

British Lichen Society (BLS) Bi-annual Update

April 2022

Dear British Lichen Society Members,

It's got to that time of year when, every time I go out into the garden, I notice more green leaf than the day before. My flower beds (and gravel paths) are full of primroses and violets, two of my favourite flowers. In fact, the plant diseases are starting to distract me from the lichens.

Many of us will move towards other distractions in the summer months but there are still lichen events in the [BLS events calendar](#). The number of active lichen groups is growing and BLS field trips have begun again. A feature of these is likely to be last-minute cancellations due to Covid, so if your life is flexible enough, do consider asking if there are any last-minute bookings available. If we can fill spaces, we can refund more monies paid.

If you do carry on with lichens through the summer, I hope you enjoy your trips out and your ID time indoors. Please consider sending your records through to our database manager at records@britishlichensociety.org.uk With new lichen resources appearing, my ID sessions are becoming more enjoyable.

Very best wishes,

Fay Newbery
Vice-president



Lichens in the media

The popular gardening podcast *Roots and All* recently featured lichens. The interview with April Windle can be listened to at <https://rootsandall.co.uk/podcast/episode-153-lichen/>

April has also been helping *Caring for God's Acre* to promote the exceptional lichen diversity that occurs in churchyards. A new video is available on the *Caring for God's Acre* YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4qfZcGEcM4> It will be worth keeping an eye on this channel. There should be more lichen-themed videos coming later this year.

Member Services Committee

BLS Archives

In mid-March, the BLS Archives were transferred from the care of Mark Seaward to that of the Library at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. All the original mapping cards, correspondence and other items are now awaiting inventory work, so that they can be properly documented and made available more widely. A few gems stood out: beautifully organized photo albums assembled by a volunteer working with Mark, a huge bound print-out (rather dated!) of the BLS reprint collection held at the National Museum of Wales, and of course, Ursula Duncan's hammer and rock-breaker's specs. Council agreed in January to fund a short-term project to inventory and prioritize the materials contained in the Archive; it is hoped that this work will extend to visits to the Library at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and to items held at the Natural History Museum.



Education & Promotions Committee

Lichen Chat & Improvement Groups

This approach to "learning about lichens" continues to expand. As well as the main Tuesday and Wednesday sessions lead by Judith, the spin off Lichens for Absolute Beginners Groups (LABs) have flourished.

The main Tuesday and Wednesday groups have dropped down to one meeting per month for the summer but will return to fortnightly meetings in the autumn. Some of the recent talks have looked at the lichen genera *Hypotrachyna* and *Umbilicaria* and at using the photo-stacking function on the Olympus Tough camera and at microscopes.

To join contact Judith Allinson at zoom-improvement@britishlichensociety.org.uk

LABS groups

Ten groups have formed over the last couple of years. Building on the enthusiasm generated, two of these have formed their own follow-up self-help groups. As well as face to face Zoom meetings, attendees are encouraged to use the "Learn the Language" on-line learning module to re-enforce terminology. New tutors have come on board and attendees have delivered support to the BLS in many ways. An article for the Bulletin is planned. Further LABs courses may be delivered in Sept 2022, depending on demand. To register interest please contact Judith Allinson.

Lichenicolous Fungus Chat & Improvement Group

A specialist Zoom chat & improvement group ran for a series of eight meetings over the winter months. The group attracted interest from abroad as well as from the UK and was very successful. There will be a write-up in the Summer Bulletin.

Online Learning

The short learning module *Learn the Language* is still available on the BLS website. Please recommend it to anyone who might be interested in learning the basic specialist terms that are used to describe lichens.

Local groups

Some of the local lichen groups have been busy. Details of all the groups and their activities can be found at <https://www.britishlichensociety.org.uk/local-groups> Many of the groups post their upcoming events on the [BLS events calendar](#)

The Cumbria Lichen & Bryophyte Group have held a couple of training sessions. These have been extremely successful and have been followed by an informal ID day which may well become a regular feature in their calendar. See the news on their [website](#) and on [Facebook](#).

A '[Lichens in South-East Scotland group](#)' has been started by Graham Pyatt. The group had its first outing on 8th March, visiting Hay-Lodge Park and South Park Wood.

The [Tayside Lichen group](#) held an outing to Clatto Country Park in Dundee in February.

The [Sorby Natural History Society lichen group](#) has updated its events on the BLS calendar. Trips cover the area around Sheffield. All BLS members are welcome.

April Windle, Nathan Christmas and Phil Sansum have volunteered to revive the Devon Lichen Group. If you are interested in lichens in this area, please keep an eye on the [Devon group webpage](#) and on the [South West Lichens Facebook page](#).

Other local news

The founder of the very popular [Scottish Lichens Facebook group](#) has built a website called [Scottish Lichens](#). This is already well populated with many species descriptions and a series of blogs aimed at new lichen enthusiasts. Congratulations Petra Vergunst.

Conservation Committee

The updating of the website has brought into the focus the need to upgrade the conservation section. We have massive amount of information that needs to be made available to help conserve lichens, but this will need a lot of writing of content. We are looking for volunteers to help. So, if you have a favourite habitat or rare species you have studied, please offer to add content to the website.

The conservation section will be split into: News & Consultations, Habitats (volunteer organiser needed), Species (Neil Sanderson organising), Lichen Communities (Pat Wolseley organising), Site Assessment & Planning (Neil Sanderson, Andy Cross & Andy Acton organising) and Management & Advice (volunteer organiser needed). The details of what is needed will become clearer when we get the new structure set up and some first examples written.



The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust, in conjunction with other conservation bodies, are developing a Species Action Plan for the Gilt-edged Specklebelly, *Crocodia aurata* (previously known as *Pseudocyphellaria aurata*), which is now confined in the UK to the Isles of Scilly. This may be followed by action plans for other lichens confined to the coastal areas of the islands.

Photo: Jason Hollinger [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic Licence](#)

Exciting lichen finds continue. Nicola Bacciu brought a specimen of a pinhead that she had recently collected from a veteran Field Maple in Monks Wood, Cambridgeshire to the winter workshop. Neil Sanderson identified this as *Sclerophora farinacea*, a rare species across Europe, which has only two previous 19th century records from the east of England and no other records in the UK. An amazing find!

Other good recent finds include two by Neil Sanderson: *Cladonia peziziformis* from several sites in the New Forest and the first record of *Scytinium fragrans* (previously *Collema fragrans*) from Wales for several decades. The latter as a massive colony on a wounded Oak in an old growth upland Oak wood at Llwyn Madoc, Breconshire.

Website Working Group

Website changes

The scheduled update of the Lichens of Wales website was successfully completed last autumn. <http://wales-lichens.org.uk/> The look is much the same with the same high-quality information on lichens and lichen habitats. If you live in Wales or visit regularly and you would like to write for this site or if you would like to share your photos of any of the species featured, please get in contact at vice-president@britishlichensociety.org.uk

The upgrade for the main BLS website is now also underway. The tab structure has already been restructured and you should be finding the site much easier to navigate. Do let us know if you go looking for something and don't manage to find it quickly as further improvements can still be incorporated. Huge thanks go to our webmaster, Chris Cant, for managing the restructuring without leaving large trails of broken links. Please do keep reporting any problems to webmaster@britishlichensociety.org.uk

Data Committee

Species and Maps

The maps on the species and maps pages (<https://www.britishtichensociety.org.uk/resources/species-accounts>) have been updated and now show data up to January 2022. Clicking on a map gives you options to expand the map onscreen or to download a high-quality map image.

The layout of the entry page has also been changed. There is still a dropdown list of species for those who wish to use it but many members may prefer to use the new link to "Complete index of species, grouped by first letter ie A..Z." This new entry page allows a choice of first letter to quickly move to the right area of the list. A tick beside a name indicates that the map page has been populated with additional information. This information ranges from very brief to extremely detailed.

Abrothallus caerulescens

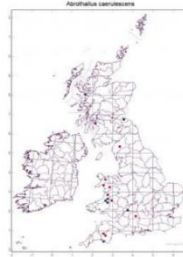
Authority: J. Kotsis (1909)
Conservation Status: LC NR (Key)
BLS Number: 12
Comments: lichenicolous on Xanthoparmelia

General Description

Lichenicolous on *Xanthoparmelia conspersa* and *X. korodezi*.

Identification

See <http://fungi.myspecies.info/all-fungi/abrothallus-caerulescens>



Key to map date classes

■ 2000+
■ 1960 - 1999
■ 1850 - 1959

Lobaria pulmonaria

Authority: (L.) Hoffm. (1796)
Conservation Status: LC Sc L IR (Key)
BLS Number: 857



General Description

A conspicuous large, green, foliose lichen found on tree trunks and alone.

Identification

The thallus is wide-spreading, often >30cm diameter with 1-3cm wide lobes, and is loosely attached at one end, at times hanging and strap-shaped. The upper surface is pale green-brown when dry, bright green when wet, strongly reticulately ridged with marked depressions and often with lisdia, or more rarely coarse soredia, along the ridges. The lower surface is finely tomentose, brown and bullate.

Frequently fertile in western Britain, sterile in eastern areas.

Reactions: medulla Pd+ orange, K+ yellow-orange, KC+ yellow-orange, C- Contains norstictic, stictic and constrictic acids.

Habitats

Occurs on broad-leaved trees, low scrub, heather and mossy rocks, rarely on old walls in the west and on conifers in western Scotland. Away from western Scotland it is a good indicator of ancient woodland, and in lowland areas of southern England is found in former medieval parklands and old forests such as the New Forest.

Lobaria pulmonaria is the most typical and constant member of the foliose *Lobarina* communities, with species of *Lobaria*, *Sticta*, *Nephroma*, *Degelia*, *Pannaria*, *Parmelia*, and the crustose "old forest" species that grow on bryophytes such as *Hormothecium sericeum* and *Isotachium myosuroides*.

Distribution

Common in western and central Scotland in suitable habitats, even on planted and roadside trees. Much less common elsewhere but locally frequent to locally abundant in southern Scotland, northwest England, north and south Wales, occasional in Dorset and the New Forest, and very rare in Sussex, Kent, NE England and the West Midlands.

Scarce in Ireland except in the southwest.

Widespread in oceanic and montane Europe but now extinct in the lowland plains of central Europe and most of lowland France except near the Atlantic coast. Still present in the lowlands of western Denmark and Schleswig. In montane areas of Europe it occurs on *Abies* as well as on broad-leaved trees.

Also in Macaronesia, north and south Africa, North America, and Asia.



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Threats & Status

Native. Locally abundant but rare and decreasing in parts of the south and east and now extinct from former sites in the midlands, East Anglia, and east of Hereford and Gloucester.

It is very sensitive to changing habitat structure and woodland management, also to atmospheric pollution, especially SO₂ and acid rain.

Lichenicolous Fungi

Cornuliospora lichenicola D.Hawksw. & B.Sutton

Dactylospora lobarella (Nyl.) Hafellner

Endophragmatella hugheisi D.Hawksw.

Monodictys fuliginosa Etayo

Nectria lecanodes Ces.

Nieszia lobariae Etayo & Diederich

Plectocarpon lichenum (Sommerf.) D.Hawksw.

Spirographa fusisporella (Nyl.) Zahlbr.

Protocelia sp.

References

Rose, F. & Coppins, B.J. (1988) species account in Lichen Atlas of the British Isles. British Lichen Society, London.

Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland edition 3 (LGBI3)

Another six parts of the Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland edition 3 have been published since the last members' update in September: Roccellaceae, Xylographaceae, Trapeliaceae, Cladoniaceae, Peltigeraceae and Candelariaceae. For those of us not used to dealing with family names, these parts cover the following genera:

Candelaria	Gyroglypha	Placopsis	Roccella
Candelariella	Lambiella	Placynthiella	Schismatomma
Cladonia	Lecanactis	Pseudocyphellaria	Solorina
Coppinsia	Lithographa	Pseudoschismatomma	Sticta
Cresponea	Lobaria	Psoronactis	Synoesia
Crocodia	Lobarina	Ptychographa	Trapelia
Dendrographa	Nephroma	Pycnothelia	Trapeliopsis
Dirina	Peltigera	Ricasolia	Xylographa
Enterographa	Pilophorus	Rimularia	

Some of these names will be totally new as they are the result of splitting some of our well-known genera. Splits rarely result in species moving to other families, however, so searching for a name that you know using Ctrl+F on the [LGBI3 webpage](#) will usually find you the correct part to look in.

The current name for any species in the BLS database can be found using the [Taxon Dictionary](#). Simply type in the name you know, click on 'Apply' and look in the 'Current Taxon Name' column.

The Lichenologist & BLS Bulletin

The next deadline for the BLS Bulletin is 1st May. There is still time to send in an article, a report, a poem... or to share a photo or some artwork. The Bulletin editor is always happy to receive contributions.

One of the best features of the BLS Bulletin is that the contents vary so much. Some items appeal to all and others are aimed at people on different parts of their lichen learning journey.

Field meetings

The first post-Covid BLS meeting took place at Cober Hill near Scarborough in February. Although there were some cancellations at the last minute due to Covid, those who attended found the workshop extremely worthwhile. Three new lichen enthusiasts attended as well as a lot of familiar faces.

Get Involved

It's been great to have new people coming forward to help the society in a variety of ways. Special thanks go to Duncan Wright who has taken over the role of Treasurer for the society.

There are still lots of opportunities to get involved.

Website photos: Do you enjoy photography? Do you have photos that you would be willing to share on the BLS website? We're particularly looking for:

- Pictures of people looking at lichens in the field.
- Artistic pictures such as lichens picking out writing on a gravestone or heart-shaped lichens or...
- Pictures that show a collection of different lichen species living together.
- Pictures of single lichen species that make you think Wow!

If you would like to offer any pictures for use on the website (or in the Bulletin!), please contact vice-president@britishlichensociety.org.uk.

Social Media Leads: The BLS has accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. If you have a keen interest in posting on any (or all!) of these social platforms, we would love your help. Please contact April Windle at education-promotions@britishlichensociety.org.uk

Record Digitisation: The BLS database is an important way in which the society contributes to the conservation and knowledge of lichens. Data requests are received for purposes as diverse as planning applications, scientific study and members who wish to know what has been seen in their area.

If you enjoy working with data, we have work waiting to be done. For example, we're keen to get all of the *New, rare and interesting* entries from the last few editions of the BLS Bulletin entered into the database. If you feel you can help, please contact vice-president@britishlichensociety.org.uk

Species Descriptions Writers and Reviewers: Very few new descriptions in accessible language have been added to the website over the last twelve months. The project needs a new administrator with good organisational and people skills, and reviewers – good lichenologists able to check drafted descriptions. Please contact Fay Newbery at online-learning@britishlichensociety.org.uk if you feel you may be able to help.

Excel expert needed: If you have advanced Excel skills including writing macros and adding code, please could you contact the vice-president at vice-president@britishlichensociety.org.uk to see if your skills could help us?