BLS Database – Spreadsheet Surgery

The BLS database

Software – Recorder6 and Microsoft SQL Server

R6 was developed by JNCC to replace Recorder 3 and Recorder 2002

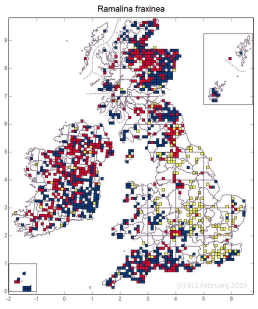
- Modern user interface
- Able to handle millions of records
- Mapping
- Easy to use reports and queries

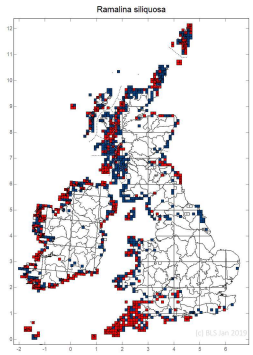
500+ licences sold, about half still in use

Funding now withdrawn, will be self-supporting and managed by the user community from 1/4/2019

Replacement - plans at an early stage, aiming to replace R6 in about 2025
Open source software and database, but retaining all the existing functionality and using the same data model that we have now

Purpose – to store records, and to provide information





The most frequent data requests include:

- Records of a particular species
- Species list for a site (often a churchyard)
- Records for a site, with details of date, substrate, specimens etc.
- Records for a vice county
- Distribution maps for individual taxa, in various formats and at different resolutions
- Coincidence maps for lichen communities, such as the Lobarion
- Coverage maps of VCs or local areas, at 1km or 2km resolution
- Flat file extracts for ArcGIS, QGIS and MapInfo
- VC exports for local record centres
- National exports for the NBN Atlas and GBIF

The BLS spreadsheet

What we need to know – who, when, where and what?

If this is presented in the form the database expects it can import the records without any further work. If not, we have to reformat it.

The spreadsheet is in three colour-coded parts:

1. Location details

A	B	C	D
Location	**Grid ref**	**VC**	checked?
Cawfields - car park	NY71326661	67	
Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	
Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	

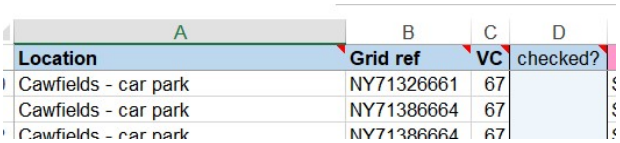
2. Visit details

E	F	G	H
Recorders	**Date(s)**	**Altitude**	**Site and visit comments**
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey

3. Record details

I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
BLS no.	**Species**	**BLS no.**	**Taxon name**	**Group**	**Status**	**Substrate**	**Small scale habitats**	**Abundance**	**Record notes**	**Herbarium**	**Specimen**	**Determiner**
	Ramalina fastigiata	1235	Ramalina fastigiata		LC	Cort	CFx	A/F	On ash, condition good, fertile			
	Ramalina fraxinea	1236	Ramalina fraxinea		LC Sc IR	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile			
	Ramalina farinacea	1234	Ramalina farinacea		LC	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good			
	Ramalina fastigiata	1235	Ramalina fastigiata		LC	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile			
	Evernia prunastri	0511	Evernia prunastri		LC	Cort	CAp	A/F	On sycamore, condition good			
	Pseudevernia furfuracea	1192	Pseudevernia furfuracea s. lat.			Lig	PGt		On gate, condition average			

Location details - Location



	A	B	C	D
	Location	Grid ref	VC	checked?
	Cawfields - car park	NY71326661	67	
	Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	

Location name = village or site first, then the subsite, e.g.

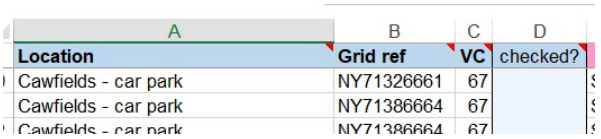
Ponteland – North Road *not* North Road, Ponteland

Brockbushes – A69 layby *not* layby on the A69 near Brockbushes

Ponteland - St. Mary churchyard *not* St Mary's church, Ponteland

Please avoid using commas in location names as they cause problems when we extract data to csv files for GIS.

Location details – Grid ref.



	A	B	C	D
	Location	Grid ref	VC	checked?
	Cawfields - car park	NY71326661	67	
	Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	

Grid reference = alphanumeric format with no dots or spaces

The precision should be appropriate to the area covered (recognising that some records may be just outside the defined square), e.g.

NY76	10km square, puts a dot on the map but otherwise useless
NY7166	1km square, perfect for a woodland, park, etc.
NY713666	100m square, use for churchyards, gardens, laybys etc.
NY71326661	10m square, so a single tree or building, or a length of hedge, outcrop or wall
NY7132466618	1m square. Your GPS is not that accurate!

<u>Important note</u>

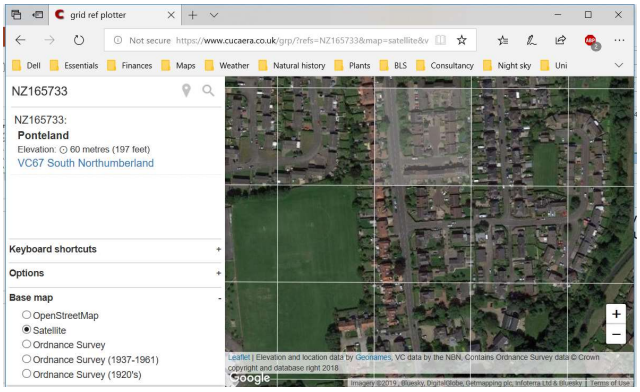
Beware smartphone apps – they give a very precise grid ref. for where you were when you input the record. False accuracy, and often misleading.

Location details - VC

	A	B	C	D
	Location	Grid ref	VC	checked?
	Cawfields - car park	NY71326661	67	
	Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	
	Cawfields - car park	NY71386664	67	

Vice county – records are filed in the database by VC so this is needed and it has to be right. Check on Cucaera (www.cucaera.co.uk) if you are not sure.

Cucaera also gives you the altitude.



Visit details - Recorders

	E	F	G	H
	Recorders	Date(s)	Altitude	Site and visit comments
	Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
	Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
	Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey

Recorders – the names of all the active recorders involved, but not the hangers on, with the name of the expert first in the list. That name is taken to be the determiner, unless someone else is specified

The format is flexible but separated by commas and space works best, e.g.

Janet Simkin, Les Knight, Sue Knight

Brian Coppins, Janet Simkin, BLS field meeting

If you include commas in the names you must then separate them by semi-colons, e.g.

Coppins, Brian; Simkin, Janet; Hackett, Shaun

Visit details - date

E	F	G	H
Recorders	Date(s)	Altitude	Site and visit comments
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey
Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey

Date – the date of the visit, in any of the usual formats

If records have been accumulated over a number of days this can be entered as a date range, but not as a list of dates, e.g.

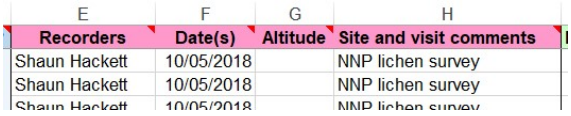
11/3/2019 – 14/3/2019 *but not* 11/3/2019, 12/3/2019 and 14/3/2019

Important note

The date column in the spreadsheet should be set to the dd/mm/yyyy format, which is fine for single dates. If you want to enter just month and year, or just the year, prefix that with a ‘ , Excel will then treat it as a text field.

If somehow the format of that column has been changed to mmm-yyyy, then change it back by selecting the column and setting it back to short date or dd/mm/yyyy format

Visit details - comments



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Shaun Hackett	10/05/2018		NNP lichen survey

Site and visit comments – these relate to that site and visit only, not to the individual record. They should be the same for all records that are to be held together under the same location and date.

Notes relating to an individual record go into Record Notes.

Important note

Please don’t copy and paste into either of the notes fields from a word document (or worse, much worse, from anything on a Mac or iPad!). That introduces hidden formatting characters that are very difficult to find and they cause big problems.

Record details – species

BLS no.	Species	BLS no.	Taxon name	Group	Status	Su
	Ramalina fastigiata	1235	Ramalina fastigiata		LC	Cc
	Ramalina fraxinea	1236	Ramalina fraxinea		LC Sc IR	Cc
	Ramalina farinacea	1234	Ramalina farinacea		LC	Cc
	Ramalina fastigiata	1235	Ramalina fastigiata		LC	Cc
	Evernia prunastri	0511	Evernia prunastri		LC	Cc
	Pseudevernia furfuracea	1192	Pseudevernia furfuracea s. lat.			Lic

Enter the BLS number or name to the columns left of the green columns.

Any name used in the last 40 years should be accepted, unless there has been a split or revision that requires a decision from you.

The BLS number, modern name, group and conservation status will then be displayed back.

Do not enter anything to the green columns. If the name or number has not been recognised I will sort that out for you.

Important note

If you want to add a line to the spreadsheet you must insert a whole row, and copy the formulae in the green columns down to the new row. Don't insert individual cells or it will all go wonky!

Record details – substrate and position

Substrate	Small scale habitats	Abundance	Record notes
Cort	CFx	A/F	On ash, condition good, fertile
Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good
Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
Cort	CAp	A/F	On sycamore, condition good
Lig	PGt		On gate, condition average

Optional

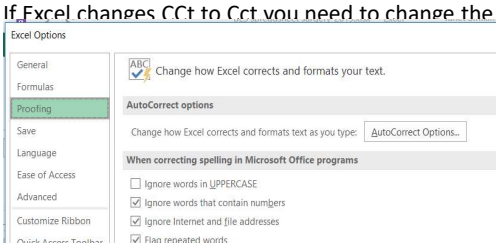
Substrate - select from the drop-down list, or start typing it in

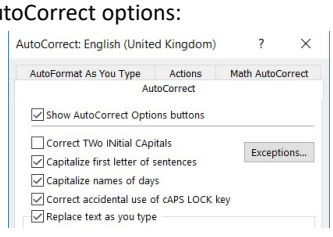
Small scale habitat codes – use the standard codes (refer to the Codes tab in the spreadsheet), separated by commas but no spaces, e.g.

CCt,CQ,CFx,PW *not any of* Cct Cq, CFX. Wall

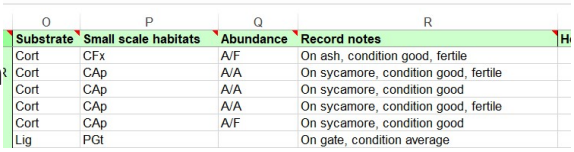
Important note

If Excel changes CCt to Cct you need to change the AutoCorrect options:





Record details – substrate and position



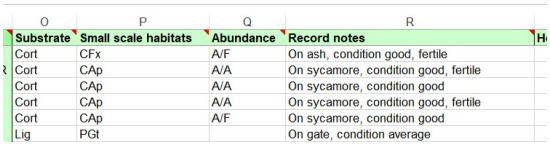
	O	P	Q	R
	Substrate	Small scale habitats	Abundance	Record notes
	Cort	CFx	A/F	On ash, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/F	On sycamore, condition good
	Lig	PGt		On gate, condition average

Important note

One line per species

- use combination codes for substrates and a string of scale habitat codes, rather than adding additional rows
- If it is important to link codes together this can be done in record notes, using the same conventions as in survey reports, e.g Q-tw, Fx-tr
- In exceptional circumstances this can be done by using a separate row for each record, but this should only be done for species of particular interest. Those records will usually have different 8 digit grid refs and so will be on separate rows anyway.

Record details – abundance and notes



	O	P	Q	R
	Substrate	Small scale habitats	Abundance	Record notes
	Cort	CFx	A/F	On ash, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good
	Cort	CAp	A/A	On sycamore, condition good, fertile
	Cort	CAp	A/F	On sycamore, condition good
	Lig	PGt		On gate, condition average

Optional

Abundance – use the DAFOR (A/…) or DOMIN (D/….. Scales), preferably DAFOR, as shown in the Codes tab of the worksheet

e.g. A/O *for occasional, not* Occ, O *or* 2

Record notes – text relating to that species record, perhaps notes on ID, position, substrate, condition, associated species, etc. Max 256 characters.

Important note

Please don't copy and paste into either of the notes fields from a word document (or worse, much worse, from anything on a Mac or iPad!). That introduces hidden formatting characters that are very difficult to find and they cause big problems.

Record details – specimen and determiner

	S	T	U
	Herbarium	**Specimen**	**Determiner**
	E	Coppins 12335	Brian Coppins
	Sanderson		

Optional

Herbarium – use the standard herbarium code, or the name for a personal collection

Specimen – the accession number or catalogue number if there is one

Determiner – the name of the determiner, only needed if that is different to the first recorder in the list

Sending records in

The spreadsheet will take up to 4000 records, and you can extend this by copying the green formulae down

If you want to reduce the file size you can delete the unused rows below your records, down to 4000. You can also use "paste values" to lose the formulae altogether and then delete the three worksheets that lie behind the input worksheet, but don't try this unless you know what you are doing.

Save the spreadsheet and **email** it to one of us for import:

- Brian – Scotland, Devon and Somerset
- Janet – the rest of England, Isle of Man, Wales, Channel Isles

At present we are not importing records for Ireland but they are stored and will be processed in time.

If you don't want to use the BLS spreadsheet

Any spreadsheet format will do, but if non-standard it is more work for us to reformat it so there will be a delay before records get into the database.

For single records just an email will do, with all the usual details. But if you have a single record, why not send in the list of associated species to make it more valuable?

Use **iRecord** if you must, but we only pick up those records up from time to time and it takes a lot of work to reformat them and clean them up. Please use the lichen recording activity in iRecord.

Important note

If you send records in to a local record centre, or using any other app, they will not find their way to us so please send them to us as well.

Data in, data out

The more records we hold, the more valuable the database is for all its users

We need records of common species just as much as the rarities

…. and we need records of lichens as well as of lichenicolous fungi!

This is your database, please use it!