Sixteen members assembled at Preston Montford on the 22nd of November for what proved to be an outstanding workshop on the genus *Bryum*, presided over by David Holyoak. Indeed so popular was the workshop that I had a substantial waiting list. Should there continue to be an interest David will consider re-running the workshop in the future, perhaps giving another chance to those who missed out this time round.

The workshop was laboratory based and David’s presentation and instruction were supplemented with interesting specimens from his collection as well as specimens, in some cases unidentified, brought by David Long from the RBGE herbarium. David also provided us with 39 pages of notes and keys – the updated versions of which are available on the BBS website.

After an introduction to the often problematic taxonomy, morphology and growth forms of the genus, David took us through the ID characters we would need to examine - in particular leaves, the inflorescence, capsules, the peristome, bulbils and rhizoidal tubers. Many of us tend to be rather lazy when it comes to dissecting out perianths to see if a plant is dioicous or monoicous but there was no chance for idleness here and by the end of the weekend we were all well practiced at sorting out synoicous from autoicous from dioicous. Just to confuse matters we were also introduced to species displaying variable sexuality, such as *B. torquescens*. There were also ample opportunities to practice dissecting off and displaying the inside and outside of peristomes – David demonstrated a useful technique for getting rid of clumps of spores by rinsing the peristome with strong alcohol which disperses them much more effectively than water.

On Sunday morning a few folks felt the need for fresh air so I took a group out to a local stubble field to hunt down extra *Bryum* including those with fresh axillary bulbils and rhizoidal tubers. A little oddity which turned up on some rhizoids proved to be a gall – identified by being unicellular.

We wound up by discussing ID problems in the genus – poor specimens, mixed collections and morphological plasticity plus taxonomic and nomenclatural difficulties and potential ploidy issues, all adding to make for a pretty thought-provoking brew. This is one of the huge advantages of being taken through a group by an expert – one not only has the opportunity to analyse a lot of material and practice various techniques, but also to discover the problem areas and the limits of our current knowledge.

**Acknowledgements**

As well as thanking David for coming over from Portugal to share his knowledge with us I would also like to thank the centre staff for looking after us – in particular the cake in the afternoon and wine in the evenings to fortify fraying minds.

**Martin Godfrey**

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