

BBS Field Guide: progress report

Since the last update (*Field Bryology* 89: 46–47), arrangements for preparing the BBS Field Guide have cranked up several more gears.

Professor John Birks, who over the years has photographed about 80% of British bryophyte species, has very kindly offered his colour images for use in the Field Guide. A number of images have already been incorporated into draft accounts and are available to view at www.bryosoft.co.uk/fieldguide.

BBS member Ian Atherton has volunteered to design the Field Guide and typeset it in Adobe InDesign, incorporating photographs, text, maps, etc., and producing a press-ready file of the whole book – in other words, to see the project through to completion of the finished book. Ian is Design Manager and Senior Staff Editor for the Society for General Microbiology, where he works on the Society's four research journals, and designs and produces a range of other literature, including books and the Society's membership magazine. Ian has also taken over the role of photo-editor from Alan Hale, but Alan will continue to manage the Field Guide website.

There are now many more draft accounts on-line than a few months ago – thanks in particular to Sam Bosanquet – and you can see each author's efforts (and Ian's formatting of the pages) at the above URL. A sample account is shown on the following page.

Ian also produced a display for the conversazione at the autumn 2006 meeting in Hatfield, which included designs for the covers as well as accounts of species. Feedback at the

meeting was very positive, and several constructive comments were made. Ian has now considered all the feedback and the final designs for the book are shown below.

We have every incentive for the BBS to self-publish the book, rather than use a commercial publisher. By doing so, the Society will retain complete control of copyright, enabling us to reprint and publish new editions whenever we wish, with updated distribution maps, amended texts and additional images without having to convince a commercial organisation that it would be financially advantageous to do so. In addition, we can maintain the files on the Society's website, and all income from sales of the book will accrue to the BBS.

Sean Edwards has prepared a completely new field key with thumbnail drawings of diagnostic features accompanying each couplet. Please try the key out in the field to see if it works, and tell us if you think it can be improved. All draft accounts of species should be on-line by the end of 2006, allowing you to download and field-test them, and offer feedback before we publish the first edition of the book early in 2008.

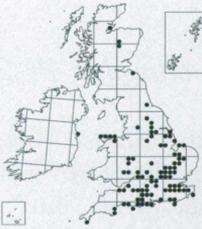
We expect that accounts of species in subsequent editions of the guide may also carry additional illustrations of important diagnostic features such as capsules and perianths. Indeed, the new technologies enable us to upgrade and republish the guide at minimal cost indefinitely.

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Microbryum curvicolle(syn. *Phascum curvicolle*)

Swan-necked Earth-moss



Identification A very small, ephemeral moss growing as scattered individuals or in small patches. Lower leaves are oblong-lanceolate, while the upper leaves are longer and narrowly lanceolate. Leaf margins are recurved and the tips are acuminate. The nerve is weak below but strong above and protrudes as a point beyond the tip of the leaf blade. The seta is strongly curved and 0.5–1.5 mm long. The egg-shaped capsules do not open at the lid, which has a short, oblique tip. The species is rarely encountered during summer, but from autumn to spring patches of the reddish-brown capsules are visible from a couple of metres distance.

Similar species Nothing similar.

Habitat A lime-loving species that inhabits disturbed soil in a variety of habitats, most often in calcareous grassland and quarries, but also in arable fields and woodland rides.