

Council Newsletter No 39, presented to the 2022 AGM held in September at Middlesbrough

We have had two very strange years during 2020 and 2021, courtesy of COVID-19, when although the BBS continued with much of its work, the field meetings and recording stopped completely or were severely restricted, but now at last the Society has been able to get back to closer to normal this year. The autumn AGM and field meeting in north Wales last year was a very much welcomed return to recording and meeting in person rather than just over Zoom. However, having said that, we have learnt to embrace some aspects of Zoom for committees and some business meetings to keep the Society running smoothly, and this AGM is our first attempt at a hybrid meeting for some participants who are not able to attend in person.

The previously postponed spring meeting to Hungary was again deferred to 2024, due to continuing COVID restrictions, and Philippa Thompson, aided by Claire Halpin and Matt Stribley, very nobly stepped in to arrange an outstanding spring meeting in Cornwall at very short notice, with some beautiful Cornish sites to visit, and very interesting species to see, especially for those of us from much further north. A full programme included a range of sites each day, more than we were able to cover, but which catered for every ability level. We were especially pleased that Mrs Jean Paton, who lives locally, was able to join us in the field for a few visits, as she has not been able to attend a national field meeting for many years. During the week Jonathan Sleath, ably assisted by many others, arranged an excellent dinner at the meeting headquarters, with Jean as our guest of honour to launch the supplement to her 1999 Flora, a project which has been supported by the Society. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet up again.

The much-postponed summer field meeting to

Jura eventually went ahead this year, it was originally scheduled for 2020. Another excellent meeting was very well organised by Fiona Cameron, who sadly came down with COVID after the first day, and had to miss the remainder of the meeting. Again, it was a very beautiful location with a superb range of species, and two boat trips to the more remote west coast, during which we realised that some among our membership had exceptional rowing skills, having offered to replace Fiona's role to ferry us ashore in a dinghy.

The local meeting groups started to be active again towards the end of last year and have continued during 2022 as COVID restrictions eased. However, during the summer much of lowland England suffered from the drought which has curtailed some recording. We currently have 24 local recording groups and I would encourage you all to support your local group. This is a brilliant way to learn identification skills and meet other bryologists whilst contributing to our knowledge of bryophyte distribution. Other opportunities for improving identification skills are the BBS workshops which have restarted this year and it was good to see that there were three workshops that have focused on relative beginners.

The Society has supported a number of other activities during the year, as previously mentioned one of these was the production of Jean Paton's supplement to her Liverwort Flora. Nick Hodgetts is being supported by the BBS to produce a series of new identification keys, incorporating both field and microscopic characters, to supplement the keys available in the Field Guide. The first of these, a key to the Pottiales, is currently available on the website. Please look at and use these keys, and provide constructive feedback if you have any comments, as key construction is an iterative process. Another project supported by the Society is Des Callaghan's molecular research on *Thamnobryum* to try and

resolve issues around the delimitation of the European taxa. This is a collaborative project with European bryologists and we look forward to reading about the results of this study in due course. The Bequest Fund supported research on the ecology of *Petalophyllum*, and enabled three students to attend bryological courses and conferences.

Work has continued on the planning for the Centenary celebrations in 2023. The BBS was formally constituted on 1 January 2023, as the successor to the Moss Exchange Club, which was established in 1896. This event will soon be upon us, and Council and members are planning celebratory events, including launching the first UK National Moss Day sometime in October 2023 [21 October]. This is an opportunity for all members to contribute to raising awareness of the Society and the environmental value of bryophytes and you are all welcomed to contribute your ideas for these celebrations. We hope that you will be able to arrange many local events to publicise the work of the Society during the centenary year, and in particular to

celebrate National Moss Day.

I am extremely grateful to all Society members and members of Council for the considerable time and effort that they contribute to the running of the Society. Thank you to Ambroise and his assistants for organising this autumn meeting and an excellent programme of talks, thanks to Claire and others for continuing the work on the website, especially the brilliant species accounts, to Jeff Scott for much essential behind the scenes work, and to Gail for all the hard work involved in producing the Society accounts. Thanks to Lucia Ruffino for all the hard work she has given to the role of Meetings Secretary for the last five years. Lucia is resigning at the end of this year and Philippa Thompson has agreed to take over from her and we welcome Philippa to her new role. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the spring meeting in Cumbria.

Liz Kungu, British Bryological Society President

Annual General Meeting 2023

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 4.30 p.m. on Saturday 9 September 2023 at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

The agenda will comprise the standard business: namely, Minutes of the 2022 AGM, the Annual report of the Trustees for 2022, Accounts and Treasurer's report from Council, the election of Officers and Elected Members (see separate notice), the place and date of the 2024 AGM and any other business. In

addition, there will be an extra agenda item – 'Changes to the Rules' (see separate notice).

The full agenda, minutes and reports are in the booklet enclosed with this issue of *Field Bryology* (no. 129). The AGM will be preceded by a paper-reading meeting and there will be a field trip to a location yet to be decided on Sunday 10 September.

D. J. Scott, General Secretary, March 2023

Election of Officers and Elected Members of Council

Mr P.G. Martin, the current Vice-President, will become President on 1 January 2024 and it is necessary to elect a new Vice-President who will take up office on that date and will become President on 1 January 2026.

The terms of the following Officers expire at the end of 2023: Treasurer, Recording Officer, Conservation Officer, General Secretary, Librarian, Membership Secretary, Recorder for Liverworts and Recorder for Mosses. The current holders of the posts

of Treasurer and Conservation Officer do not wish to stand for re-election. Council is considering changes to the role of Conservation Officer. This post is to be held in abeyance until a decision is reached on how to proceed. The present incumbents of the other offices are eligible for re-election for another two-year term, with the exception of the Recording Secretary who will have completed the maximum 10-year period. There is provision in the Rules for an Officer who has served 10 years or more to be re-elected, but only if proposed from the Chair and seconded by the Vice-President or a Past-President. The current holder is willing to stand for re-election for another two-year period.

There is one vacancy for an Elected Member, to serve for a period of three years. Members are invited to submit nominations for Officers and an Elected Member of Council, sending them to the General Secretary of the BBS, D. J. Scott, 19 Abbotts Grove, Peterborough, PE4 5BP (secretary@britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk) to arrive no later than 18 August 2023. Nominations are particularly sought for the post of Treasurer. A nomination must not be made without the consent of the person you wish to nominate. Elections will be held at the AGM in Edinburgh.

D. J. Scott, General Secretary, March 2023

Changes to the Rules

Council agreed at the meeting on 9 September 2022 that two changes should be made to the Rules of the Society and be put to a vote at the next AGM in 2023:

1) 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.”

2) The Society’s Rules state that there should be a quorum of ten eligible members at Special General meetings or at 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 is recommended that the BBS Rules should be amended to include a quorum of 15 eligible members for an AGM.

Members will be invited to vote on these two changes under item 9 of the agenda at the AGM in Edinburgh on 9 September 2023.

D. J. Scott, General Secretary, March 2023

Website editor – assistant sought

It requires a fair amount of effort to ensure that the website is kept up to date and that new content is added. We are looking for someone to help with this task initially, with a view to becoming joint Website

Editor. Experience with maintaining WordPress website content would be useful but not essential. If you would be interested in helping or would like to know more, please contact Claire Halpin by email at webmaster@britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk

National Moss Day 2023 – Saturday 21 October

The British Bryological Society celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Amongst other things, the Society is promoting a National Moss Day to mark the event.

A range of initiatives, many of them in partnership with other organisations, will be taking place around Britain and Ireland on or around the date of 21 October. Details will be posted, closer to the time, on the BBS website www.britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk

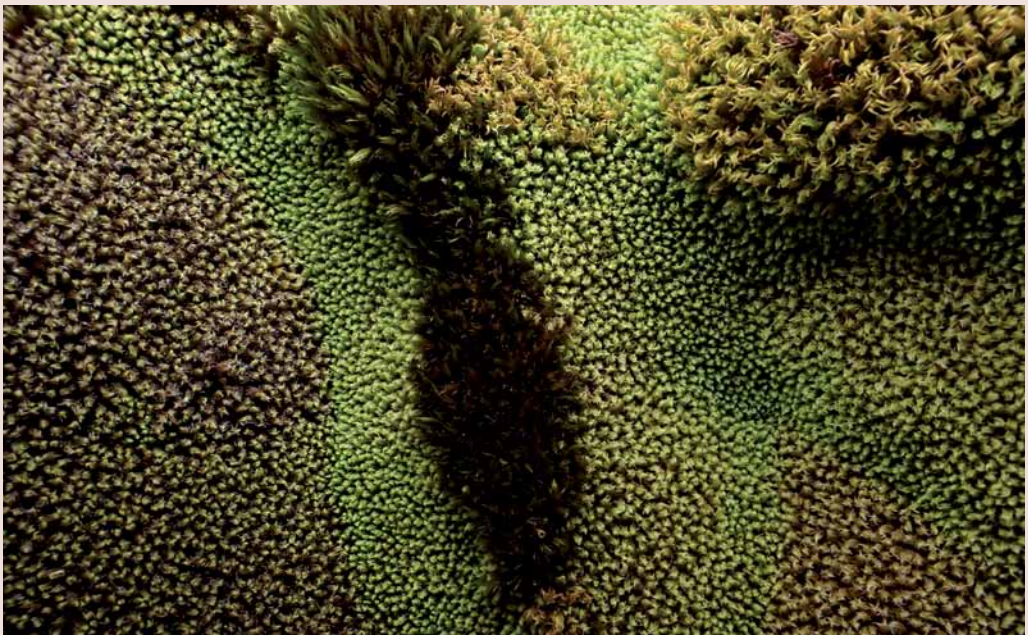
Beginner events, exhibitions and moss trails are being planned. It is hoped that interest in National Moss Day will reach a wider audience than just the BBS membership. You might be in contact with someone who would be prepared to celebrate National Moss Day with artwork inspired by the world of mosses and liverworts. If you feel that you could contribute in any way, we would love to hear about

it. Please contact Philippa Thompson at meetings@britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk

Continuing with the artistic theme, there is still some time to enter the BBS photography competition, which does not close until 30 June. There is no need for specialist knowledge. Just get out there and photograph your local mosses and liverworts. Winning entries will be included in a bryophyte calendar for 2024 which should be available in time for the AGM. The competition has inspired some marvellous creativity. The judging will be on-line and we are relying on you, the membership, to log onto the website in July and vote for your favourite images. For further details of the photography competition visit www.britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk.

Philippa Thompson Meetings Secretary
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Grimmia torquata. Philippa Thompson



Future Meetings

An overview of the BBS national meetings programme for the rest of 2023 is given below. Details of all these meetings are posted on the website as they become available. Many areas have BBS local group meetings and details of these can also be found on the BBS website.

Summer Meeting 2023 – Galloway, Saturday 10 to Saturday 17 June

The summer meeting in 2023 will take place in Dumfries and Galloway covering a range of sites. There will be a focus on areas of the Southern Uplands which have few records to date. The full itinerary is still to be decided, but is likely to include visits to Silver Flowe which is a designated RAMSAR site and is notable for being one of the least disturbed mire habitats in southern Scotland. Other sites on the itinerary may include Loch Dungeon/Rhinns of Kells and Cairnsmore of Fleet NNR. There will also be a range of lowland sites to visit such as the Wood of Cree SSSI and various coastal localities.

The meeting will be based near Mossdale, just south of New Galloway. Members will need to arrange their own accommodation. If anyone would like to share, it would be best to contact the local secretary.

Local Secretary: Rory Whytock; email: rory.whytock@gmail.com

Autumn meeting, 2023 – Edinburgh, Saturday 9 to Sunday 10 September

This meeting will take place at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, with a paper-reading session and AGM on Saturday 9 September and a local field trip on Sunday 10 September. The location for the field trip has yet to be decided, although a range of interesting bryophyte habitats are within easy reach.

The results of the Photography Competition will be announced at the AGM and the winning images will be on display. Members will need to arrange their own accommodation.

Local Secretary: Neil Bell; email: nbell@rbge.org.uk

Additional Autumn Meeting – Ben Lawers and Loch Tay, Monday 11 to Friday 15 September

This meeting will be based near Killin, with the idea of exploring some of the well-known base-rich habitat around Ben Lawers, and unrecorded monads in other parts of Mid Perthshire. Morenish House (grid ref. NN5935), a nine-bedroom, self-catering establishment, standing in 50 acres of grounds on the shores of Loch Tay, has been rented to act as headquarters. The list for this meeting has now been closed. The first field meeting will be on Monday 11 September, and it is anticipated that most participants will attend the Sunday meeting associated with the Edinburgh AGM on 10 September before travelling on to Killin.

Local Secretary: Philippa Thompson; email: meetings@britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk

Meetings in 2024

There are plans for a trip to Hungary in Spring 2024 and a trip to Coll and Tiree in Summer 2024. Nobody has come forward as yet to organise a weekend for the Autumn AGM 2024. If anyone would be prepared to organise this or any other meeting, please contact Philippa Thompson.

Philippa Thompson Meetings Secretary
e meetings@britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk