

Dear BLS Member,

In the temporary absence of face-to-face meetings, and more than six months on from my last letter, I thought it was time to give you all another update about news of your Society. Please note that for text in black underline is expanded upon further down the document (when you click on the link), if you want further info!

New Resources

Some of the most exciting developments are about bringing new resources, experience and information to you, our members: First, new **online workshops** have been launched, and are planned at different levels of learning – watch the website, your email and social media for more information. For those looking forward to the third edition of the Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland, the first two instalments have been published as **Revisions of British and Irish Lichens**, including a **draft Glossary** now available for download.

Keeping things moving

Some procedural information is relevant as well: first, our new **Direct Debit** machinery is now in place to ensure your membership is automatically paid. Importantly, too, following government advice, we can promote small, local field meetings by following our new **COVID-19 Guidance on Organising Meetings**. Get out there and get recording!

Good news! In a year like 2020, we need some good news to celebrate:

- The BLS has been heavily involved in watching out for lichens in the work of a new alliance of many partners tasked with protecting [Scottish rainforests](#).
- **Save the date!** The first ever **online AGM** has been approved by Council for 29-31 January 2021– no travel required, so we expect good numbers for the speaker line-up, featuring our newest honorary life member, Rosmarie Honegger, for our Swinscow Lecture. More details in the Bulletin, but keep your eye on email and the website for further updates to the Programme.
- A couple of local groups have been particularly active recently, including [Cumbria Lichens](#) and Bryophytes website and Facebook groups and the newly-minted [Scottish Lichens](#) group on Facebook.
- A new booklet on the lichenicolous fungi of Xanthoria is ready for launch – it provides a richly illustrated starter guide to common fungi found on this common lichen.

Thank you. As ever, I'd like to recognize all the hard work - voluntary, unpaid, and often behind the scenes - by the officers, council members, trustees, committee members and all you dedicated enthusiasts alike in making the Society tick. In particular, we need to offer some **very big thank you's** to long-serving members of the behind-the-scenes action:

- After more than 12 years and the oversight of our wonderful web resources, Janet Simkin is passing the webmaster baton on. A huge thank you, Janet – and a warm welcome to Chris Cant!
- Also after more than 12 years, John Skinner will be stepping aside from his role as Treasurer. We are looking to *(try to) fill his shoes*, so please get in touch to find out more! More information about the role will be in a forthcoming announcement.

If you would like to be more involved with the Society, please get in touch! Let us know your skills and how you might like to be involved – Please do contact the BLS if you would like to get involved in any aspects of the society's work. We are very likely to be able to find you a new way to enjoy lichens! Please indicate your interest in the **conservation, education and promotions**, data, or other ways you might be able to help out.

With best wishes, and hoping that everyone stays safe and well,
Becky

Rebecca Yahr, BLS President
Edinburgh, Nov 2020

Online workshops

The second set of online workshops for beginners and intermediate learners are underway! These have been a great success so far, with mini-presentations, discussions and time for ID questions – and more than 40 participants between the Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning sessions. Feedback includes this lovely summary: "It is useful to have the facility of sharing pictures in the screen and zooming in and magnifying certain features, and to use and develop the specialised language for describing such features. We are improving our ability to use Zoom... but still learning."

Please watch for emails, website and social media for more information. We will send announcements out via email as well so that no one misses these opportunities. In the meantime, don't forget our Facebook and Twitter sites, in addition to [UKFungi forum](#) lichens channel for help on IDs.

Revisions of British and Irish Lichens

Revisions of British and Irish Lichens is a free-to-access serial publication, under the auspices of the British Lichen Society, which charts changes in our understanding of the lichens and lichenicolous fungi of Great Britain and Ireland. Each volume will be devoted to a particular family (or group of families), and will include descriptions, keys, habitat and distribution data for all the species included.

The editorial board is very pleased to announce the first volume of new taxonomic treatments, published as a freely downloadable pdf document of the Arthoniaceae and Collemataceae available on the BLS Website Treatments for the Ramalinaceae and Opegraphaceae are also nearing completion. Please use this link for access:

<https://www.britishlichensociety.org.uk/content/lgbi3>

New Glossary download

Look out for the new [Glossary](#) by Mark Powell, too. This document has a very valuable introductory section explaining both the aspiration and reality of compiling definitions of complicated terms meant to evoke a picture in one's mind, and with the ultimate goal of making usage of terms in the new treatments clear, unambiguous and consistent.

Direct Debit

The BLS is pleased to relaunch its direct debit scheme for its members.

1. To pay for your membership via direct debit in future please log into [mySociety](#).
2. Then, click 'my account' and finally 'Direct Debit'
3. Once complete you'll then receive a confirmation that your direct debit is active and future membership fees will be collected in this way.

If you have any queries at all please don't hesitate to get in touch and thank you for supporting the British Lichen Society.

COVID-19 Guidance on Organising Meetings

We are continuing to postpone all face-to-face meetings, including Council, Committee and Field meetings and excursions in line with government advice. However, we can promote **small, local field meetings under the umbrella of the BLS, provided two conditions are met:**

1) all government advice is followed at all times to keep everyone safe, and 2) that any local organizer must use the new [BLS Fieldwork Risk Assessment](#) to be covered on our insurance.

Dates in 2021 and 2022 have now been pencilled in for a number of field meetings and workshops cancelled because of COVID-19. See the BLS website for the latest information.

Online AGM

This year we are planning our first ever online AGM. The online format allows us to invite speakers and audience members from all over our worldwide membership: Rosmarie Honegger will give our Swinscow Lecture, and we anticipate a wide-ranging programme of talks from fields including research, conservation and the humanities. Please keep your eye on the website, email and social media for further information.

Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee welcomes involvement by any member of the BLS, regardless of experience. There is a good email group, which ensures you can keep up to date with what is going on with lichen conservation, whether locally or regionally. We welcome your involvement and input! Everywhere in the British Isles, lichens are important, and are too often overlooked, and sometimes local issues may arise that cause concern. Having a link to the Conservation Committee may help to put things into perspective. The regional chairs of the CC will always welcome your contributions or comments.

Education and Promotions Committee

There are a number of ongoing or planned initiatives, and we are always looking for people to get involved in the committee. We are presently looking for people to write, or to review, descriptions of lichen species written in non-scientific language. Also, in the near term, we will be looking for members help us to redevelop our website.