

# British Lichen Society (BLS) Bi-annual Update



## September 2021

Dear British Lichen Society Members,

Hello! We hope you have had many happy months of lichen-ing since the last bi-annual update in April – it's amazing how quickly six months can go with a brain full of lichens. As usual, there is lots going on across the Society and we are delighted to be providing you with an update on all the wonderful work going on behind the scenes.

A quick note from our President...

***“We on the Council thought it would be nice to hear from more of us in these update letters, and the editor-ship of these will rotate among the chairs of the Education and Promotions, Conservation and Data Committees, along with an update from the President, so each two years, you should hear from each of the four major branches of activity. This is the first of these letters from the Committees, this time from the Education and Promotions Committee, who have been very busy over the last six months! – Enjoy, Becky”.***

We hope you enjoy the update and feel inspired to get more involved with the Society. We look forward to seeing you all before too long at future BLS field meetings. Happy lichen-ing!

Very best wishes,

April Windle & Raymond Griffiths

(Education & Promotions Committee Chairs)  
[education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk)

## Education & Promotions Committee

- **Lichen Chat & Improvement Groups - to be relaunched on Tue 12 Oct and Wed 13 Oct 2021.** This programme was set-up by Judith Allinson in October 2020, as a means of providing a platform for those progressing with their lichen studies to learn together and support one another via two zoom chat groups on Tuesday evenings (7-9pm) and Wednesday mornings (10am-12noon), fortnightly. [Details here](#). These support groups have been hugely successful. If you have been thinking of joining one of these, now would be a really good time to start. Do invite your non BLS friends to join too - maybe this will encourage them to join the BLS.

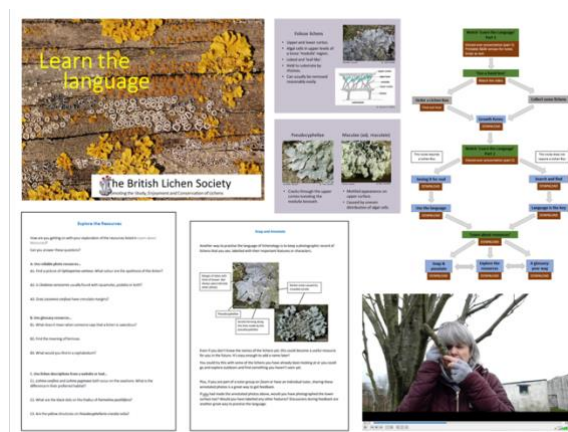


In association with this, and to help those people who are just starting out on Lichens, two small tutorial “Lichens for Absolute Beginners” (LABS) zoom groups are being set up in October, one on the alternate Wednesday mornings at 10am, starting on 20<sup>th</sup> October and one on alternate Wednesday evenings at 7pm starting on 20<sup>th</sup> October. To **book your place for any of these groups**, or if you have any questions, please contact Judith directly

via [zoom-improvement@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:zoom-improvement@britishlichensociety.org.uk) If there are too many bookings we will start a waiting list.

- **NEW Lichenicolous Fungi Chat and Improvement Group – starting 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov and running fortnightly through into February 2022.** An opportunity to find out about some of the fungi found growing on lichens through sharing knowledge, photos, ideas and questions with other interested people. Running on alternate Tuesday evenings from 7.00 – 9.00 pm. Hosted by Fay Newbery who says: “I’m not an expert but I’m definitely someone interesting in this fascinating group of fungi”. If you are interested in attending these meetings, please contact Fay at [fay.newbery@btopenworld.com](mailto:fay.newbery@btopenworld.com).
- **Online Learning:** We are delighted to announce that the first of a proposed series of online learning modules has been released on the British Lichen Society website. ‘Learn the Language’ is targeted at keen beginners who are ready to take the time to learn the basic language used to describe lichens. It is hoped that ‘Learn the Language’ may become the first part of a more extensive course on identifying common lichens and understanding their habitats.

The module is available under the Identification tab on the [BLS website](http://www.britishlichensociety.org.uk). All of the materials for the module can be accessed online and all can be downloaded for future reference. These include voiced-over presentations, videos, instruction sheets, activities and a resource list. This design offers learners complete autonomy, although a flow chart is available to guide learners through a step-by-step growth of knowledge and skills. For any questions, contact: [online-learning@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:online-learning@britishlichensociety.org.uk)



- **Species Accounts:** There are a variety of useful resources available through the BLS website, with more species accounts added for [lichens](#) and [lichenicolous fungi](#). These projects have been coordinated by Fay Newbery and we regularly welcome volunteers to write and review content for us. If this is of interest, please contact [education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk)

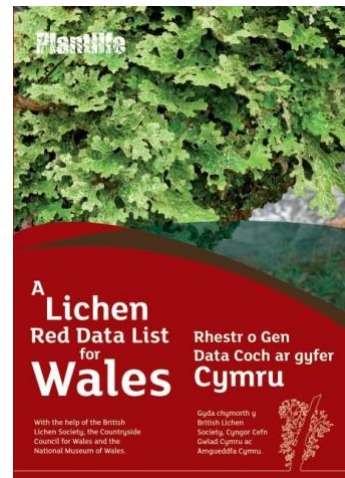
- **Local Groups:** A note from Caz Walker - Learning about lichens as part of a group is often the best way to progress - and more fun. The sharing of knowledge and experience helps lichenologists at all levels and, most importantly, encourages beginners. There is now a [Local Groups](#) page on the BLS website where you can find your nearest group and see what they are up to. The Local Groups Working Group (a subset of the EPC), aims to connect and support members across the Society, whilst encouraging more people to get involved. Please do get in contact if you would like help setting up a new group. Photo: Bristol & Gloucestershire Lichen Group.



## Conservation Committee

With the easing of COVID restrictions, this has been a particularly busy period for members of the Conservation Committee, as many are left catching up with fieldwork and writing reports, resulting in limited bandwidth for BLS works. Despite this, there is still plenty of positive movements we can share with you since the last bi-annual update.

- **Quinquennial Review for Schedule 8:** Neil Sanderson handled the consultation on the Quinquennial Review for Schedule 8, informing JNCC of taxonomic changes and pointing out the need for effective habitat protection to replace Schedule 8. The main effort was an application to retain the ban on commercial collection of *Lobaria pulmonaria*, while lobby against the needless addition of species that would receive no meaningful protection from Schedule 8. No results have yet been published.
- **Beavers:** DEFRA have recently launched a consultation titled "[Consulation on approach to beaver reintroduction and management in England](#)", which closes on the 17th November. The supporting [documentation](#) provides a useful evidence-based survey on beaver impacts on lichens (by Tim Wilkins). Conservation Committee member - Dave Lamacraft is coordinating a response from the BLS.
- **Red Listing:** the BLS intends to go ahead with updating the British and [Welsh](#) Lichen Red Lists and creating new English and Scottish Red Lists. It is hoped there will be DEFRA money available for Red List updating in the next financial year and possibly some this year. This will need a lot of discussion on how to proceed.
- **Alliance for Scotland's Rainforests:** Andy Acton has continued his valuable work representing the BLS on the [Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest](#) (ASR). He has consulted with other biodiversity experts and managers on his report and evidence review on Lichens, Woodland Management and Restoration. The BLS has also agreed to sign up to a letter to the Scottish Government proposing Scotland's Rainforest Restoration Fund, along with the other NGOs in the ASR (the ASR can not directly lobby, as it includes government bodies).



## Data Committee

The Data Committee have processed a staggering 46,000 records since the beginning of this year. This valuable information has been incorporated into the main BLS National Lichen Database, generated by lichen recorders from across the British Isles. The new [recording spreadsheet](#) and [distribution maps](#) are yet to be updated on the new BLS website – but do keep your eyes out for these additions.

## Website Committee

The two BLS websites are being upgraded over the coming year. Perhaps you didn't realise we had two! The Lichens of Wales site <http://wales-lichens.org.uk/> should go live in late autumn. This is a fantastic resource with information and photos about more than 50 rare species, lichen communities and conservation. As it says on the home page, Wales, for its size, has the highest diversity of lichen species in the world. The main BLS site [www.britishtichensociety.org.uk/](http://www.britishtichensociety.org.uk/) has grown and grown over the years and updating it will take



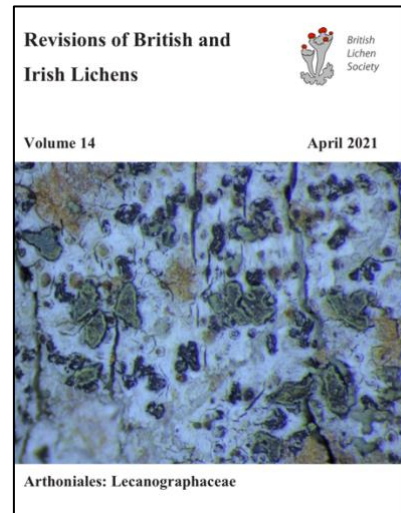
a little longer, so expect the full upgrade late next year, but meantime we will be reorganising and simplifying the tab structure. These modifications should not lead to broken links or bookmarks, but if you notice anything or have any suggestions, please let us know.

## Revisions of British & Irish Lichens

The Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland is the primary reference for the identification of lichens within the British Isles. At present, Society members are working towards a new edition of this publication, which will include descriptions, keys, habitat and distribution data for all species.

There have been a further three additions to the BLS website since the last bi-annual update, so do take a look and trial them for yourselves.

The following families are now available for download: Acarosporaceae, Arthoniaceae, Ramalinaceae, Coenogoniaceae, Porinaceae, Protothelenellaceae, Thelenellaceae, Collemataceae, Pannariaceae, Ochrolechiaceae, Pertusariaceae and Vezdeaceae. The additions since the last April bi-annual update include Lecanographaceae, Opegraphaceae and Caliciaceae



## The Lichenologist & BLS Bulletin

The most recent issue of [The Lichenologist](#) (Volume 53 – Issue 4 – July 2021) is now available for those BLS members with a subscription, containing an excellent collection of papers which we hope you enjoy. The editors of the Lichenologist are also active on [Twitter](#) – so give them a follow for regular updates.

A reminder that all historic issues of the Bulletin are [available online](#) (excluding those within a five-year window of the most recent issue). You will have recently received an email from our Bulletin Editor and we would greatly welcome any content for the next edition. Please contact Maxine Putnam at [bulletin@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@britishlichensociety.org.uk)



We would love to hear from you if you have any content for the next Winter Bulletin. A note from the Editor of the Bulletin '*Please dig deep or the next issue will be a slimline one without field meetings reports*'.

## IAL9 Conference

What an exceptional few days this turned out to be, filled with inspiring talks, projects and research. A huge congratulations to our friends and colleagues who made this online event such a huge success and was excellent to keep updated via [Twitter](#). It was our pleasure that the BLS could financially support 10 BLS members to attend this virtual event and a reminder that our [Grant & Scholarship Scheme](#) is open to all our members, from student through to academics – please do have a look.



## Field Meetings

After unavoidable cancellations, postponements and rescheduling, field meetings are finally back in action. Graham Boswell is the new Field Meetings Secretary, and planning is underway for the [Autumn Field Meeting](#) at the Dingestow Court, Monmouthshire (Wales). In addition to this, local groups have been organising local trips, with active meetings from the [Cumbria Lichen & Bryophyte Group](#), [Tayside Lichen Group](#) and the [Bristol & Gloucestershire Lichen Group](#). A full list of field meetings can be found on the events page of the [website](#). Photo: CLBG first field meeting of 2021. The Education & Promotions Committee are working with the Field Secretary to ensure opportunities are available to support beginners and early-intermediates at BLS Field meetings.



The second BLS Montane Lichen Group at Alladale Wilderness Reserve in VC106, East Ross and Cromarty, just returned from the glorious wilds without internet. Ten BLS members took part, based at Deanich Lodge, ranging from experts to beginners. We successfully implemented a “specimen table” to share finds and ID tips, where everyone could get a glimpse of the species collected for ID. During the trip, members visited the tops – or near the tops! – of Seanna Bhraigh, Beinn Dearg, and Carn Ban, in addition to the Amat Forest, Gleann Beag and surroundings. Look out for a Bulletin article in Summer 2022, when all the collections should finally be named and records compiled. Photos by David Genney (left) and Liz Campbell (right).



## Get Involved

Just a reminder that the Society is operated by a group of dedicated volunteers who are involved with lichens in different capacities. We would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved. In particular, we still have a few vacancies that we are hoping to fill...

- **Treasurer:** The BLS are exploring ways to lighten the work of the Treasurer by compartmentalizing the role somewhat. If you are interested or have any suggestions then please do get in touch. For info, contact: [treasurer@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@britishlichensociety.org.uk)
- **Social Media Leads:** If you are interested in engaging with a variety of people and promoting lichens widely, then this is an excellent opportunity to do some good work and meet fellow lichen enthusiasts. This role oversees the BLS Facebook and Twitter

accounts (supported by the Education & Promotions Committee). For info, contact: [education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk)

- **Record Digitisation:** The BLS National Database is the beating heart of the Society and digitising records is an excellent way to contribute from the comfort of your home. For info, contact: [records@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:records@britishlichensociety.org.uk)
- **Species Account Writers & Reviewers:** We have lots of species accounts that have been written by our volunteers and we need individuals (intermediates – advanced) to review the content before being published online. There are also plenty more accounts to be written. For info, contact: [education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk](mailto:education-promotion@britishlichensociety.org.uk)