

Cumbria Lichen and Bryophyte Group annual report 2026

It is 5 years since our first AGM, deep in the Covid Zoom world. Much has changed. Or has it? We are still fascinated by small things.

But yes, something has changed. We've jettisoned the list in my emails of 150 folk plus, and set up a mail chimp list that currently stands at of 50 or so. Some old friends have fallen by the wayside. A lot of names who never came don't hear from me any more. My hunch is that we have fewer folk coming out, but that might not be to do with the mailing migration. There's certainly fewer coming out for lichens. Maybe we have filled their heads too much.

In the last year we've had 12 field trips: Tilberthwaite, Hardknott Forest, Watendlath, Dufton, Kirkstone, Keskadale Wood, Glasson Moss, Borrowdale (the one on Westmorland), Glencoyne Wood, Thirlmere, Troutdale and Tilberthwaite again. I've only been on seven of them, so don't know how many folk have been, or how many records we've sent in. But it's quite a few. And that's before we start talking about the ones individual folk have added.

Blog posts still go on the website. Sandy Coppins said nice things about them in the latest British Wildlife. My mate Trudi enjoys them too, and she isn't really interested in lichens or bryophytes. The Facebook groups keep on running: both have 550 members. We contribute reports to the annual Birds and Wildlife in Cumbria. Chris's maps continue to distract me daily.

The extra-societal stuff continues. 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. There's been lichen walks and talks at Allan Bank, Holehird Gardens, Threlkeld, Higham Hall, two campuses of the University of Cumbria; a talk in Shap and a walk at Naddle for Shap Outdoor festival. There's been a talk to Carlisle Nats, sessions for National Trust rangers. Clare did bryophyte talks at Higham Hall. Chris and Caz continue working on the transplants at Haweswater and the Gowbarrow Elm. Some of us helped April Windle and John Douglass with a survey at Watendlath. There's CBDC record checking, BBS county recorder work. I'll have missed stuff. But there is lots going on.

We don't have any money, so there isn't a need for 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.

The committee of 6 (Chris, Caz, Kerry, Clare, Paul and me) do very little. We run the trips (two each per year, since you ask) after having one Zoom meeting a year to sort out the timetable. When we need to need to, we cover for each other.

We owe lots of people thanks: April Windle for setting us off, all the committee members, the landowners and agencies. But most of all thank you to people for coming and feeding our enthusiasm.

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?

Pete Martin 12.3.26