

Bryological book dispersal at the BBS AGM, September 2015

There will be a dispersal of bryological books at the next Annual Meeting of the society, held on 5th September 2015 at Preston Montford Field Centre. This will largely include volumes from Mr Brian O'Shea's library, who has very generously donated these items to the society membership. Further details will be made available on the BBS website.

Octospora affinis in Britain

During 2014, Nick Alpin, a Sussex mycologist found the bryophilous discomycete, *Octospora affinis* Benkert, D. & Kriegist, L.G., growing on its host *Orthotrichum affine*, new to Britain in West Sussex. This distinctive orange ascomycete should be extremely easy to spot as it is only known from the above *Orthotrichum* species. Discovered new to science in 2006 it must be of a genuinely rare occurrence not to have been seen in Britain previously.

Howard Matcham

Local meeting updates for 2015/2016

Full listings for 2015 field meetings are given in Field Bryology vol. 112 and on the BBS website.

Acrocarp Identification Workshop - Preston Montford Field Studies Centre, Shrewsbury 22-24 January 2016. Tutor - Sharon Pilkington

A repeat of a popular workshop first held in 2013, this course will enable beginners and improvers to learn how to identify many widespread acrocarpous mosses. An intensive mixture of lectures, microscope exercises and a short excursion will provide opportunities to study acrocarps in depth. Workshop participants will also hone field skills and master some of the trickier microscope techniques required to identify species with confidence. Numbers will be limited to 15.

The cost will be £157 for a shared room and £177 for a single. This includes B&B, dinner on Friday and Saturday night and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Please e-mail Sharon Pilkington [sharon.pilkington1@btinternet.com] to book a place on this course.

Essex Group Local Meetings 2015

Saturday 19th September, 10.30 am: Kelvedon Hatch for ferns & bryophytes. Meet in School

Road at c.CM150AH. TQ572,989. Please bring wellies and packed lunch. Leader: David Dives. Please book: 01277 823457.

Monday 19th October, 11.00 am: Thaxted, for arable and hedgerow species. Meet in Barnards Field opposite fire station CM6 2LY. TL616,086. Please bring packed lunch. Leader: Ken Adams. Please book: 020 8508 7863, Mobile: 07773 492260.

Monday 2nd November, 11.00 am: Walthamstow, East London. St. Mary's churchyard & museum. Some parking NE corner of church off Church Hill Rd. TQ378,892. Please bring packed lunch. Leader: Ken Adams. Please book: 020 8508 7863, Mobile: 07773 492260.

Sematophyllum demissum

It is not my practice to discuss my clients' business with other people, but I am compelled to do so by a recent article in *Field Bryology* (Callaghan, 2014), which has already intruded publicly and specifically on a business report (Newton, 2013). I therefore wish to rectify the misleadingly selective comments introduced by Callaghan to *Sematophyllum demissum* in Garth Gell and I do so with the permission of my clients.

While it is, of course, good news that additional sites of *Sematophyllum demissum* have been discovered in Wales, it is wrong to select and mis-represent out-of-context portions of a script, especially when taken from an unpublished document. Of particular concern is the Afon Cwm-Mynach, of which Callaghan has surveyed a section upstream of a proposed hydro-electric scheme. He quotes, "(Newton, 2013) suggested that *S. demissum* would be unaffected by the scheme because it behaves as a species that is capable of robust survival on the basis only of direct rainfall...", but Callaghan did not continue the quotation, which reads "in an area in which annual rainfall is of the order of 1500mm over 180-220 days of rain per annum". Instead, he wrote, "The niche occupied by the moss is more complex than this suggests...", implying that Newton had not already addressed that question. In fact, my report includes a whole paragraph that covers a broad consideration of habitat, position and interaction, unfortunately missed by Callaghan. I have carried out a complete and intensive bryophyte survey of the entire length and breadth of the proposed scheme, including the intake weir, the pipeline route and the proposed return of water to the river. In addition, I have examined the river upstream of the weir in order to determine what

adjustments, if any, might be needed to control the potential height of the intake weir and the depth and extent of the pool behind. It was thus ensured that the nearest *S. demissum* upstream of the weir will not lie within the intake pool and that it will not therefore affect or be affected by the hydro scheme.

Callaghan did not survey any of the stretch of river proposed for a hydro-electric scheme. I wonder, therefore, how the presence of a hydro-electric scheme downstream of his survey area could possibly affect the population of *S. demissum* he has seen upstream, and to allow him to pronounce that, "whilst it is possible that a hydro-electric scheme along the Afon Cwm-Mynach would not cause a significant decline in the population, there is a significant risk that it would". It is undoubtedly relevant to add in this context that the proposed scheme essentially follows the route of an old scheme. There has also been at least one other instance of water abstraction within the same stretch of river, where *S. demissum* has clearly survived in excellent condition. Unlike Callaghan, I have on several occasions encountered *S. demissum* in dry conditions.

References

- Callaghan, D.A. (2014).** *Sematophyllum demissum* in Wales. *Field Bryology* **112**: 5-18.
- Newton, M.E. (2013).** *Afon Cwm-Mynach H.E.P.: Bryophyte Survey*. Unpublished Report.

M.E. Newton

Stalybridge, Cheshire

Council Newsletter no. 31: as given to the 2014 AGM at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 13 September 2014

The ongoing activities of the Society are well-covered in the reports of the officers and in the digest of our activities that Rachel Carter prepares as the Annual Report of the Trustees and I urge you to read these. I will only pick out a few matters that interest me.

The membership of the society remains fairly constant at around about 600 and this means that the boost in numbers that might have been expected as a result of the success of the field guide, sales of which are still buoyant, has not occurred. Perhaps the hope was unrealistic, but it is difficult to understand why the undoubted increase in the interest in bryophytes engendered by the guide has not resulted in a few more members. I doubt that it has anything to do with the cost of the subscription.

Another landmark publication is coming shortly with the imminent arrival of the new bryophyte atlas, due in November. Mark Hill's final report as Recording Secretary makes interesting reading for the sheer number of records involved in the final effort for the Atlas, with some large datasets being incorporated. Our thanks should go out to Mark and to Chris Preston for making the submission of data such a relatively simple process and for the impressively rapid feedback. In addition, thanks are also due to Chris, Tom Blockeel and Sam Bosanquet for dealing with the Atlas text and photographs and to Tom for taking on the contract negotiations with NatureBureau. It is good to note that there seems to have been a seamless transition of recording responsibilities from Mark to Oli Pescott and Chris Preston as Joint Secretaries.

Ron Porley, a well-known face in the society, produced a book on England's bryophytes on the

UK red data list which has been very well-received and this, along with the earlier publication of a Welsh bryophyte red data list, is likely to push Scotland into producing something along the same lines before long. Whether this is a good thing in terms of allocating scarce resources for bryophyte conservation in the long term, I am not sure.

In terms of other activities, Jeff Bates and an enthusiastic band continue with the BRECOG project and there have been three workshops; on *Bryum* run by David Holyoak, on *Orthotrichum* organised by Tom Blockeel and Sam Bosanquet and on oceanic liverworts run by Ben Averis. Jo Denyer used varying degrees of persuasion to put together an excellent programme of 'national' field meetings and enabled greater publicity for the healthy list of regional meetings. The field meetings included a trip abroad to Albania which was very successful (so I am told) and certainly the pictures look stunning and I attended one of the Irish regional meetings, to Mweelrea with a small group and this was excellent fun. The meeting that I ran in Killin was largely lucky with the weather and we got up a lot of nice hills and saw many of the rare montane calcicoles which are a feature of the Breadalbane area. Photographs of these meetings, usually superb, often appear very rapidly on the BBS Facebook site and this site also has useful links; it is well-worth a visit and thanks are due to Charlie Campbell for setting it up and managing it.

It was personally satisfying to note that some 14 of the 21 participants on the Killin meeting were based in Scotland and quite a few of them were relative youngsters. Up in Scotland we have benefited enormously from the various

'apprenticeship' schemes run by by BTCV, RSPB and NT Scotland which have enabled a group of people to immerse themselves in bryophytes for up to 18 months. Liz Kungu, David Chamberlain and David Long provided a lot of support for these schemes, both formally and informally and the society should thank them for this investment which has paid real dividends. But I do not know what is happening elsewhere in the UK to encourage young bryologists and help them to develop skills beyond the short bryophyte courses at FSC centres that are currently available. With this in

mind, I very much welcome the setting up of the BBS Education and Training Committee. This new initiative owes much to the enthusiasm of Martin Godfrey who has already run successful courses with the help of the FSC.

Finally I would like to thank Liz Kungu and David Long for organising an excellent AGM; as Pete Hollingsworth said in his welcome, there are strong links between RBGE and the BBS and, happily, these look set to continue.

Gordon Rothero, President

Changes to the Membership List, March 2015

New Members,

Angell, Steven, 97 Church Road, Peasdown St John, Bath, BA2 8AD, UK

Beaton, Heather, Hamilton Hall Cottage, West Linton, Peebleshire, EH46 7DB, UK

Blaker, Laura, c/o Nadine Smykatz-Kloss, C + S Department, Ecotricity, Unicorn House, Russell Street, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 3AX, UK

Britton, Andrea, 4 Bucklerburn Close, Peterculter, Aberdeenshire, AB14 0XQ, UK

Brockbank, James, 69 Matilda Street, Islington, London, N1 1BG, UK

Brown, Cai, Flat 2 Hartshill House, St Andrews Square, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 8RS, UK

Camara, Prof. Paulo, Departamento de Botanica, Universidade de Brasilia, Campus Universitario Daey Ribeiro, Asa Norte, Brazil

Charissou, Isabelle, Biard, 19130 Voutezac, France

Crittenden, Margaret, 80 Leamington Drive, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 5LN, UK

Daute, Christine, Seydelstr. 30, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Davies, Rhiannon, 33 Monkton Farleigh, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2QB, UK

Draycott, Ian, Whiterocks, The Doward, Whitchurch, nr. Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6DZ, UK

Fraser, Adam, Silver Birches, Upperton, Balnain, Highland, IV63 6TJ, UK

Gould, D, 37 Kingsway, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE3 2JN, UK

Goulder, Ray, 5 Bishops Croft, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 8JY, UK

Grayston, Sue, 18 Days Green, Capel St Mary, Ipswich, IP9 2HZ, UK

Grech, Michael, 16 Antrim Road, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3NS, UK

Gritten, Rod, Traian, Llanfrothen, Gwynedd, LL48 6SW, UK

Haden, Anne, Les Deux Ruelles, St Lawrence, Jersey, Channel Islands, JE3 1FT, UK

Hughes, Ronald, Le Mercier, 19160 Latronche, France

Knight-Fox, Ryan, Glanrafon Caravan, Oakford, Llanarth, Ceredigion, SA47 ORP, UK

Kurt, Claudia, Naturbadstrasse, 91056, Erlangen, Germany

Laing, Sophie, Pool Cottage, Moreton Wood, Whitchurch, SY13 4PY, UK

Line, Kevin, Paddock Cottage, Barton-On-The-Heath, Moreton-In-Marsh, Gloucestershire,