representing finds of relatively common and widespread mosses in under-recorded vice-counties, as usual. Other highlights included *Microbryum starckeanum*, not seen in Ireland for more than 50 years.

In Wales, there was also a significant increase in record submissions. Remarkably, the rare *Sphagnum skyense* was found in not one but two new vice-counties. *Daltonia splachnoides* and *Sphagnum warnstorffii* were also very welcome finds of rarities.

English highlights included various rarities, including *Acaulon mediterraneum* in an inland situation in Sussex, *Grimmia laevigata*, and *Bryum gemmilucens*. The very rare *Weissia levieri*, lost from Devon when its Torquay specimen was redetermined as *W. wilsonii*, was restored to the county list when a new population was discovered at a new site.

Sharon Pilkington February 2024

Recording Secretary's Report

In 2023 we have again been able to make useful progress in the way in which we communicate BBS data holdings to Regional Recorders and others. As stated in my 2022 report, this year Sam Amy and I were able to produce an overview of BBS bryophyte data contributed to iRecord and iNaturalist, as well as outlining some possible future databasing and recording options available to the Society. Both of these featured as *Field Bryology* articles. During my shared parental leave, Sam was also able to produce a new "Rare & Interesting" column for *FB*, resuming service after the Census Catalogue hiatus. The article on the future of the BBS database has directly informed the Council decision to form a Working Group (WG) to decide on progress on this area, and, as of the time of writing, three WG meetings have occurred, with draft proposals being prepared for the consideration of Council in 2024.

Around 35 datasets were received in 2023, with most (almost 80%) of these already having been compiled for loading to the database, entirely due to Sam's hard work. We have also continued to make updates to the UKSI, to ensure accurate display of records on the NBN website, as well as pursuing an update to the BBS data on the NBN Atlas. The latter has been frustratingly delayed for a host of reasons; however, the data up to the end of 2022 are now with the NBN, and should be included in the February 2024 update.

We have of course also assisted with numerous other data enquiries this past year, including around 15 direct requests for the Society's raw data or summaries. These requests supported individual recorders, bryological consultants, and the planning of BBS field meetings. As usual, the number of direct requests to the Recording Secretary does not capture the numerous downloads of BBS data from the NBN or GBIF.

2023 was an exceptionally quiet year for Regional Recorder turnover; the only change to report being for v.-cc. 61–65 (i.e. Yorkshire *in toto*), where Steven Heathcote takes over from Tom Blockeel. Whilst my records only begin in 1990 (with free admittance that I have made no effort to extend these backwards in time), Tom has apparently overseen some parts of God's own county since the late 1970s, perhaps a modern record within the BBS. As always, Regional Recorder details for each vice-county can be viewed under the relevant vice-county page on the BBS website (see <https://www.britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/recording/vice-county-maps>). Note that I also keep a spreadsheet-based record of all appointments.

This year I have been again indebted to Sam Amy for her tireless work across numerous tasks. Thanks also to other BRC staff, including Steph Rorke for database updates and Martin Harvey for support

with iRecord-related issues; thanks also to Claire Halpin on the BBS side for website updates.

**Dr Oliver Pescott & Sam Amy,
Biological Records Centre (UKCEH Wallingford), February 2024**

