

PLANTS IN VICE-COUNTY 104: TEN YEARS OF SIX-MONTHLY AND ANNUAL REVIEWS 2006 TO 2015

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July to December 2015

The Skye Botany Group met three times in the second half of 2015, visiting Loch Chaluum Chille, Preshal Beg and Loch Duagrigh for an aquatics-centred day.

A list of [plants native to Skye](#) was produced. With many caveats it includes just short of 600 species.

Two populations of *Euphrasia* were sampled for “[An Eye for Eyebrights](#)”, a project to investigate the evolution of British *Euphrasia*.

Arctium specimens from Skye and Raasay have been provisionally determined as *A. minus subsp. pubens*, but more work is needed.

Over 13,000 records were made in VC104 in 2015, a slight drop on 2014 but considering the weather this year, this is a tremendous achievement. Many thanks to all, too many to mention individually, who have contributed so much this year.

Raasay

Mentha x verticillata (Whorled Mint (*M. aquatica x arvensis*)) was found by Loch Eadar dà Bhaile, a first record for Raasay.

Two grasses that have probably arisen from forage were found at Glam: *Hordeum distichon* (Barley) and *Anisantha diandra* (Giant Brome), both firsts for Raasay and the latter being new to the vice-county.

Pseudorchis albida (Small-white Orchid) was found in a new area, near Brochel.

A collaboration with ceramicist [Frances Priest](#) “[Patterns of Flora – Mapping Seven Raasay Habitats](#)” resulted in maps of botanical walks, ceramic furnishings for Raasay House, Parian ware vases and adult colouring books, all featuring plants from the seven selected habitats. The project has been shortlisted in the Placemaking category of the prestigious Arts & Business Scotland Awards 2015.

Eigg

Over 1000 records were added during a two day visit including seven taxa in NM48 and three in NM49 not seen since before 2000, including the locally scarce *Epilobium parviflorum* (Hoary Willowherb).

Polystichum setiferum (Soft Shield-fern) and *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) were new to Eigg. *Raphanus raphanistrum subsp. maritimus* (Sea Radish) was the first record in the vice-county since 1893 or 1895 – and in the same location! The old record is described as “being probably *R. landra*.” *Raphanus raphanistrum subsp. landra* as we now understand it seems pretty unlikely. It is similar to *subsp. maritimus* and that seems far more likely on Eigg.

Canna

Before an August visit tetrads NG20B, C & D had 0, 6 and 0 taxa recorded. Now that reads 33 (not much land), 147 and 2 (almost no land above the high water mark).

Two species were added to the Canna list: *Rosa caesia* subsp. *vosagiaca* (Glaucous Dog-rose) and *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush) and three re-found that had not been recorded since before 2000: *Calystegia sepium* (Hedge Bindweed), *Carex x fulva* and *Nasturtium officinale* s. s. (Water-cress).

Rum

Hammarbya paludosa (Bog Orchid) was found in a new tetrad on Rum, only the second post-1999 Rum record.

Scalpay

Ten taxa were added to the under-recorded 10 km square NG63 and many more were recorded for the first time since before 2000 (often long before 2000).

Skye

Raphanus raphanistrum subsp. *maritimus* (Sea Radish) at Waternish was the first record for Skye.

Calystegia pulchra (Hairy Bindweed) was found at Carbost; it is also known from Dunvegan, Uig and the Portree area.

Cephalanthera longifolia (Narrow-leaved Helleborine) was relocated at the last known Skye site where it had not been re-found recently, apart from Armadale Caste and another where a bungalow has since been built.

Helminthotheca (previously *Picris*) *echioides* (Bristly Oxtongue) was recorded at Waternish Farm, probably introduced with wildflower seed. The only previous record in VC 104 was from the roadside south of Sconser in 2004.

An autumn campaign to re-find *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) in various Skye lochs was very successful and two new 10 km squares were added for this species.

In Sleat, Loch na Doireanach had *Utricularia stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort) in flower, something I have never seen before, and Loch Mhic Charmhiceal had the locally uncommon *Sparganium emersum* (Unbranched Bur-reed).

Loch Chaluim Chille, once Skye's largest loch, was drained nearly 200 years ago yielding good arable land but has now reverted to marsh. *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge) was re-found in a couple of places here and nearby on the Monkstadt track there was *Salix pentandra* (Bay Willow) where it had been previously recorded. This willow was also re-found in Staffin and at Orbost this year.

Rubus tricolor (Chinese Bramble), not previously known in the wild in VC104, was spotted in the Armadale area. *Triticum aestivum* (Bread Wheat) in Portree was the first VC record except for a reference in a 1964 paper about fungi on Rum which presumably referred to cultivated plants.

Saxifraga hirsuta (Kidney Saxifrage) is well established across the road from Gesto House. The only previous records for VC 104 are from Rum. Its presence in the mountains of Rum remains unexplained.

The second and third recent records for *Rubus laciniatus* (Cut-leaved Bramble) were made at Talisker and Sligachan.

A record for *Mentha x verticillata* (Whorled Mint) near Portree was re-found but other old sites need to be searched. Other *Mentha* hybrid specimens were taken for expert determination.

Atriplex x gustafssoniana (*A. longipes x prostrata*) was found at Edinbane. *A. longipes* (Long-stalked Orache) is unknown in VC104 but the hybridisation events are probably historical. This is the third known site on Skye and the first record since 1993.

Probable *Vaccinium x intermedium* (*V. myrtillus x V. vitis-idaea*) was found growing with both parents (Bilberry & Cowberry). There is a very high likelihood that it is *V. x intermedium*, but without flowers it was not possible to determine it with 100% certainty. A re-visit needed in 2016.

Eilean Trodday and Eilean Flodigarry

Thanks are due to the Wild Flower Society for a grant towards the hire of a RIB to get a group of us to Eilean Trodday and Eilean Flodigarry.

Trodday was last surveyed botanically in 1987 but the records were not split between the two tetrads and so none of them appear on tetrad distribution maps. The best finds were *Dactylorhiza x formosa* (*D. maculata x purpurella*), new to the 10 km square NG47, and *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel) with only an unlocalised, undated but old record in NG47.

Flodigarry Island was also surveyed in 1987. New 10 km square records were *Dryopteris borreeri* (Borrer's Male-fern), *Elytrigia repens* (Common Couch) and *Salix repens* var. *argentea* (Creeping Willow).

January to June 2015

The Skye Botany Group met twice in the first half of 2015, on the first occasion enduring a very wet day on Ben Suardal to inspect *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil), *Carex rupestris* (Rock Sedge) and other limestone specialists. The second excursion to Rubh' an Dùnain was a much drier day and allowed much useful recording including re-finding *Ruppia cirrhosa* (Spiral Tasselweed) and *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch).

Andrew Currie's Herbarium was catalogued by two volunteers and the sheets were then transferred to RBGE where they will become part of the general herbarium. There are c. 1800 sheets of which c 75% were from the UK (63% from Scotland). Only six are from VC104.

Specimens of *Gunnera* were collected for a Royal Horticultural Society project looking at hybridisation in populations of these plants established in the wild.

Rona

A trip to Rona added six plants to the Rona list including *Carex canescens* (White Sedge), and twelve more to the list for the northern hectad, NG66. Many previous records at the hectad level were converted to tetrad records.

Raasay

Recording on Raasay has been a bit neglected in recent years as the much larger and less well recorded Isle of Skye has taken precedence. However, a walk along Raasay's east coast allowed several species to be re-found that had not been recorded in NG54 since before 2000 such as *Cirsium heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) and *Equisetum telmateia* (Great Horsetail).

New sites for the locally uncommon *Vicia sativa* subsp. *nigra* (Narrow-leaved Vetch), *Veronica beccabunga* (Brooklime) and *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirreltail Fescue) were discovered.

Rum

A day in the Kilmory and Samhnan Insir area on Rum, mostly on the dunes, proved very worthwhile. New to VC104 was *Saxifraga tridactylites* (Rue-leaved Saxifrage) and there were several sites for *Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass) recorded from this area up until 1992 but not recorded anywhere in VC104 since 1996 (on Eigg). There was a lot of *Atriplex laciniata* (Frosted Orache) along the shore. This had been recorded at Kilmory up to 1997 but it was not found during the years of recording for The Flora of Rum. *Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass) was also present, another plant that had been recorded there before (until 1984) but was not found during the Flora surveys.

Canna & Sanday

Ficaria verna subsp. *verna* (Lesser Celandine –with bulbils in the leaf axils) and *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress) were found at Canna House and are new to Canna/Sanday.

These islands continue to hold the only sites in the vice-county for *Hypericum elodes* (Marsh St John's-wort) and *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill) and appear to have the only remaining sites for *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant).

Skye

Allium schoenoprasum (Chives) at Lusa, *Elodea canadensis* (Canadian Waterweed) at Waterish and *Leucojum vernum* (Spring Snowflake) from Kilbeg, Sleat and Talisker Bay are all new to the vice-county. The Talisker Bay plants have been known for many years but never made it onto the official record. Also new to VC104 is *Rheum palmatum* (Ornamental Rhubarb) from the top of the shore at Armadale, which was identified from a 2006 photograph, though it has now gone.

Moehringia trinervia (Three-nerved Sandwort) was found for the first time on Skye. There are several sites on Raasay and Eigg and an old record from Rum.

Galium album (Hedge Bedstraw) was found not far from Broadford. All previous records were in the north of Skye and the last was in 1997.

Potamogeton coloratus (Fen Pondweed) was re-found in Loch Cill Chriosd where it has been known since 1968 but last recorded in 1996. Other old records re-found include *Centaureum erythraea* (Common Centaury) from the Torrin area, where it has not been recorded since 1971 and *Neottia ovata* (Common Twayblade) at Fiskavaig where it had first been recorded in 1958, again in 1989, but not since. *Matteuccia struthiopteris* (Ostrich Fern) was located near Dunvegan where it was last recorded in 1976.

Valerianella locusta (Common Cornsalad) has been known at Ord since 1967. Only two plants were found there this year but at least 48 years in the same site is a remarkable achievement for a tiny population of an annual. This is the only known Skye site.

New sites on Skye were found for *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge), *Ficaria verna* subsp. *verna* (Lesser Celandine –with bulbils), *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb-Paris), *Polypodium interjectum* (Intermediate Polypody) and *Viola tricolor* subsp. *tricolor* (Wild Pansy).

Cortaderia richardii (Early Pampas-grass) continues to spread and is now known from 17 tetrads on Skye and Raasay.

Profuse thanks are due to all, too many to mention individually, who have contributed to the above records and many more. Despite notably cold weather and the resulting late seasons, there are over 5,600 records for VC104 in the first half of 2015.

July to December 2014

The Skye Botany Group met twice in the second half of 2014, on the first occasion visiting the newly found *Saxifraga cespitosa* (Tufted Saxifrage) and nearby *Woodsia alpina* (Alpine Woodsia) and later on recording at Loch Sneosdal and Creag Sneosdal. On the first occasion there was one spot when we were within a few metres of six species of saxifrage.

A survey of sites of past records for *Agrimonia eupatoria* (Agrimony) has led to the conclusion that this plant is probably not present locally; all populations found being *Agrimonia procera* (Fragrant Agrimony).

Sibbaldia procumbens (Sibbaldia) was noted to be in seed by the beginning of July on the Trotternish Ridge. Most books say it flowers in July/August. Following a survey of other Scottish Vice-county Recorders, it seems that this species can flower over quite a long period but that June flowering is likely at lower altitudes.

Rum

Over fifty spikes of the Nationally Scarce orchid, *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* (Irish Lady's-tresses) were found on Rum. This is the first record for the vice-county and a plant that has long been hoped for here as it has been known in adjacent vice-counties for many years.

Raasay

Tropaeolum majus (Nasturtium) was found still flowering in late October. This garden escape/throw-out is a first record for VC104.

A single specimen of *Prunus padus* (Bird Cherry) was found near Screapadal; the only previous records of this tree as a native on Raasay are from Brochel woods by the shore in 1903 and somewhere unspecified in the southern part of Raasay in 1957, though it has been planted more recently as part of a native tree mix on Raasay and Fladday.

Tiny areas of land in NG63 were recorded separately for the first time. NG63 overall doesn't have a lot of land – apart from these tiny areas on Raasay there is NE Scalpay, most of the Crowlins and a tiny piece of the mainland and Eilean Bà. The Raasay Flora was updated to take account of these records. It had stated that there are five 10 km squares that cover Raasay with 98 recording units based on 1 km squares. This has been changed to six 10 km squares and 100 recording units. There are thirteen species that were known in the 98 recording units but now only one (*Sagina procumbens* (Procumbent Pearlwort)) known in all 100 units.

Skye

Phalaris canariensis (Canary-grass) was found in Portree - presumably having arisen from birdseed. This is new to VC104 except for a 1939 Rum record on a waste heap.

At Earlish *Stachys arvensis* (Field Woundwort) was found – the first Skye record since 1975 and *Beta vulgaris subsp. maritima* (Sea Beet) was found growing out of a compost heap, perhaps introduced with seaweed used for gardening purposes. The only previous record for Skye is from Glenbrittle beach and it has not been seen there since 1972, though it is present on Muck, Canna & Hyskeir.

Stellaria graminea (Lesser Stitchwort) was recorded in the Dunvegan area, the first record for 50 years in the 10 km square NG24 and a new site for *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) was found in an otherwise unexciting area of moor in NG31 – a strong healthy group of large tussocks, better than anywhere else currently known on Skye.

A new site for *Leymus arenarius* (Lyme-grass) was found at Uig and *Cakile maritima* (Sea Rocket) was recorded from a completely new area of Skye: Kilmarie.

Centaureum erythraea (Common Centaury) was found by the Varragill River south of Portree, a long way from any previously known site and farther from the sea than usual – though not very far from the estuary.

Site Condition Monitoring of rare plants in the Cuillins SSSI allowed the audit of many species such as *Cerastium nigrescens* (Arctic Mouse-ear), *Deschampsia subsp. alpina* (Alpine Hair-grass), *Draba norvegica* (Rock Whitlowgrass) and *Poa alpina* (Alpine Meadow-grass). *Equisetum variegatum* (Variegated Horsetail) remains elusive.

Site Condition Monitoring of the Trotternish Ridge SSSI led to new sites for *Juncus biglumis* (Two-flowered Rush) not far from the known site near the Storr summit. A passing benefit was spotting *Juncus trifidus* (Three-leaved Rush), the first record for Trotternish for many years. *Cryptogramma crispa* (Parsley Fern) was also re-found where it has been known for over 50 years – and perhaps much longer, earlier records being a bit vague. This is a strangely rare plant on the Trotternish Ridge. There was a good patch of *Saussurea alpina* (Alpine Saw-wort) on the Quirang. This plant has been recorded on the Quirang from 1868 to 1973, the latter occasion probably being from the same site as today – though no grid reference is available for that record. *S. alpina* was also recorded this year from the northern foothills of the Trotternish Ridge and from Healabhal Mhor (Macleod's Table North), useful records as it is not frequent on Skye away from the Cuillins.

Coir' an t-Seasgaich to the south of Sgùrr a Mhadaidh Ruaidh is the site of long-term vegetation monitoring to assess effects of grazing and erosion. However, actual plant records that had made their way into the BSBI database were nil. It turned out to contain many of the plants one might expect from knowing the Ridge to the north and the south such as *Koenigia islandica* (Iceland-purslane), *Poa alpina* (Alpine Meadow-grass), *Poa glauca* (Glaucous Meadow-grass), *Saxifraga nivalis* (Alpine Saxifrage) and *Arabidopsis petraea* (Northern Rock-cress), *Draba incana* (Hoary Whitlowgrass), *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) and *Minuartia sedoides* (Cyphel).

The small part of the 10 km square NG82 on Skye was recorded for the first time and contained *Juniperus communis subsp. communis* (Common Juniper) which is anything but common here, unlike *Juniperus communis subsp. nana* (Dwarf Juniper).

Fladaigh Chuain

Fladaigh Chuain and associated islands lie to the north of Skye were visited in July resulting in a list of over 90 vascular plants including *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage), *Asplenium marinum* (Sea Spleenwort) and *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue), plus a dozen specimens of *Dactylorhiza purpurella* (Northern Marsh-orchid) in one spot.

Profuse thanks are due to all, too many to mention individually, who have contributed to the above records and many more. By the time all records are in there will be over 14,000 records for VC104 in 2014.

January to June 2014

The Skye Botany Group met only once owing to time pressures on the leader, but had a successful day in NG31 leading to greatly improved coverage there.

A talk on the Plants of Sleat led to considerable interest and feedback, following which a significant proportion of recording during the first half of the year was devoted to that area of Skye. Many tetrads with no previous records were visited during the first half of the year.

Skye

By far the most important find so far this year was of *Saxifraga cespitosa* (Tufted Saxifrage) on the Trotternish Ridge by Gordon Rothero. This species was not previously recorded from any Scottish island and has a very restricted number of sites on the Scottish mainland, the nearest being on *Liathach* at Torridon about 45 km due east of the new site.

A different sort of new vice-county record was provided from the gravel surrounding the Edinbane Wind Farm turbines - *Senecio inaequidens* (Narrow-leaved Ragwort), a species from Southern Africa that is now found across Europe. It was first found in Europe in Fife in 1834 but this is a first for northwest Scotland. It will be interesting to see whether it manages to cross the surrounding moorland and appear elsewhere on Skye.

Different again, being garden escapes, there were first vice-county records for *Dicentra formosa* (Bleeding-heart) looking well-naturalised, and *Sempervivum tectorum* (House-leek). A second vice-county record was made for *Saxifraga x arendsii* (Garden Mossy Saxifrage).

It turns out that the *Peltaria alliacea* (Garlic Cress) at the top of the shore at Rubha Phòile was planted about 25 years ago – though it now reproduces by seed.

Linaria vulgaris (Common Toadflax) was spotted in a garden in Portree and it is still in the Raasay garden where it appeared mysteriously a couple of years ago. It has not been recorded outside a garden in the vice-county – yet.

Epipactis atrorubens (Dark-red Helleborine) and *Paris quadrifolia* (Herb-Paris) were rediscovered in the Coille Thogabhaig SSSI after a gap of at least 45 years.

A single plant of *Cakile maritima* (Sea Rocket) at Harlosh made only the fourth site for Skye, though it is more common on the Small Isles.

At the north end of the Trotternish Ridge *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens) was re-found having previously been recorded in 1968 and 1992. Further south on the Ridge the *Cerastium nigrescens* (Arctic Mouse-ear) re-found last year was seen in flower and *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail) was found with fertile fronds, which is unusual in these parts.

Another attempt to re-find *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) on Skye failed. The only recent records in the vice-county are from Sanday (Canna).

Rubus latifolius infected by the smut *Hapalospheria deformans*, giving it large flowers, was recorded in a couple of places on Skye and George Ballantyne suggests that this may be the source of old records for *Rubus caesius* (Dewberry).

A second Skye example of *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* x *incarnata* was found at Kilbride, at the opposite end of Skye from the first in 2008.

It was possible to confirm *Empetrum nigrum* subsp. *hermaphroditum* (Mountain Crowberry) from the Cuillins as plants were found with fruits. Previous records on Skye had only been at the 10 km square level.

Records for *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder's-tongue) on Skye are increasing and one near Earlish, a long way from previously known records, opens up the possibility of other sites around the Skye coast. A number of new sites for the Locally Scarce *Lepidium heterophyllum* (Smith's Pepperwort) were found.

Raasay

Cotoneaster bullatus (Hollyberry Cotoneaster) was recorded for the first time on Raasay at Oskaig where there was also *Cryptogramma crispa* (Parsley Fern) on a wall, unlike all previous records which are from scree or natural rocks.

It turns out that the *Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint) found on Raasay last year used to be grown in a garden at Balachuinn, about 500m from its main site now.

The Small Isles

Calystegia soldanella (Sea Bindweed) is still in the Kilmory dunes on Rum at its only site in the vice-county. *Pseudorchis albida* (Small-white Orchid) was found on Sgaorishal, Rum and in several other places in the vice-county this year.

Soay

A trip to Soay allowed records for this island to be significantly improved. One partial tetrad with zero previous records now boasts 95 taxa and various additions were made to the island list such as *Carex lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge), *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge), *Carex x fulva*, *Juncus bufonius* (Toad Rush) and *Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush).

Unlocalised 1961 Soay records for *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirreltail Fescue) and *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge) were located, the latter in a surprising habitat on a cliff top with *Empetrum nigrum* (Crowberry), *Eriophorum angustifolium* (Common Cottongrass), *Carex nigra* (Common Sedge), etc.

The finding of *Isoetes echinospora* (Spring Quillwort) in Loch Doir' a' Chreamha makes the only recent record in the vice-county apart from those on Rum.

July to December 2013

The newly formed Skye Botany Group held three meetings in July, August and September and made a very useful contribution to recording as well as providing an opportunity for mutual learning.

Various specimens were obtained for the RBGE barcoding project

A Sedge Day was held on Raasay which gave attendees the wherewithal to identify the commonest sedges in the area.

A review of the past ten years' recording in the vice-county was the subject of a talk to the Inverness Botany Group in December.

Skye

First vice-county records were made for *Ononis repens* (Restharrow) and *Mimulus x burnetii* (*M. cupreus* x *guttatus*). *Leymus arenarius* (Lyme-grass) was found in two new locations, a plant not previously recorded on Skye itself (rather than Raasay) since 1988.

Elymus caninus (Bearded Couch) is growing on a roadside in Broadford. This is the first roadside site in the vice-county, others being on rock outcrops. Also by the roadside but near Dunan, there was a monstrous *Plantago maritima* in which the inflorescences have been replaced by whorls of leaves.

What appears to be *Sparganium emersum* (Unbranched Bur-reed) was found in Loch Cleap. This is a plant whose existence in the vice-county has long been a matter of uncertainty as there are some relatively broad-leaved "*S. angustifolium* (Floating Bur-reed)" specimens. Kay Fuhrman in Oldenburg has recently published a paper saying that many northern European populations "share characters which are intermediate between the traits of *Sparganium angustifolium* and the closely related *S. emersum*.... Two hypotheses exist, one assumes two hybridizing species, the other emphasises a single variable taxon. The real relationship seems still not to be understood."

Potamogeton crispus (Curled Pondweed) was re-found in Loch Dubhar-sgoth, the only localised record for this species in the vice-county where it was last recorded in 1983.

Three new sites were found for the Nationally Scarce *Deschampsia setacea* (Bog Hair-grass).

A garden at Earlish was found to contain *Vulpia myuros* (Rat's-tail Fescue) where it may have come from birdseed. The only previous VC104 record was an anonymous one from 1949 in NM48 (Eigg or Muck), though it was recently recorded as an introduction not far from Skye on the mainland. *Viola arvensis* (Field Pansy) was also present. This is one of only two extant sites known in VC 104.

Cerastium nigrescens (Arctic Mouse-ear), was re-found on the Trotternish Ridge where it was last recorded twenty years ago. Its apparent absence has been causing the Trotternish Ridge SSSI to be given an unfavourable report. Indeed the 2009 Site Condition Monitoring team concluded "The habitat at this location is unlikely to support this species and in no way appears to have been modified. The SCM team at 2004 also did not find this species and it is therefore concluded that this is an erroneous record."

Old records for *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) and *Carlina vulgaris* (Carlina Thistle) at Suisnish were re-found readily enough, the latter in large numbers. It was also pleasing to see *Orobancha alba* (Thyme Broomrape) there at a new site as recent records in the south of Skye are very thin.

Samolus valerandi (Brookweed) was seen at the mouth of the Allt nan Leac where it had previously been recorded from 1968 to 1989. This is one of only three localised records in the vice-county, one of which still needs to be re-found.

The provision of samples of *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell) to the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Edinburgh led to the first record for tetraploid plants in the Hebrides. A second population was the expected hexaploid.

Raasay

A good population of *Mentha requienii* (Corsican Mint) was found near Balachuirm though it is not known to be grown anywhere on Raasay. This is a considerable extension to its range; previously the most northerly accepted record on the west coast is the Loch Glashan area of Argyllshire and there is also a slightly more northerly record from near Arbroath.

Juncus foliosus (Leafy Rush) was found for the second time on Raasay, ten years and a few hundred metres from the first. It remains to be found on Skye.

As I have been concentrating on the rest of the vice-county in recent years, Raasay has been a bit neglected so a start has been made on refreshing records that have not been recorded on Raasay since before 2000 at the 10 km square level. There is plenty more of this to do before 2020.

The Small Isles

Òigh-sgeir (in Scots Gaelic, Hyskeir in Norse) lies 10 km southwest of Canna and 14 km west of Rum marking the southern end of the Minch and is composed entirely of columnar basalt.

During a day trip from Elgol 72 plant species were recorded many of which had been recorded in the 1930s but quite a few hadn't – but there again quite a few of the species recorded all that time ago were not seen this time. *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge) and *Lemna minor* (Common Duckweed) were widespread, as were *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush) and *Lycopus europaeus* (Gypsywort). Two plants of *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima* (Sea Beet) added significantly to recent records of this plant in the vice-county which previously amounted to three plants on Canna and one ancient specimen on Muck.

January to June 2013

A number of people are now recording plants on Skye so a Skye Botany Group has been formed to share learning and to record plants on Skye. The first meeting is planned for 11th July.

The Rare Plants Register for VC 104 was launched at a well-attended talk under the auspices of the Skye Members' Centre of the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The talk was repeated a few weeks later for the Southwest Ross Field Club. The RPR is available from the BSBI Website or my webpage where errata are being noted and there are frequently updated distribution maps of all species in the RPR.

A leaf specimen of *Orobanche alba* (Thyme Broomrape) was obtained for the RBGE barcoding project during a botanical walk at Talisker Bay run for SWT.

Skye

A colony of *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides subsp. traunsteinerioides* (Narrow-leaved Marsh-orchid) near Strollamus is the first record for the vice-county. We do, of course, have *subsp. francis-drucei* (previously called *D. lapponica* (Lapland Marsh-orchid)). Nearby was an unusual form of *Erica tetralix* known as *E. tetralix f. fissa* in which the corolla is not urn-shaped but irregularly split into segments.

A fairly small patch of *Ammophila arenaria* (Marram) was found in Sleat. This was highly unexpected. Marram is long known from the dunes at Glen Brittle but the only other Skye records are old, anonymous, unlocalised 10 km square records from the far north of Skye and had been thought to be probable errors.

Vicia hirsuta (Hairy Tare) was noted on the Talisker Bay cliffs in a natural environment – all other recent records have been on roadsides - and two new sites have been found for *Lepidium heterophyllum* (Smith's Pepperwort), one in a new 10 km square.

A large colony of *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail) with some fertile shoots was noted near Greshornish. Fertile fronds are not often seen.

The first vice-county record of *Lamium album* (White Dead-nettle) since 1987 and the first for *Rubus lacianatus* (Cut-leaf Bramble or Parsley-leaved Blackberry) since 1970 were recorded at Ullinish. Old sites for *Lycopodiella inundata* (Marsh Clubmoss) near Lochan Dubha, one of only two known extant sites on Skye, *Saxifraga oppositifolia* (Purple Saxifrage) and *Glechoma hederacea* (Ground-ivy) have been re-found.

At the RPR launch two hay meadow surveys were mentioned, the first in 1985 and a follow-up in 2003. These, particularly the first, led to some useful additional records for the next edition of the RPR.

Lysichiton americanus (American Skunk-cabbage) was found near Kyleakin, a first for the vice-county; there is now some debate as to whether to attempt to eradicate it.

The Herbarium at Home project has thrown up a specimen of *Carex saxatilis* (Russet Sedge) from 1872 labelled Skye and from the image it appears to be that species.

Raasay

The British Bryological Society Meeting held half of its Summer Meeting on Raasay and they started with a talk on the Flora of Raasay. In return they are providing some useful vascular plant records.

Vicia sativa subsp. nigra (Narrow-leaved Vetch) was found near the new ferry terminal, the third record for Raasay. It is close to a 1930s record but seems likely to have been introduced with soil during ferry terminal construction. Alternatively, it could have come from long-dormant seed disturbed during these operations.

The Small Isles

Sean Morris found a first vice-county record on Rum: *Allium triquetrum* (Three-cornered Garlic) which has escaped from the White House garden.

Ascribs

The Ascrib Islands are in Loch Snizort off the north-west coast of Skye. A day's expedition allowed the confirmation of *Vicia sativa subsp. nigra* (Narrow-leaved Vetch) from what appears to be an entirely natural habitat.

Ligusticum scoticum (Scots Lovage) was common and *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) pretty frequent throughout the islands. *Populus tremula* (Aspen) was found on South Ascrib as was *Carex extensa* (Long-bracted Sedge), though the latter was also on Eilean Garave, where *Salicornia* (Glasswort) was also spotted.

The first ever plant records were made for Eilean Iosal and Eilean Creagach, the two very different islands at the north-west end of the group, the latter being the only place where *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear) was recorded.

July to December 2012

This year's Threatened Plants Project target species in VC104 was *Alchemilla wichurae* (Rock Lady's-mantle) which was duly recorded from the Storr.

Skye

Christopher Fraser Jenkins had another look at one of his 1988 collections from Struan in the herbarium at RBGE and seems quite sure that it is *Cystopteris diaphana* (Greenish or Diaphanous Bladder-fern) which is new to Scotland.

Two specimens collected during the 2011 BSBI Field Meeting on Skye have been confirmed as the first vice-county records for *Equisetum x mildeanum* (*E. pratense* x *E. sylvaticum*).

Equisetum x dycei (*E. fluviatile* x *E. palustre*) from Lochan Uisge was confirmed by Chris Page. It seems likely to be more widespread than records suggest.

A single plant of *Heracleum mantegazzianum* (Giant Hogweed) appeared in Portree, the first record in the vice-county. It was destroyed pretty comprehensively but the area will be under surveillance for some time.

Gwyn Jones reported *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold) in an oat crop at Stenscholl and described a population of *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway), originally spotted about a decade ago at Carbstmore. I found it to be doing well, as is the well-known population at Sligachan.

The fine flora of the Trotternish Ridge got a fair amount of attention, amongst which the *Sibbaldia procumbens* (*Sibbaldia*) seemed more common than records might have suggested.

All specimens I have taken of *Utricularia intermedia* agg. in the vice-county in recent years have been determined as *U. stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort), but there are quite a lot of fairly recent records for *U. ochroleuca* (Pale Bladderwort) (as well as *U. stygia*) in the rest of NW Scotland, so this remains a possibility.

Scrophularia auriculata (Water Figwort) was found near Kyleakin. This plant has a stronghold in the Dunvegan area but otherwise the only other recent records are from a garden on Raasay and emerging from imported roadside soil near Loch Cill Chriosd.

Steve Terry reported *Alliaria petiolata* (Garlic Mustard) from Lower Breakish. There is some around the Corry Lodge area of Broadford and a few old records from the Dunvegan and Uig areas, but that is it for the vice-county - except for some growing in a garden on Raasay.

A number of interesting records were made from a disused quarry near Dunvegan which has clearly been used to dispose of material from a not-too-distant estate. These include first vice-county records for the purple form of *Euphorbia dulcis* (Sweet Spurge) "Chameleon", *Rubus cockburnianus* (White-stemmed Bramble), and (almost) *Saxifraga x polita* (*S. hirsuta* x *spathularis*, False Londonpride) for which there is an anonymous 1950 record from the same 10km square. *Carex pendula* (Pendulous

Sedge) is present, only known previously on Skye from Dunvegan Castle grounds. Other locally uncommon escapes present include *Crocasmia paniculata* (Aunt-Eliza), *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove), *Gunnera tinctoria* (Giant-rhubarb) and *Tellima grandiflora* (Fringecups).

The Clan Donald Centre at Armadale still has a problem in its ponds with *Crassula helmsii* (New Zealand Pygmyweed), first recorded it there in 1996.

Escallonia rubra var. *macrantha* (Escallonia) was found in a burn gorge well away from habitation or a road, which is the first record for Skye, though it will probably have escaped elsewhere.

Raasay

The soil from ground cleared for a house extension in Clachan produced *Persicaria lapathifolia* (Pale Persicaria), a first for Raasay, and a single plant of *Atriplex patula* (Common Orache) which made only the second reliable record for Raasay, the previous one being unlocalised in the south of Raasay in 1957. This area is the only Raasay site for *Potentilla reptans* (Creeping Cinquefoil) and *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort) (both first recorded in 1993) and both are still present.

A couple of plants of *Epilobium hirsutum* (Great Willowherb) appeared near the ferry terminal, another first for Raasay, but disappeared before they set seed.

A mature specimen of *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress) has been confirmed from Raasay House grounds, another Raasay first.

Several plants of *Linaria vulgaris* (Common Toadflax) appeared in a West Suisnish garden but have not been formally recorded at this stage.

The Small Isles

A *Hieracium* collected on Canna by Michael Usher has been determined as *H. uistense* (Island Hawkweed), a first for Canna. There is also *Salvia pratensis* (Meadow Clary) growing on Sanday which must be a garden escape or the result of wild flower seed being scattered or some similar mode of introduction.

Armed with a list of plants not seen since before the year 2000 Michael knocked off nearly twenty of them including *Cakile maritima* (Sea Rocket) which was last recorded on Canna in 1953.

It looks as though the *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort) has really gone from An t-Oban (Sanday) as it fills in with reeds, which is a shame as that was the only confirmed site in the vice-county. I couldn't find any in 2009 and Michael has not found any this year.

Sarah Longrigg has been surveying *Utricularia* on Eigg over the past three years. She has found *U. minor* (Lesser Bladderwort) and *U. stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort) in numerous locations and there is the possibility of a further species.

January to June 2012

The first stage of a Rare Plants Register for the vice-county – the selection of species to be included - has been completed.

A list of axiophytes for VC 104 has been produced. Axiophytes are “‘worthy plants’ – the species that arouse interest and praise from botanists when they are seen. They are indicators of habitat that is considered important for conservation”.

All available VC104 records have been put through the NBN record validation tool which highlighted a number apparently in the sea, for which the grid references have now been amended. This also showed up some errors in vice-county assignment in the new BSBI Distributional Database, which have yet to be corrected.

This year’s Threatened Plants Project target species in VC104 is *Alchemilla wichurae* (Rock Lady’s-mantle) which will be dealt with in July. Specimens of *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage) were collected from Skye and Raasay for a project at the University of Leicester.

Skye

Much time has been spent in tetrads with no previous records, which has resulted in many records of relatively uncommon plants but few of rare ones. New sites have been found for species like *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Cerastium diffusum* (Sea Mouse-ear), *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid) and *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage). However, this activity did result in the first Skye record for *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder’s-tongue). A putative *Equisetum x dycei* (E. fluviatile x palustre) received partial confirmation but will be sent for further examination. An unusual-looking *Callitriche* (Water-starwort) has also been sent for expert determination.

Steve Terry has been making many helpful new records on Skye including hybrid orchids and several new sites for aliens such as *Geranium x oxonianum* (Druce's Crane's-bill) and *Gaultheria mucronata* (Prickly Heath).

I went with Steve plus Joanna & Julian Walmisley to Suardal where we checked the *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil) and *Carex rupestris* (Rock Sedge) and also found the former in two further sites recorded by Ben Averis in 1999.

Attempts were made to find *Ranunculus fluitans* (River Water-crowfoot) and *Andromeda polifolia* (Bog-rosemary) at sites that had been revealed by access to the BSBI Distributional Database, but these were not successful. The former at least seems likely to have been an error.

The half-year ended with a Scottish Wildlife Trust walk in the extraordinary landscape of Fairy Glen during which we saw *Draba incana* (Rock Whitlowgrass), *Arabis hirsuta* (Hairy Rock-cress) and *Saxifraga hypnoides* (Mossy Saxifrage).

Raasay

Epilobium hirsutum (Great Willowherb) was recorded for the first time on Raasay, near the ferry. Two new garden escapes/throw-outs were also spotted: *Centaurea montana* (Perennial Cornflower) and *Symphoricarpos x chenaultii* (Pink Snowberry or Hybrid Coralberry).

The Small Isles

Claudia Ferguson-Smyth sent me records of dandelions on Rum from May 2011, all determined by *Taraxacum* expert John Richards. The list includes four species that are new to the vice-county. The Skye & Lochalsh SWT group visited Mull on a day trip and brought back a useful list of records.

June to December 2011

Threatened Plants Project activity in the second half of the year concerned *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain). Good populations were recorded at known sites including about 1000 plants in Loch a' Ghlinne. All plants appear to be subspecies *ranunculoides* but the description of the population structure for this subspecies as "scattered, detached individuals" doesn't do justice to the large numbers in close proximity seen in Loch a' Ghlinne.

At one site selected by the TPP, Loch Meàhdannach, *Baldellia* had only been recorded once, in 1989 by the NCC Loch Survey and it was not found this year.

Specimens of *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage) from Raasay and *Eriocaulon aquaticum* (Pipewort) from Skye were provided for the plant bar-coding project.

Skye

Seventeen folk took part in part or all of the three-day Field Meeting based in Dunvegan in July. The weather was kind so we completed the task of covering tetrads in the 10km square NG15 and managed some in NG14 as well.

Highlights included lots of *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort) and *Orobancha alba* (Thyme Broomrape) plus *Anagallis tenella* (Bog Pimpernel), *Carlina vulgaris* (Carlina Thistle), *Draba incana* (Hoary Whitlowgrass), *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid), *Ribes spicatum* (Downy Currant), *Saxifraga oppositifolia* (Purple Saxifrage), *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch), and *Vulpia bromoides* (Squirreltail Fescue).

Other interesting finds included *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort) and *Potentilla reptans* (Creeping Cinquefoil), both common plants in other parts of the British Isles, but rare here.

A return visit to Dunvegan Head in September yielded *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avenas) an old record that we had not re-found during the field meeting.

Nitella translucens (Translucent Stonewort) was found by Richard Lansdown on Skye. Previously known on Raasay (2002) and Soay (2010), this is only the third record for the vice-county and the first for mainland Skye.

Gentianella amarella subsp. *amarella* (Autumn Gentian) was re-found at Torrin and Jackie Parry sent details of *Mycelis muralis* (Wall Lettuce) at Luib. Known in the Broadford area for at least 50 years, other records on Skye are very few and far between.

Terry Swainbank recorded *X Dactylodenia vollmannii* (*Gymnadenia borealis* x *Dactylorhiza incarnata*) from Ard Dorcha again this year and James Merryweather found *Dactylorhiza x venusta* (*D. fuchsii* x *D. purpurella*) at Ashaig. *Dactylorhiza x formosa* (*D. maculata* x *purpurella*) often causes astonishment as it can be very tall. Morag Henriksen reported a specimen from Edinbane and Alison MacLennan one from Roag.

In Sleat, I found an excellent bog with *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) – only the second Skye record since 1990 – and *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge), a first record for Skye, though known on Raasay, Rona and Soay. The bog also contained *Carex limosa* (Bog-sedge) and *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort).

Three hybrid willows sent to Desmond Meikle and Jeanne Webb were determined as:

Salix caprea x *myrsinifolia* = *S. x latifolia* from Glen Drynoch, the second record for VC104.

Salix cinerea x *myrsinifolia* = *S. x strepida* from Glen Ose, a first record for VC104.

Probably a very rare hybrid indeed, *Salix aurita* x *herbacea* x *repens* = *S. x grahamii* from the Loch Meàhdannach area but catkins are needed for final confirmation.

Soay

Sarah Longrigg re-found a previous record for *Cladium mariscus* (Great Fen-sedge) at Lochan na Teanga Riabhaich. *Cladium* is well known from Loch Doire an Lochain on Soay but Lochan na Teanga Riabhaich is less accessible and had not been checked recently.

She also found *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort) which had not been recorded on Soay since before 2000 and *Drosera x obovata* (*Drosera rotundifolia* x *anglica*), a first for Soay.

Raasay

Further strangers to these parts emerged from grass seed near the new ferry terminal: *Parentucellia viscosa* (Yellow Bartsia) and *Anthemis cotula* (Stinking Chamomile).

The unusual form of *Carex x fulva* mentioned in the First Half report turns out to be just that. Some of the *C. hostiana* nearby shows the same conical spikes.

Muck

Michael Usher found several plants on Muck that had not been recorded since before 2000 including *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (Early Marsh-orchid), *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Narrow Buckler-Fern), *Isolepis setacea* (Bristle Club-rush), *Myosotis scorpioides* (Water Forget-me-not), *Pinguicula lusitanica* (Pale Butterwort) and *Polypodium interjectum* (Intermediate Polypody).

He also found *Atriplex praecox* (Early Orache), *Festuca ovina* subsp. *ophiolicola* (Sheep's-fescue) and *Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *raii* (Ray's Knotgrass) and added two species to the island list I provided: *Malva moschata* (Musk-mallow) growing associated with the hotel gardens and more pleasingly, the native *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) – though I have since located an anonymous record for the northwest of Muck for the latter.

Eigg

Sarah Longrigg returned to Eigg in September and provided some useful late-season records including many new sites for *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian).

January to June 2011

This year's Threatened Plants Project target species in VC104 are *Pseudorchis albida* (Small-white Orchid) and *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain). The former has been covered by Sarah Longrigg on Eigg, Bill and Deirdre Peppé and Nick Hodgetts on Skye as well as myself, giving a mixed bag of results. *Baldellia* will be dealt with in July.

Skye

Much time has been spent in under-recorded tetrads, which has resulted in many records of relatively uncommon plants but few of rare ones. New sites have been found for locally rare species like *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge), *Lemna minor* (Common Duckweed) and *Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed).

Much more *Carex aquatilis* (Water-sedge) has been found some miles upstream from the only previously known site in the River Snizort.

The first vice-county record was made for *Lamium maculatum* (Spotted Dead-nettle).

I went with Kaarin Walls and Kev Parker to Bearreraig Bay where five years ago in September I found a couple of plants of *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine) with *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine) amongst *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens). Since *Cephalanthera* flowers in May, I felt lucky to find them at all – they were fruiting well. This year we found fourteen, many of which had flowered. However, the very wet and windy weather throughout most of May meant that there will be no fruits this year.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to re-find *Alisma lanceolatum* (Narrow-Leaved Water-plantain) at the only site ever recorded in the vice-county, where it was last recorded in 1978.

Raasay

The area around the new ferry terminal that was seeded after landscaping has been a source of new records including *Sisymbrium altissimum* (Tall Rocket), *Papaver rhoeas* (Common Poppy), *Lolium multiflorum* (Italian Rye-grass) and more that were found just into July and so will appear in the next half-year report.

The half-year ended with a Scottish Wildlife Trust walk on Raasay during which an unusual *Carex* hybrid was spotted. It may be an unusual form of the common *C. x fulva* but further study is in progress.

The Small Isles

Darrell Watts visited Canna and found *Ajuga pyramidalis*, the first record there for 10 years.

Sarah and Fred Longrigg visited Eigg in May-June and were able to check two known sites for *Pseudorchis* which were both doing well. They also found a new site on Eigg for *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort) and one on Muck during a brief visit.

July to December 2010

This year's Threatened Plant Project work was completed. As well as *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly Fern) on Raasay and Skye, *Glebionis segetum* was looked for in several locations, but it had only ever been a casual in these places and was not re-found. (There is a thriving population on Muck.) A form was completed for the requested *Sibbaldia* site on Skye based on a visit made in 2009.

Skye

Dactylorhiza x carnea, the hybrid between *D. incarnata* (Early Marsh-orchid) and *D. maculata* (Heath Spotted-orchid) was confirmed from Ard Dorch. This is uncommon, with only a handful of 10 km squares showing post-2000 records on [the current BSBI Map](#). In VC104 the only previous records are from Raasay in the 1930s and Rum in 1974.

Prenanthes purpurea (Purple Lettuce) was recorded near the walled garden in Dunvegan Castle grounds some years ago. It is still there, as is the previously unrecorded *Carex pendula* (Pendulous Sedge). Both species grow inside the walled garden and the sedge also grows in various places around the grounds.

The Gun Court of the castle is the only known site in the vice-county for *Centranthus ruber* (Red Valerian) and *Parietaria judaica* (Pellitory-of-the-Wall) and both were still present.

New sites for *Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed) are being found each year, suggesting that this plant that has either been overlooked in the past or is expanding its range on Skye.

Sarah and Fred Longrigg looked at several bladderworts from the *Utricularia intermedia* aggregate and from microscopic examination of the quadrifid hairs in the bladders have concluded that they are all *U. stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort).

A trip to Loch Ravag was made easier by the new road put in for the nearby wind-farm and resulted in a new site for *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge), the first record for Skye since 1970.

At Uig there were three plants of *Torilis japonica* (Upright Hedge-parsley) near an old site – a very local plant in NW Scotland - and some locally unusual weedy things: *Sonchus oleraceus* (Smooth Sow-thistle) and *Chenopodium album* (Fat-hen). There was also a black or hybrid black poplar which needs revisiting.

Late in the season various known sites were checked for *Subularia aquatica* (Awlwort). These were mostly successful but searches for *Elatine hexandra* (Six-stamened Waterwort) less so. A further late season campaign was undertaken to check old records for *Mercurialis perennis* (Dog's Mercury), which is very local in the vice-county. All sites reached were still extant.

James Merryweather reported *Ophioglossum vulgatum* (Adder's-tongue) still looking good on Skye in mid-October – the latest record I have for it.

Raasay

Site Condition Monitoring of the Raasay SSSI took several days and had some pleasing outcomes. Two new sites were found for *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine), one with 44 plants. Additional specimens of *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) were located at one of the known sites. At another site there was a young sapling – the first time that I have seen evidence that the seeds ever germinate on Raasay.

A fern was found adjacent to specimens of *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly-fern) and *P. aculeatum* (Hard Shield-fern) that seemed satisfyingly intermediate, suggesting the hybrid *P. x illyricum*. An initial response to a specimen sent to Chris Page was positive but spores are needed for confirmation and no spores were formed this year. This is pretty rare with the [current BSBI map](#) showing only one record since 2000.

Abies procera (Noble Fir) was found naturalised on the eastern cliffs well away from the area where it was introduced many years ago.

A garden throw-out was identified as *Crocasmia* 'Lucifer' (*C. paniculata* x *C. masoniorum*), a fine-looking giant compared with the standard Montbretia, and *Berberis darwinii* (Darwin's Barberry) has been added to the Raasay list as a garden escape.

Rona

An expedition from RBGE visited Rona and added *Dryopteris borreieri* and *Vicia sativa* (Common Vetch) to the Rona list. The latter was probably introduced with animal feed

Ascribs

The same expedition visited these islands off the north of Skye where the last records were from 1979. It is excellent to have recent records from somewhere that is not easy to reach. They reported the locally rare casual, *Vicia sativa* (Common Vetch) from South Ascrib and *Rumex longifolius* (Northern Dock) from all three 1km squares visited on the Ascribs. This latter is frequent enough in the vice-county but is usually found near houses or sheep fanks

Soay

Sarah Longrigg went to Soay and made localised records for some nice plants that previously were only recorded as "Soay" and the 10km square given as the grid reference. These include *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge), *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) and *Neottia cordata* (Lesser Twayblade). She also produced first records for Soay for *Asplenium scolopendrium* (Hart's-tongue Fern), *Epilobium brunnescens* (New Zealand Willowherb) and *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress).

Eigg

Sarah also looked at some *Utricularia* specimens on Eigg and found *U. stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort) there too.

January to June 2010

[A Flora of Raasay and Rona](#) has now (4 July 2010) attracted over 1,100 different visitors since its publication in Spring 2009. [My botanical blog](#) has had over 4,000 hits since it started in March 2009 and continues to be a source of useful records and contacts.

Work for the 2010 Threatened Plants Project was started with a look at *Polystichum lonchitis* (Holly-fern) on Raasay. The 2010 cycle of Site Condition Monitoring for SNH of the Raasay SSSI has also started. Specimens of *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* were collected under licence from large populations on Skye and Raasay for micropropagation at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Skye

A hybrid orchid from Ard Dorch has been confirmed as *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant-orchid) x *Dactylorhiza incarnata* (Early Marsh-orchid). This is apparently only the second confirmed record for the British Isles and new to Scotland. The *D. incarnata* in the vicinity is the pinkish form usually recorded as subsp. *incarnata* but actually thought to be a pale form of subsp. *pulchella*.

Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. *argentatum* (Garden Yellow-archangel) is established at the top of the shore near Sconser. This is only the second record in the vice-county, the first being almost exactly three years previously at Broadford.

Specimens of a woody variant of *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress) were collected for molecular work in Belgium.

A currant in a limestone grike that I have known for several years never gets big enough to flower but it is very hairy and I have decided that it is *Ribes spicatum* (Downy Currant) even though it is a few miles from the nearest known sites.

I found *Hypericum hirsutum* (Hairy St John's-wort) in Portree, a first record for the vice-county. This has to go down as an introduction: it is in the same ground as the *Linaria repens* (Pale Toadflax) that has been recorded there for nearly fifty years, *Euphorbia dulcis* (Sweet Spurge) and various planted shrubs. *Berula erecta* (Lesser Water-parsnip) and *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge), both rare on Skye, were found in new 10km squares making the total number of 10km squares on Skye now four and five respectively.

Raasay

The *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Pugsley's Marsh-orchid) flowered well this year with nearly 200 flowering spikes seen in mid-June.

A fern is under investigation as the hybrid *Polystichum x illyricum*. It is growing with both potential parents, *P. lonchitis* (Holly-fern) and *P. aculeatum* (Hard Shield-fern) and looks suitably intermediate.

A couple of conifers in Raasay House grounds need further work, but may be *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress) and *Thuja occidentalis* (Northern White-cedar). *Abies alba* (European Silver-fir) was added to the Raasay list.

A whole hedge of *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn, Sloe) was spotted adjacent to the new ferry terminal site, which had been hidden from view previously. The only plant I had found before was in Raasay House grounds and had been lost during renovation work.

Muck

A couch grass collected on Muck in 2009 was determined as *Elytrigia x laxa*, the hybrid between *E. repens* (Common Couch) and *E. juncea* (Sand Couch).

Canna

Mertensia maritima (Oysterplant) was again reported on Sanday (Canna) by Robert and Anne Arnold.

Rum

A few hours on Rum in May as part of a local SWT expedition led to new 10km square records for *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge), *Cerastium glomeratum* (Sticky Mouse-ear) and *Stellaria graminea* (Lesser Stitchwort) plus various introductions, and a useful increase in records in a tetrad that turned out to have been less well recorded than most.

July to December 2009

[A Flora of Raasay and Rona](#) has attracted nearly 600 different visitors since its publication in the Spring. [My botanical blog](#) has had over 2,100 hits since it started in March and has led to several excellent records from people with whom I had not previously been in contact.

Work for the 2009 Threatened Plants Project was completed with help from Kevin Walker on Rum.

Skye

All known sites in the vice-county for *Equisetum x trachyodon* (Mackay's Horsetail (*E. hyemale* x *variegatum*)) have now been checked and found to be doing well.

The only site for *Carum verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway) in the whole of vice-county 104 is near Sligachan and was checked this year and found to be flourishing.

Martin Perry reported *Campanula rotundifolia* (Harebell), which is rare on Skye, from Loch Coruisk. Given that this plant is common on Eigg and Muck, it seems possible that south-western Skye might yield more records, especially if visited in July and August when flowers make it more obvious.

A day in the Kyleakin Hills to re-find earlier records of *Arctostaphylos alpinus* (Alpine Bearberry), *Loiseleuria procumbens* (Trailing Azalea) and *Sibbaldia procumbens* (Sibbaldia or Least Cinquefoil) was successful on all counts. Other pleasures included *Hieracium holosericeum* (a mountain hawkweed) in large numbers and some *Lycopodium clavatum* (Stag's-horn Clubmoss) with curiously curly cones:



It was also good to find *Epilobium anagallidifolium* (Alpine Willowherb) from a 10km square where it had never been recorded before. It is not uncommon in northern Skye but the last record in the Kyleakin Hills was from Ben Aslak in 1973.

The only extant site on Skye for *Carex hirta* (Hairy Sedge) is at Armadale. It was looking fine this year. I found a second site with a few plants a few years ago but it seems to have gone – perhaps washed into the sea.

Various newly available Herbarium United records such as *Vaccinium uliginosum* (Bog Bilberry) from a mountain near Luib looked interesting. This was catalogued as Luib, Skye but this species has never been recorded in VC104. However, Luib, Stirling in NN42 is in the centre of the known distribution for this species and this and several other specimens appear to belong there.

Sadly, a putative *Poa flexuosa* (Wavy Hair-grass) specimen from the Trotternish Ridge, which would have been new to the vice-county, was determined as *P. glauca* (Glaucous Meadow-grass) which is not that uncommon locally.

Raasay

Solidago canadensis (Canadian Goldenrod), which is new to Raasay, was noted as a garden throw-out in Inverarish.

The specimen of *Araucaria araucana* (Monkey-puzzle) by the Raasay sawmill developed a good crop of cones this year. There are some older cones as well as the fresh ones so it must have fruited, if that is the right term, last year as well. It is clearly a female and the cones are all on the southwest-facing side of the tree.

An afternoon with the pupils of Raasay Primary School went well with much interest in the plants taken in and the construction of simple keys to identify different thistles and yellow-flowered plants. Next time we will go on a field trip!

Eigg

Heather McHaffie spotted some proliferative *Cynosurus cristatus* (Crested Dog's-tail) on Eigg in September. According to the new BSBI Grasses Handbook such specimens are common late in the season.

Canna

Robert and Anne Arnold tell me that they have seen *Mertensia maritima* (Oysterplant) on Sanday (Canna) at intervals from 1995 to 2009. These include the first VC records post-1999.

Muck

The following native plants found during an August visit are probably new to Muck. In a couple of cases it is hard to be sure as there are previous records for NM48 which covers most of Eigg and a part of Muck. However, they are not shown as present on Muck in “The Botanist in Skye and Adjacent Islands”:

<i>Agrostis vinealis</i>	Brown Bent
<i>Carex lasiocarpa</i>	Slender Sedge
<i>Carex x fulva</i>	<i>C. hostiana x viridula</i>
<i>Juncus ambiguus</i>	Frog Rush
<i>Polygonum oxyspermum subsp. raii</i>	Ray's Knotgrass
<i>Rosa caesia subsp. glauca</i>	Glaucous Dog-rose
<i>Spergularia media</i>	Greater Sea-spurrey

Rum

Kevin Walker reported new sites for *Gnaphalium sylvaticum* (Heath Cudweed) at Kilmory, *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) at Samhnan Insir, *Rhynchospora fusca* (Brown Beak-sedge) at Loch nan Eala, Kinloch Glen and *Ajuga pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Bugle) in at least two new tetrads.

January to June 2009

A Flora of Raasay and Rona was published on the Web at www.users.waitrose.com/~suisnish/ and an article on its production was written for the August SWT North Newsletter.

This year's Threatened Plants Project requires populations of *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine), *Dactylorhiza viridis* (*Coeloglossum viride*) (Frog Orchid), *Vicia orobus* (Wood Bitter-vetch) and *Gnaphalium sylvaticum* (Heath Cudweed) to be surveyed. The first three are best seen in the first half of the year or early in the second half. I agreed with the organisers not to do *C. longifolia* as I have visited all the sites in the vice-county in the past three years and my time is better spent elsewhere. Limited reports will be constructed based on these earlier visits.

Of the twelve populations I was given as suggested survey sites, 7 were on Rum, 1 on Eigg and 4 on Skye. Kevin Walker agreed to undertake the Rum ones, as this was the only one of the Small Isles that I had no plans to visit this year whereas he had a visit planned. Also, the Eigg site was one I had visited in 2008 and in the absence of a minibus service on Eigg when I was there this year, it was out of reach in the time available. Two of the Skye sites were *C. longifolia*, which leaves two Skye sites for *G. sylvaticum* - best done later in the year.

I have chosen my own sites and visited *D. viridis* sites on Sanday (Canna), Eigg, Raasay and Skye and *V. orobus* sites on Canna and Skye. Some very fine specimens have been found but in some cases I failed to find any plants of the target species. Maybe the best way to continue this project is simply to let the vice-county recorder select the sites to be visited. This will lead to some bias but surely not as much as the current system where 7 out of 12 sites in total, and all 6 *V. orobus* sites selected were on the island of Rum, which accounts for 5% of the land area in VC 104 – and it does not have a monopoly of any of these species.

Skye

Perhaps the best record so far this year is James Merryweather's *Lycopodium annotinum* on Skye. Whilst quite plentiful on Scalpay, the only previous records for Skye were old and dubious – they were not accepted for Atlas 2000.

The possible *Equisetum x mildeanum* (*E. pratense* (Shady Horsetail) x *E. sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail)) from Portree mentioned in the H2 2008 report has not been confirmed.

I forgot to say in the H2 2008 report that *Veronica agrestis* (Green Field-speedwell) was spotted as a weed in a Breakish garden, the first VC record for 12 years.

The H1 2008 report shows *Senecio x ostenfeldii* as a new vice-county record. I have since learned of three 1985 records on Skye.

Also from 2008, the willow hybrid *Salix x tetrapla* (*S. myrsinifolia* x *phylicifolia*) at Breakish in a planted row and as a single tree near the shore at Broadford, is new to vice-county 104.

Two sites for *Cirsium x wankelii* (*C. heterophyllum* (Melancholy Thistle) x *C. palustre* (Marsh Thistle)) were found this year, though expert confirmation has yet to be sought.

The *Peltaria* at Armadale has finally been determined definitively as *P. alliacea* (Garlic Cress). A short note has been prepared for BSBI News as this appears to be a first occurrence of it in the wild in the British Isles. Specimens have been deposited at the herbarium at RBGE.

As a result of publishing my Flora of Raasay and Rona, Philip Samsun got in touch to send me a record of *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) from the same tetrad on Skye as one recorded in 1987. I had tried to find it in 2006 but failed. This year, I went to look for it in early June armed with Philip's grid reference and found twelve flowering spikes plus some old fruiting spikes.

Convolvulus arvensis (Field Bindweed) and *Carlina vulgaris* (Carlina Thistle) were both spotted near Glendale. The former is very rare in the vice-county but had been recorded previously from this location. There are more records for *Carlina* but this is the first post-Atlas 2000 record on Skye. (Many records have been made on Eigg and Rum this decade.)

A visit to Wiay off the west coast of Skye with Bill and Deirdre Peppe confirmed the presence of cranberry, one of only two locations recorded in VC104. It has minutely pubescent pedicels making it clear that the species is *Vaccinium oxycoccos* (Cranberry) rather than *V. microcarpum* (Small Cranberry). There has been some confusion in the past over which species was present.

Eigg

Pat Cottis spotted *Cardamine pratensis flore pleno* the double-flowered form of Lady's-smock during an SWT visit – this is new to Eigg.

Hypericum perforatum (Perforate St John's-wort) was added to the Eigg list during the same visit as a weed in a vegetable garden. However, it had all been weeded out when I returned six weeks later.

The putative *Ajuga x pseudopyramidalis* (*A. pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Bugle) x *A. reptans* (Bugle) found in 2008 has been confirmed.

The odd-looking *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) or *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge) found in 2008 is now confirmed as *C. paniculata*. This is a first record for Eigg, though it is plentiful just across the water on the north side of Muck.

The *Epilobium x vicinum* (*E. obscurum* (Short-fruited Willowherb) x *E. ciliatum* (American Willowherb)) recorded in 2008 turns out not to be a first record for the vice-county as I have now been sent records for several places in Sleat (Skye) in 2006.

Canna

A June visit to Canna produced records for *Anchusa arvensis* (Bugloss), *Beta vulgaris subsp. maritima* (Sea Beet), *Erodium cicutarium* (Common Stork's-bill), *Hypericum elodes* (Marsh St John's-wort), *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) and *Scilla verna* (Spring Squill), all rare or absent elsewhere in the vice-county. I failed to find *Apium inundatum* (Lesser Marshwort) at its only confirmed site in VC104 – though there are a couple of dubious records from Skye.

A sand dune/machair area on Sanday had all sorts of goodies like *Elytrigia juncea* (Sand Couch), *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge), *Ammophila arenaria* (Marram), *Arenaria serpyllifolia* (Thyme-leaved Sandwort), *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *coccinea* (the red form of Early Marsh-orchid) and *Thalictrum minus* (Lesser Meadow-rue), again all rare or absent elsewhere in the vice-county.

A first Canna record was made for *Epilobium brunnescens* (New Zealand Willowherb),

Raasay

A 2008 hangover: *Astilbe japonica* (False-buck's-beard) as a garden throw-out was new to Raasay.

Rona

Ophioglossum vulgatum (Adder's-tongue) and *Solanum tuberosum* (Potato) were added to the Rona list.

July to December 2008

In addition to some paperwork, the Threatened Plants Project pilot study required populations of *Pyrola media* (Intermediate wintergreen) and *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) to be surveyed. Several were studied on Skye and Raasay, the general conclusion being one of good health, though I failed to re-find one large population of *P. media* on Skye. The availability of a simple DNA-based test at RBGE that allows the determination of non-flowering *Pyrola* plants from a single leaf is a real boon.

Skye

In the way of introductions there were first Skye records for *Symphoricarpos x chenaultii* (Pink Snowberry) and *Cotoneaster dielsianus* (Diel's Cotoneaster).

Roger and Pat Cottis recorded *Cardamine pratensis flore pleno* the double-flowered form of Lady's-smock at Isleornsay.

Possible *Equisetum x mildeanum* (*E. pratense* (Shady Horsetail) x *E. sylvaticum* (Wood Horsetail)) was reported from Portree by Tim Harrison but specimens sent to expert referees have caused some confusion. Further specimens will have to be taken in 2009.

Thanks to Bill and Deirdre Peppé and to Mike Porter, records for *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine) were made in 10km squares where no records had been made since pre-2000.

Eigg

Even though the Eigg visit took place in the first half of 2008, the results are still coming in. Several referees have yet to opine on specimens sent to them, so some potentially exciting items remain unresolved such as putative *Ajuga x pseudopyramidalis* (*A. pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Bugle) x *A. reptans* (Bugle)).

The "*Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge)" mentioned in the first half report is now thought to be an odd form of *Carex arenaria* (Sand Sedge) though further specimens have been requested by the experts.

Epilobium x vicinum (*E. obscurum* (Short-fruited Willowherb) x *E. ciliatum* (American Willowherb)) found with both parents on a forestry track is a first vice-county record.

Alchemilla glomerulans (a Lady's-mantle) is also a first for the vice-county.

January to June 2008

Skye

A first vice-county record was made for *Senecio x ostenfeldii*, the hybrid of *Senecio aquaticus* (Marsh Ragwort) and *S. jacobaea* (Common Ragwort) at Kylerhea.

Also in the Kylerhea area a new site was located for *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Pugsley's Marsh-orchid) (previously *D. lapponica* - Lapland Marsh-orchid) and with it were hybrids with *Dactylorhiza incarnata* subsp. *pulchella* (Early Marsh-orchid) and *Dactylorhiza maculata* (Heath Spotted-orchid).

Neottia nidus-avis (Bird's-nest Orchid) and *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine) were both spotted in flower at Geary again this year by Alan Sillence.

The *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) at Càrn Mór near Elgol, last formerly recorded in 1966 was located, counted and given an eight-figure grid reference. The same day a huge stand of the locally rare *Carex diandra* (Lesser Tussock-sedge) was spotted in a marsh near Elgol along with *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* (Grey Club-rush) which is also rare on Skye and *Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed) which is infrequent.

Raasay

The only addition so far this year has been *Alnus rubra* (Red Alder) several of which were planted at Oskaig some years ago.

Rona

An early visit added *Bromopsis ramosa* (Hairy Brome), *Cytisus scoparius* (Broom) and *Nitella flexilis/opaca* (Smooth Stonewort) to the recent Rona list. There are still some unexpected gaps in the list such as *Juncus squarrosus* (Heath Rush), *Geranium robertianum* (Herb-Robert) and *Orchis mascula* (Early-purple Orchid).

Isay

A visit, twenty-one years after records were last made, led to a number of additions to the Isay list e.g. *Blysmus rufus* (Saltmarsh Flat-sedge), *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) and *Lycopus europaeus* (Gypsywort), but nothing of great rarity.

Eigg

A party of six recently spent a week on Eigg with the records still being sorted out at the time of writing. Noteworthy finds included two plants new to Eigg: *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) and *Gymnadenia borealis x Dactylorhiza maculata*

Whilst on Eigg, Site Condition Monitoring was undertaken in the Cleadale SSSI checking on *Ajuga pyramidalis* (Pyramidal Bugle), *Arenaria norvegica* subsp. *norvegica* (Arctic Sandwort), *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens) and *Orobancha alba* (Thyme Broomrape).

Many previous Eigg records of note were re-found e.g. *Salsola kali* (Prickly Saltwort), *Atriplex laciniata* (Frosted Orache), *Trifolium campestre* (Hop Trefoil) and *Listera ovata* (Common Twayblade).

January to December 2007

A first vice-county record for *Ranunculus omiophyllus* was made on Scalpay by the Pendleburys and Peppés during a SWT trip. (I went in the opposite direction!) Whilst this is a common enough plant further south in western areas of the British Isles, this is pretty much at the northern limit. Two good patches were found.

On the last afternoon of a visit of the Bradford Botany Group, after I had to leave them to their own devices, *Puccinellia distans* (Reflexed Saltmarsh-grass) was ticked off on a recording card at Ardnish (in addition to *P. maritima* - Common Saltmarsh-grass). If this is correct it would also be new to the vice-county. This is not unlikely as there is a fairly recent record from the mainland close by. Confirmation is needed!

Various aliens were also recorded for the first time in the vice-county such as *Cerastium tomentosum* (Snow-in-summer), *Crocsmia paniculata* (Aunt-Eliza) and *Primula x polyantha* cultivar (Cultivated Primrose). A roadside plant photographed by Crawford Godfrey in 1997 was identified as *Lathyrus aureus* (Golden Pea).

A curious finding was of several patches of bright blue *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone) in the woods near McAllister's Tomb, Drinan. As this area has a history of planted species, it seems likely that this too is a planted cultivar.

A first Skye record was made for *Alchemilla conjuncta* (Silver Lady's-mantle). This was previously recorded from Muck, but during a brief visit to Muck in 2007 it could only be found within the confines of a garden. A first record of *Hammarbya paludosa* (Bog Orchid) for Muck was made near Beinn Airein by Nigel Brown, Curator of Treborth Botanic Garden, University of Bangor.

On Raasay, I made the first record for *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup). The two flowering specimens were within a garden and seem likely to have been brought in as seed with seaweed. A second site was found for *Carex otrubae* (False Fox-sedge) on the coast to the south of Umachan. After several attempts over the years I finally re-found Mrs Murray's *Potentilla sterilis* (Barren Strawberry) on Fladday which she recorded in 1987.

A visit to Rona resulted in the addition of 11 taxa to the recent Rona list including *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge), *Eriophorum latifolium* (Broad-leaved Cottongrass), *Phleum pratense* (Timothy), *Suaeda maritima* (Annual Sea-blite) and *Utricularia minor* (Lesser Bladderwort).

Alan Newton stayed for a few days and sorted out Raasay brambles for me, plus one brought from Rona. We also spent some time in Sleat but added little new there.

Skye hills visited included Marsco, The Storr, Ben Edra, Blaven and parts of the Cuillin Ridge, Jim McIntosh joining me for a couple of these. Some Skye rarities were checked and found to be doing well such as *Carex aquatilis* (Water Sedge), *Carex rupestris* (Rock Sedge) and *Potentilla crantzii* (Alpine Cinquefoil) but the *Arabis alpina* (Alpine Rock-cress) is giving cause for concern

The visit of the Bradford Botany Group led to a number of new hybrid and alien records. Two hybrid rushes were recorded from both Raasay and Skye: *Juncus x surrejanus* (the hybrid between Jointed Rush and Sharp-flowered Rush) and *J. x kern-reichgeltii* (the hybrid between Compact Rush and Soft Rush). Both are likely to be common. Indeed Mike Wilcox is of the view that all our *J. acutiflorus* (Sharp-flowered Rush) may actually be the hybrid with *J. articulatus* (Jointed Rush). Also during this visit we noticed *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort) doing well in imported soil used for road repairs by Loch Cill Chrìosd and, more pleasingly, *Alchemilla wickuriae* (one of the rarer Lady's-mantles) near Loch Gauscavaig in Sleat, some way from its known sites around the Storr area.

A plan to acquire samples of *Arabis alpina* for the Natural History Museum in London, under special licence from SNH, was abandoned as there was insufficient material to sample. Back on Raasay, fruits of *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam) were collected for the seed bank at RBGE and seeds from thirty plants of *Rhinanthus minor* (Yellow-rattle) were collected for a Newcastle University research project. The *Sorbus* exercise resulted in the discovery of an additional tree – an increase of 8% in the known Raasay population – but this was not a young plant, merely one that had been overlooked previously. Fruiting was good this year but a sapling has yet to be spotted.

January to December 2006

A native plant found in the vice-county for the first time is perhaps the best record likely to be made by a botanist in the usual run of events, though recent events not far away - *Tuberaria guttata* (Spotted Rock-rose) on Coll and *Carex salina* (Saltmarsh Sedge) in Loch Duich - show that plants new to Scotland or even to the British Isles can still be found.

In the first VC record category in 2006, *Carex acutiformis* (Lesser Pond-sedge) was found as a large stand along a burn in northern Skye. A number of hybrids were also recorded for the first time in the vice-county, notably several *Rumex* (dock) hybrids. One of these, *R. x dufftii* (*R. sanguineus* (Wood Dock) x *obtusifolius* (Broad-leaved Dock)), has a superficial resemblance to *R. conglomeratus* (Clustered Dock).

At least on Raasay, and perhaps elsewhere, old records for *R. conglomeratus* may be this hybrid – the only recorded Raasay site for *R. conglomeratus* now has this hybrid but not *R. conglomeratus*.

A number of aliens were also recorded for the first time in the vice-county. One of these was a crucifer from the top of the shore near Armadale which turns out to be a *Peltaria*, almost certainly *Peltaria angustifolia*, a denizen of the Middle East and not a normal item of British horticulture. This appears to be a first record for the British Isles.

Next down the list are plants new to an island, and in this category *Ranunculus sceleratus* (Celery-leaved Buttercup) was recorded for the first time on Skye.

John Chester reported *Ligusticum scoticum* (Scots Lovage) from Castle Island, the first Eigg record.

On Raasay, a number of newbies appeared after roadworks including *Fumaria muralis* (Wall Fumitory), *Fumaria officinalis* (Common Fumitory), *Papaver dubium* (Long-headed Poppy) and *Sisymbrium officinale* (Hedge Mustard). It transpired that soil had been brought from Alness in Easter Ross and this was the source of these plants, along with *Chrysanthemum segetum* (Corn Marigold) which had not been seen on Raasay for many a long year and *Spergularia rubra* (Sand Spurrey) which was previously confined to the car parking area near Balameanach for the Dun Caan walk.

A one-day visit to Pabay in mid-August led to a respectable plant list, the first such list for 70 years. A further visit a little earlier in the season would probably prove useful. A good population of *Bolboschoenus maritimus* (Sea Club-rush) was a minor surprise as the known Skye populations are around southern and western coasts. Other nice records included *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern), *Rumex sanguineus* (Wood Dock) and a large area of *Zostera marina* (Eelgrass) in the “harbour”.

A great many new 10 km square records were made, including aliens and hybrids. Notable native plants amongst these include *Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* (Pugsley's Marsh-orchid) – previously *D. lapponica* (Lapland Marsh-orchid), *D. incarnata* subsp. *coccinea* (an unusual subspecies of Early Marsh-orchid) and, thanks largely to James Merryweather's efforts, the gametophyte of *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern).

Vicia hirsuta (Hairy Tare) was spotted in disturbed ground beside the main road near Edinbane along with *Papaver dubium* (Long-headed Poppy). Given the Raasay experience with imported soil, one is

tempted to wonder how often *Papaver dubium* records on Skye (which are rare) are the result of soil import.

An old report of *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine) at Geary was confirmed and a new site was found near Storr Lochs. This nationally rare plant is also known from Sleat where it was spotted in two locations in 2006; one remains to be re-found. The new sites on coastal cliffs, similar to known sites on Mull, lead one to imagine that there are further sites awaiting discovery.

A call by SNH and BSBI for records of *Platanthera bifolia* (Lesser Butterfly-orchid) led to several new contacts and records for both this species and *Platanthera chlorantha* (Greater Butterfly-orchid).

The distribution of *Epilobium hirsutum* (Great Willowherb) turns out to be greater than previously recorded with new sites during the past couple of years in the Uig, Glendrynoch and Kyleakin areas, thanks to Morag Henriksen, H. MacAulay, Carl Farmer and myself.

In the aliens sphere, *Impatiens glandulifera* (Indian Balsam) and *Persicaria campanulata* (Lesser Knotweed) were recorded from a number of localities. In one of these *I. glandulifera* is present over a large area and is at least partly living up to its reputation as an invasive species.

Three species, *Erinus alpinus* (Fairy Foxglove), *Euphorbia dulcis* (Sweet Spurge) and *Gaultheria shallon* (Shallon) were shown in the *New Atlas* as occurring on Skye – one 10 km square for each. The Biological Records Centre records on which these were based were very vague – anonymous and no localisation within the 10km square. These were all re-found during 2006 and localised records made.

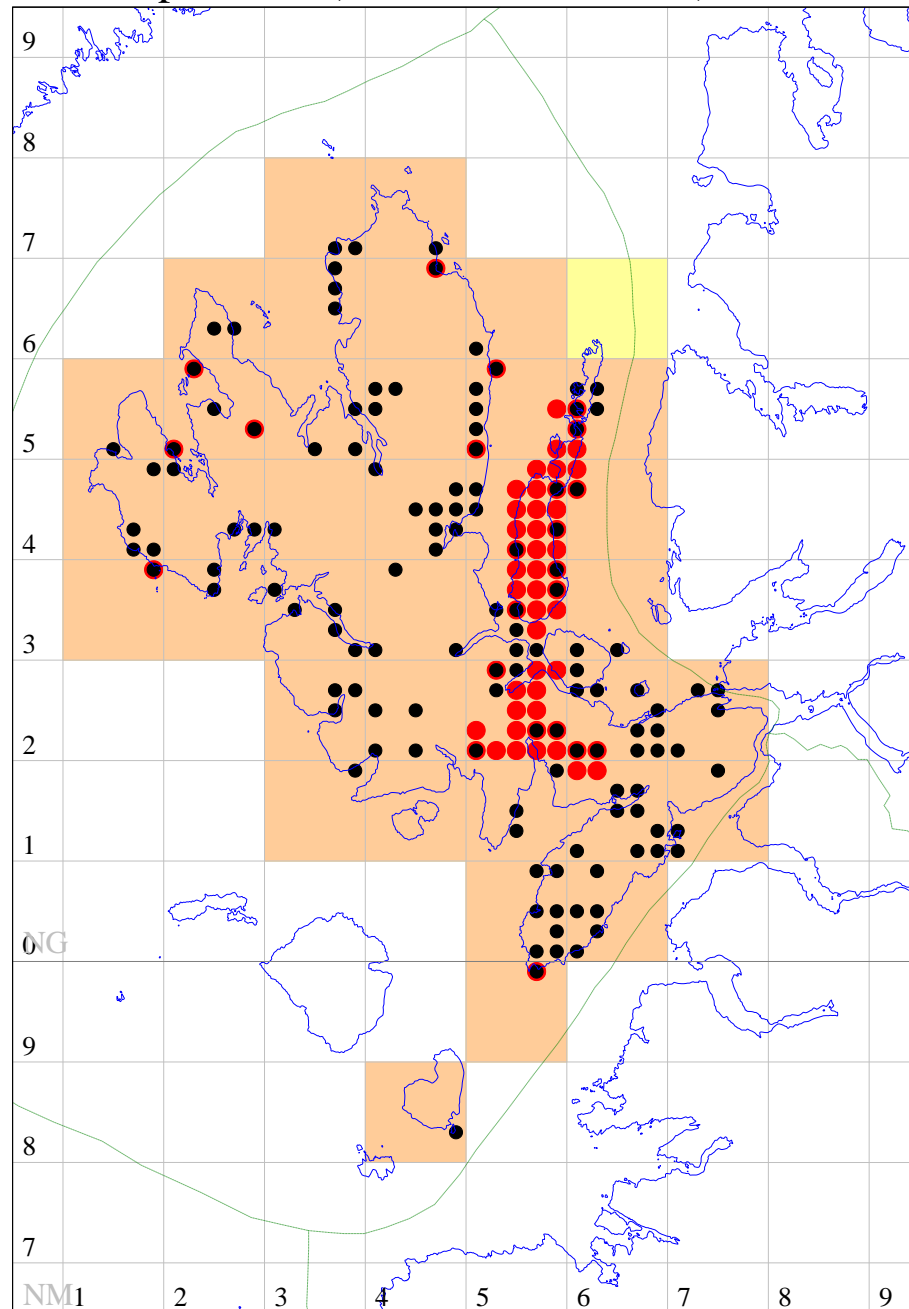
Various other aliens were noted amongst which *Sanguisorba canadensis* (White Burnet) at Kyleakin and Bernisdale is a striking plant. On Raasay, an area used for garden rubbish turned up some thriving plants of *Brunnera microphylla* (Great Forget-me-not), *Geranium endressii* (French Crane's-bill), *Oenothera glazioviana* (Large-flowered Evening-primrose) and a garden violet described by the referee as “either *Viola x wittrockiana tricolor*-like cultivar, reverted further towards *V. tricolor*, or plain *V. tricolor*”. It is not the same as standard *V. tricolor* on Skye or Raasay.

Sadly, from my point of view, Carl Farmer who has made a major contribution to recording on Skye in recent years has moved elsewhere, but he is enjoying his new location and I wish him the very best. 2006 saw a major push on computerising paper records by Carl, with about half completed thanks to a grant from SNH. The second half is currently underway under a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, again with Carl as the contractor.

2006 saw the formal retirement of Mrs C. W. Murray from the post of Vice-county Recorder for VC 104 after forty years in the job and my taking over as sole Recorder. She achieved a remarkable coverage of Skye, especially the mountains and lochs and in 2005 published the third edition of *The Botanist in Skye and Adjacent Islands* with John Birks.

With such a large area to cover, spread over Skye, Raasay, the Small Isles and numerous associated smaller islands, and with much high ground that is a long way from roads, my efforts are now mostly directed away from Raasay and towards Skye. Raasay has been well covered over the past twenty-plus years and A Flora of Raasay and Rona is now in preparation.

Succisa pratensis (Devil's-bit Scabious)



Distribution map using currently computerised data. (Rum about to be added.)

Circles are tetrads, red pre-2000, black 2000-2006

Squares are 10 km squares, yellow pre-2000, pink/brown 2000-2006

Appendix: Distribution Map of *Succisa pratensis* in VC104 at 31 Dec 2015

Succisa pratensis (Devil's-bit Scabious)

