

Cumbria Lichen and Bryophyte Group annual report 2024

We have now been in existence for 4 years, and it's 3 years since our first AGM.

We have 125 people on our mailing list. I've recently removed those that emails bounce back from and there's 10 or so to add following the CBDC recorder's conference.

In the last year we've had 12 field trips in spite of some awful weather: Hutton Roof Crag; Seathwaite Woods, Borrowdale; Burnbanks, Haweswater; Brown Cove, Helvellyn; Hartside; the Solway mosses; Mallerstang, Wallowbarrow in the Duddon Valley; Torver and Blawith Common; Swindale; Hartstop and Whitbarrow. To run a trip a month seems pretty good to me.

By my reckoning- and I don't keep detailed records of who comes to what- we have had 32 folk come out for lichens, 21 for Bryophytes and then there were those who were working/ volunteering at the sites we were visiting. So over 50 separate people have been at our trips. 23 came to Whitbarrow! I've loved the conversations full of good humour and learning and thought-provoking interest. I have learnt lots. I hope we've passed something on. As well as going to cracking places.

I've no idea how many species records we have made, but my highlights from a lichen point of view would be the *Scytinium fragile* on the little limestone cliff under an ash tree at Hutton Roof; that big boulder with *Bryoria*, *Tuckermanopsis* and the wonderfully pruinose *Lecanora subcarnea* at Burnbanks; the *Lecanora achariana*, River Jelly Lichen *Lathagrium dichotomum* and *Nephroma parile* on a sweltering day at Brown Cove; the *Peltigera venosa* and googly eyed *Sporodictyon schaerianum* at Hartside; seeing the spreading *Pannaria conoplea* thalli on willow at Blawith.

Other things we've done include an update and stall at the CBDC recorders conference; taking part at the CBDC recording day at Acorn Bank; being involved with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy shortlisting. The website (thank you Chris) looks great. His maps, for lichens at least, have now also gone national on the BLS website. We have lots of blog posts. The Facebook groups keep on running: both have over 350 members. We contribute reports to the annual Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria.

There's extra-societal stuff as well. Clare was local organiser for a BBS week long meet; some of us have been running Lichens for Absolute Beginners groups via Zoom; visiting other sites; doing stuff for the British Lichen Society; running sessions at the University of Cumbria, Matterdale Nature Group, at Acorn Bank and in Shap; checking the lichen translocations at Haweswater; running introductory sessions in Staveley Woods and for Friends of the Lake District. We've written articles for the BLS bulletin and Lakeland Horticultural Society magazine; appeared on the Countryside podcast. There'll be more, but as they aren't done "by the group" they don't count. Except to add to the impression that there's lots going on.

We don't have any money, so there can't be a financial report. We have insurance provided by the British Lichen Society for our field trips: that's minimal public liability only. In terms of kit, the Natural England funded microscopes can be borrowed from CBDC. I have an old dissecting scope we have been given. Chris and Caz hold some microscope ancillary equipment, books, UV torches, hand lenses and leaflets. Clare has the bryophyte books. Chris and Caz have lichen chemicals which can be requested: Pd, K, Iodine and Congo Red. Get in touch if you would like to know more.

Once again, it's been a good year. There is a lot going on to advance the cause of lichens and bryophytes in the vice-counties of Cumberland and Westmorland. The questions, as ever, are: where do we go from here? Is there anything else we would like to do? What have I forgotten?

Pete Martin 26.2.24