

# PLANTS IN VICE-COUNTY 104: FIVE YEARS OF SIX-MONTHLY REVIEWS 2016 TO 2020

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## July to December 2020

It was not possible to hold Skye Botany Group meetings this year. Despite the restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, nearly 2,500 plant records were made in VC104 in the second half of 2020, including six plants new to the vice-county:

- *Acer saccharinum* (Silver Maple) planted on Raasay
- *Lepidium didymum* (Lesser Swine-cress) at Harlosh, Skye
- *Persicaria wallichii* (Himalayan Knotweed) escaping from a garden at Stein, Skye
- *Poterium sanguisorba subsp. balearicum* (Fodder Burnet) at Edinbane, Skye
- *Solanum nigrum* (Black Nightshade) at Cleadale, Eigg
- *Tropaeolum speciosum* (Flame Nasturtium) at Lyndale, Skye

More *Hieracium* specimens were taken on Skye and Raasay for expert determination taking the total number of specimens for the year to sixty. In addition to the eight species recorded up to 1<sup>st</sup> July, David McCosh determined the following:

*H. cyclicum* (Round-leaved Hawkweed), *H. dasythrix* (Dense-haired Hawkweed), *H. duriceps* (Hard-headed Hawkweed), *H. oxybeles* (Pointed-leaved Hawkweed) and one that could only be recorded as *H. exotericum* agg. flowering in abundance in October. *H. dasythrix*, found on Glamaig, has only one previous record in the vice-county (in 1973) and *H. cyclicum* from Leathad Beithe (Talisker) has five earlier records, one in 2002, the rest considerably earlier.

A *Philadelphus* (Mock-orange) at Budhmor, Skye is pretty hairy on the underside of the leaves suggesting that it is one of the hybrid groups - full identification will have to wait until there are flowers next year. Similarly, a small tree that looks like a *Prunus* at Gedintailor, Skye will have to wait for flowers for full identification.

*Ulex gallii* (Western Gorse) was found at two new sites on the Harlosh peninsula. This is a pretty rare plant on Skye, but this year some older known sites were also re-found.

*Linaria repens* (Pale or Striped Toadflax) near Glasnakille on Skye was only the third site in the vice-county. It has been known in Portree for getting on for 50 years and there is a single 1978 record from Kyleakin.

First hectad records for native species with limited occurrence locally included *Koeleria macrantha* (Crested Hair-grass) in NG35, *Salix purpurea* (Purple Willow), *Zostera marina* (Eelgrass) in NG24 and *Veronica scutellata* (Marsh Speedwell) in NG42.

Thanks are due to everyone who has contributed to these records.

## January to June 2020

For obvious reasons, plant recording has been on something of a hold this year. A single day in February along the River Chraçaig in Portree added three or four new vice-county records (depending on how one counts them):

- *Galanthus plicatus subsp. plicatus* (Pleated Snowdrop)
- A hybrid swarm of *Galanthus x valentinei* (*G. nivalis x plicatus*)
- *Cryptomeria japonica* (Japanese Red-cedar)
- *Crocus neapolitanus*, though *Crocus vernus* had been recorded previously from elsewhere on Skye and *C. neapolitanus* is what used to be *C. vernus subsp. vernus*.

Thirty *Hieracium* specimens were taken on Raasay in June (and on July 1<sup>st</sup>) for expert determination. David McCosh found that there eight species were present:

*H. anglicum* (3 sites), *H. hebridense* (6), *H. oxybeles* (3), *H. pollinarioides* (1), *H. praesigne* (1), *H. shoobredii* (8), *H. silvaticoides* (2) and *H. triviale* (previously *H. vulgatum*) (6). David says “*H. silvaticoides* is rare in Scotland, probably reflecting the rarity of limestone, but is quite common on limestone in the north of England”. These records are the first for Raasay and indeed, for northwest Scotland. More work is planned on Hawkweeds this year.

Other highlights have included the first record for *Carlina vulgaris* (Carline Thistle) in NG41 and the first record this century for *Pseudorchis albida* (Small-white Orchid) in NG36.

Thanks are due to the ten folks who, in addition to myself, have contributed to the records that were made.

## July to December 2019

Over 15,000 vascular plant records were made in VC104 in 2019 including 212 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies or aggregate recording. Very many thanks to all who have contributed this year – 15,000 is an all-time high.

Skye Botany Group met three times, visiting Ulfhart Point, Hinnisdal and an area near An t-Sron, north of Camasunary. The trip to Ulfhart Point on Skye (opposite Soay) meant that the last two tetrads with any significant land but no plant records were finally covered. Ulfhart means roar or howl and we had to postpone our boat trip from Elgol twice before the seas were calm enough, and even then getting back to the boat at the end of the day was slightly hair-raising.

There is now no tetrad in VC104 with more than 2% land and no post-1999 records. Six partial tetrads have been checked and have no vascular plants and the three remaining with no records are likely to be the same. However, a great many tetrads can still not be described as thoroughly surveyed. The issue over which species of *Agrimonia* is or are present in VC104 was largely resolved, in that all specimens examined closely once fruiting are *A. procera* (Fragrant Agrimony). This follows decades of confusion where the same populations have been recorded as both *A. eupatoria* (Agrimony) and *A. procera* (Fragrant Agrimony) by different recorders. There may, of course, still be *A. eupatoria* waiting to be found. The main lesson from this exercise is that existing floras do not give adequate descriptions of the two species, except perhaps for the fruit characteristics.

A poster on “The Spread of Aliens in VC104” was displayed at the Scottish Botanists’ Conference at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

### Skye

New to VC104:

- *Lemna gibba* (Fat Duckweed) was recorded in two places
- *Hieracium subcrinellum* (previously *H. crinellum*) (Blunt-leaved Hawkweed) was a late entry as it was found in flower in October near Sligachan.
- *Melilotus altissimus* (Tall Melilot) was found as a weed in Lower Breakish
- *Ilex x altaclerensis* (Highclere Holly) at Tokavaig,
- *Euphorbia sikkimensis* (Sikkim spurge) in Portree as a garden throw-out but only the second record on the entire BSBI Distribution Database, the first being in Acton, West London.

Also found as weeds in Lower Breakish:

- *Amsinckia micrantha* (Common Fiddleneck) is new to Skye, though recorded on Muck in 1996.
- The only previous record for *Thlaspi arvense* (Field Penny-cress) in the vice-county was from Soay in 1946.
- *Viola arvensis* (Field Pansy) had only two previous records in modern times.

Most of these Breakish weeds have come from imported topsoil purchased from the local builders’ merchant in Broadford. The provenance of the soil is unknown, but it is likely to have been used all over Skye so these species may start to turn up elsewhere.

Further interesting *Hieracium* records include:

- *Hieracium eucallum* (Spreading-toothed Hawkweed) had one pre-2000 record but this is the only more recent one from Skye, though there are two modern records from the Small Isles.
- *Hieracium sparsifolium* (Sparse-leaved Hawkweed) from an area to the west of Tormore is the first modern record.
- *Hieracium sublasiophyllum* (Slender-bracted Hawkweed) from Abhainn Gremiscaig is the first for Skye and the second for the VC as there is a 1986 record for Eigg.

*Acaena anserinifolia* (Bronze Pirri-pirri-bur) at Glasphein is the second vice-county record and *Alstroemeria aurea* (Peruvian Lily) at Bernisdale and Portnalong were second and third vice-county records.

### **Raasay**

Re-examination of some established *Montbretia* colonies showed that *Crocsmia pottsii* (Potts' *Montbretia*) had been overlooked previously.

*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (Lawson's Cypress) near Temptation Hill and a single specimen of *Quercus cerris* (Turkey Oak) near Inverarish were found as planted specimens. There is only one vice-county record for *Q. cerris* - on Skye: NG51 1987-1999

Very late in the year *Ranunculus* subgenus *Batrachium* (a Water-crowfoot) was noted in a small garden pond on Raasay. Determination to species will have to wait for flowers.

### **The Small Isles**

A single day on Canna and Sanday proved very useful as 1930s records for *Catapodium marinum* (Sea Fern-grass) and *Trifolium campestre* (Hop Trefoil) were re-found in the Sanday dunes. In both cases these are only the second recent records for the vice-county, the others being on Rum and Eigg respectively.

There were also first Canna/Sanday records for several species including *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort), *Carex remota* (Remote Sedge) and *Scrophularia auriculata* (Water Figwort), the last looking like a recent import at the ferry terminal.

A single plant of *Polygonum boreale* (Northern Knotgrass) was the first VC104 record. This species was thought to be restricted to the Northern Isles, but has recently been found in the Outer Isles, Tiree and Colonsay.

## January to June 2019

Over 8,000 records were made in VC104 in the first half of 2019 including 91 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies or aggregate recording. Many thanks to all who have contributed this year.

Skye Botany Group met three times, visiting Sgùrr nan Gillean, Kimaluag and Torrin.

Early in the year a considerable amount of analysis of VC104 records was undertaken in order to help prioritise recording trips during the season. As well as poorly recorded areas, this highlighted tetrads that had the most records of plants not re-found in the relevant hectad. These are potential hotspots for re-finding plants missing at the 10km level.

Additionally, areas where *Anemone nemorosa* (Wood Anemone) and/or *Ficaria verna subsp. fertilis* (Lesser Celandine) have not been recorded were used as an indicator of places not visited early in the season in recent times. Visiting some of these areas proved quite useful. A similar approach using *Gentianella campestris* (Field Gentian) as an indicator species will be tried in the late summer. Several mountaineers have sent record from the Cuillins which has helped to improve coverage of these high peaks.

Neil Roberts deserves special mention as he has been sea-kayaking in order to reach tetrads with small land areas (islands, skerries and inaccessible areas of Skye) and no vascular plant records. By the end of the season there should be no tetrad with more than 2% land and no post-1999 records.

### Skye

New to VC104 – all garden escapes/throw-outs or planted:

- *Ornithogalum umbellatum* (Star-of-Bethlehem)
- *Iris sibirica* (Siberian Iris)

and two to be confirmed:

- *Berberis julianae* (Chinese Barberry)
- *Spiraea hypericifolia* (Iberian Spirea)

*Daphne mezereum* (Mezereon) has escaped along the road at Borve and is new to Skye

Good numbers of old hectad records were re-found i.e. plants known in a hectad from before 2000 but not seen since.

## July to December 2018

Over 12,500 records were made in VC104 in 2018 including 201 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies or aggregate recording. Many thanks to all who have contributed this year.

Skye Botany Group met twice, visiting Camas Bàn and an area south of Duntulm.

Throughout the northwest of Scotland, including VC104, June/July was marked by widespread flowering of *Utricularia stygia* (Nordic Bladderwort) – something that does not usually occur and was presumably triggered by the long dry spell in May.

Early in the year, but omitted from the January – June report, a talk was given to Skye Gardening Society on “Where Do Plants Belong?”

### Skye

New to VC104 – all garden escapes/throw-outs or planted:

- *Antirrhinum majus* (Snapdragon)
- *A Armoracia rusticana* (Horse-radish)
- *Betula papyrifera* (Paper Birch)
- *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* (Jacquemont's Birch)
- *Echium plantagineum* (Purple Viper's-bugloss)
- *Iberis umbellata* (Garden Candytuft)
- *Inula hookeri* (Hooker's Fleabane)
- *Laburnum alpinum* (Scottish Laburnum)
- *Salix udensis* (Sachalin Willow)
- *Salix x sepulcralis* nothovar. *sepulcralis*

Plus an uncommon hybrid rose: *Rosa caesia* subsp. *vosagiaca* x *spinosissima*

*Hieracium ascendentidens* (Harris Hawkweed) was recorded for only the second time in the vice-county.

*Acaena inermis* (Spineless Acaena) continues to spread on Skye with a new site found on the Quiraing path.

Determination of further *Arctium* specimens as *Arctium minus* subsp. *pubens* (Lesser Burdock) suggests that this is the common taxon in the vice-county, though more work is needed.

Good numbers of old hectad records were re-found i.e. plants known in a hectad from before 2000 but not seen since.

### Raasay

*Leycesteria formosa* (Himalayan Honeysuckle or Pheasant Berry) is spreading near Raasay House. This is new to Raasay in the wild and seems to be increasing rapidly on Skye and the adjacent Scottish mainland.

Two *Glebionis segetum* (Corn Marigold) plants in flower on a road verge near Inverarish seem most likely to have come from a wildflower seed mix, though long-dormant seed cannot be ruled out as a source given recent soil disturbance from forestry operations.

A planted specimen of *Salix x fragilis nothovar. Basfordiana* that has survived for quite a few years was recorded, new to Raasay and the second record in the vice-county.



## January to June 2018

Skye Botany Group met twice, visiting Loch Vorvin in Waternish, and Soay.

Monthly articles on matters of local botanical interest continued to be written for Am Bratach, the Raasay Community Newsletter until time just got too short for a June article.

Over 7,300 records were made in VC104 in the first half of 2018 including 95 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies recording e.g. *Betula pubescens subsp. tortuosa* where *Betula pubescens* was already recorded. Many thanks to all who have contributed so far this year.

### Skye

New to VC104 – all garden escapes/throw-outs or planted:

- *Allium paradoxum* (Few-flowered Garlic) at Caroy
- *Crinodendron hookerianum* (Chinese Lantern Bush) in Dunvegan Woods
- *Darmera peltata* (Indian-rhubarb) at Armadale
- *Griselinia littoralis* (New Zealand Broadleaf) at Dunvegan
- *Sorbaria sorbifolia* (Sorbaria) at Tayinloan
- *Ulex minor* (Dwarf Gorse) at Dunvegan – to be confirmed
- *Veronica longifolia x spicata* (Garden Speedwell Hybrid) at Broadford. We have decided it is the hybrid rather than pure *Veronica longifolia* (Garden Speedwell) as it is really quite hairy. First record for Scotland – though far from established yet, being a single plant near other plants of garden origin like *Lysimachia punctata* (Dotted Loosestrife).

### General:

A second Sleat site for *Ammophila arenaria* (Marram) was only the third recent record for Skye, the second being found not too far away in 2013.

The first Skye record for *Erodium cicutarium* (Common Stork's-bill) since 1988 was made with seven plants by a forestry track.

Quite a lot of old hectad records have been re-found i.e. plants known in a hectad from before 2000 but not seen since, notably several each for *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (Bearberry) and *Nymphaea alba* (White Water-lily).

### Soay

On Soay at the end of June Skye Botany Group added three plants new to NG41: *Carex extensa* (Long-bracted Sedge), *Cotoneaster integrifolius* (Entire-leaved Cotoneaster) and *Ribes rubrum* (Red Currant), the last two being garden escapes, but the first is welcome – if a bit of a surprise that it had not been recorded before.

We also saw four that had not been recorded in NG41 since before 2000: *Carex oederi* (Small-fruited Yellow-sedge), *Carex leporina* (Oval Sedge), *Elytrigia repens* (Common Couch) and *Rosa mollis* (Soft Downy-rose) although the last of these may turn out to have some hybridity.

### **Small Isles - Eilean nan Each**

An excursion to Eilean nan Each (Horse Island) off Muck added *Gymnadenia borealis* (Heath Fragrant-orchid) to the island list but failed to find the previously recorded *Coeloglossum viride* (Frog Orchid). As on other small islands in the area it seems that Greylag Geese are changing the vegetation - as evidenced by the addition of plants like *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (Shepherd's-purse) and *Matricaria discoidea* (Pineappleweed) to the list.

## July to December 2017

Skye Botany Group met three times, visiting Tusdale (west of Eynort), Loch Dunvegan and Loch Duagrigh. The Wild Flower Society visited Skye and made a number of useful records.

Monthly articles on matters of local botanical interest continued to be written for Am Bratach, the Raasay Community Newsletter. An article co-authored with Seth Gibson on the discovery of *Mitella ovalis* on Skye appeared in BSBI News. It subsequently emerged that there was a previous record for this plant in the British Isles (though not in Scotland) but it had not got into the BSBI database.

Specimens of *Subularia aquatica* (Awlwort) were collected for the University of Toulouse.

Over 13,000 records were made in VC104 in 2017 including 226 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies recording e.g. *Huperzia selago subsp. selago* where *Huperzia selago* was already recorded. Many thanks to all who have contributed this year

Thirty years ago Viv Halcrow completed "A Preliminary Survey of Native Woodland on the Isles of Skye and Raasay" for the Nature Conservancy Council. All records that could be assigned to a 10km square or better have now been digitised, resulting in several new hectad records and rather a lot of new tetrad records. Given the relative paucity of tetrad or better records from before 2000, this has been a real boon.

*Agrimonia* in VC104 continues to cause confusion, with different botanists assigning the same population to either *A. eupatoria* or *A. procera*. Final resolution will have to wait until next season.

### Skye

*New to VC104 – all garden escapes/throw-outs or planted:*

- *Berberis buxifolia* (Box-leaved Barberry) near Portree
- *Brachyglottis x jubar* (Shrub Ragwort) at Broadford
- *Iris spuria* (Blue Iris) at Keistle
- *Lobelia erinus* (Garden Lobelia) at Uig
- *Schizostylis coccinea* (Kaffir Lily), now apparently renamed *Hesperantha coccinea*, near Tormore

Plus records from the first half of the year not include in the January to June report:

- *Laburnum x watereri* (*L. alpinum x anagyroides*) at Uig, resulting in a need to check other *Laburnum* records
- *Pelargonium x hybridum* at Uig
- *Sedum spectabile* (Butterfly Stonecrop) near Camus Croise
- *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon-grape) at Uig

*New to Skye:*

- *Lythrum portula* (Water-purslane) near Flodigarry

### General:

*Erica vagans* (Cornish Heath) was found beside a forest track at Kinloch. There is only one previous record for Skye and that is vague both in date and location (1987-1999, NG44).

Two new sites were found for *Hypericum humifusum* (Trailing St John's-wort) which is rare on Skye.

Use of a grapnel in Loch Duagrigh produced a large quantity of *Nitella translucens* (Translucent Stonewort), a charophyte with few records in the vice-county. Maybe greater use of the grapnel would significantly increase the known distribution.

*Anaphalis margaritacea* (Pearly Everlasting) has escaped from a garden in Tarskavig. There are only two earlier records for this in VC104, one of which was within Lyndale House grounds.

*Juncus ranarius* (Frog Rush) was spotted during the WFS visit on muddy roadside edges. This is the first time it has turned up in this habitat in VC104. Further roadside sites were subsequently found.

### Isay

A visit to Isay in Loch Bay was a follow-up to a 2008 trip. *Carex distans* (Distant Sedge) was a first record for NG25, as was *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut) – four rather stunted, planted specimens which were missed previously.

Several quite large areas of *Matricaria discoidea* (Pineappleweed) were found. These were not there in 2008. They mostly also contained *Cerastium glomeratum* (Sticky Mouse-ear) and *Gnaphalium uliginosum* (Marsh Cudweed). On Skye, these are all typically found in field entrances, waste ground, etc. It seems likely that Greylag Geese are the cause of these new habitats, probably by a combination of bringing in the seed, fertilisation and grazing. These three species were all new to Isay.

### Raasay

A visit to Fladday to refresh records from pre-2000 resulted in the addition of two taxa to the list for NG55: *Salix repens* var. *argentea* (the silvery variety of Creeping Willow) and *Triglochin maritima* (Sea Arrowgrass).

### Small Isles

David McCosh determined some *Hieracium* specimens collected on Muck in June. *H. argenteum* (Silvery Hawkweed), *H. deganwyense* (Deganwy Hawkweed) and *H. subrubicundum* (Large-leaved Hawkweed) are new to Muck, with *H. deganwyense* being new to VC104.

Nick Stewart sent over 800 records from three days on Rum, adding *Alchemilla filicaulis* subsp. *vestita* (Common Lady's mantle), *Rosa canina* (Dog-rose) and *Hieracium latobrigorum* (Yellow-styled

Hawkweed) to NG30. The only previous record for this hawkweed on Rum was by W. A. Clark in 1938 and appears to have been arbitrarily assigned to NM39. Perhaps it should have been NG30...?

## January to June 2017

Skye Botany Group met twice, visiting Staffin and the slopes of Sgùrr nan Gillean. The Inverness Botany Group spent a week recording on Muck.

Talks were given to the Sleat Environment Group (*From Orchids to Invasives*) and SWT Skye Region Group (*Recent Botanical Finds in VC104*). Monthly articles on matters of local botanical interest continued to be written for Am Bratach, the Raasay Community Newsletter. Articles also appeared in BSBI News (*Extracting records from the Scottish Saltmarsh Survey*) and the BSS Newsletter (*On Being BSBI Recorder for VC104: Skye, Raasay & The Small Isles*).

Nearly 8,000 records were made in VC104 in the first half of 2017 including 149 new hectad records, although a few of these are the result of subspecies recording e.g. *Huperzia selago subsp. selago* where *Huperzia selago* was already recorded. Many thanks to all who have contributed so far this year, especially Steve Terry who produced over 1,100 records including several first vice-county records for introductions.

### Skye

#### *New to British Isles:*

Seth Gibson found *Mitella ovalis* (Bishop's-cap or Oval-leaved Mitrewort) in Uig Wood and traced the source to a garden linked to the woodland site by a drain. This has been written up for BSBI News.

#### *New to VC104:*

- *Acaena anserinifolia* (Bronze Pirri-pirri-bur) at Uig.
- *Arum italicum* (Italian Lords-and-Ladies) in Glendale.
- *Doronicum pardalianches* (Leopard's-bane) near Hinnisdal Bridge.
- *Echium vulgare* (Viper's-bugloss) at the Aird of Sleat.
- *Euphorbia griffithii* (Griffith's Spurge) at Ardvasar.
- *Phacelia tanacetifolia* (Blue Tansy) planted at Tormore.
- *Phormium tenax* (New Zealand Flax) planted on Muck.

#### *New to Skye:*

- *Juncus foliosus* (Leafy Rush), south of Orbst – known on Raasay, Rona and Rum.
- *Tulipa gesneriana* (Garden Tulip) near Broadford Airstrip.

#### *Second for Skye:*

- *Nitella translucens* (Translucent Stonewort) in Loch Corlarach, north of Dunvegan – known on Raasay, Rum and Soay.

#### *General:*

*Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) is turning out to be not quite as rare as earlier records suggest, though it remains far from common on Skye.

*Hyacinthoides x massartiana* (*H. non-scripta x hispanica*) appears to be spreading, with some 2017 records amongst populations of the native parent.

A single excursion in May added three Nationally Scarce species to tetrad NG55C, *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine), *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens) and *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine) and two to NG55H, *Dryas* and *Equisetum x font-queri* (Font-Quer's Horsetail).

## Muck

A rather wet and windy week on Muck with the Inverness Botany Group resulted in over 1,800 records at the monad level. As well as re-finding old records of many species, the following were added to the Muck list.

- *Calystegia sepium* (Hedge Bindweed)
- *Carex extensa* (Long-bracted Sedge)
- *Carex limosa* (Bog-sedge)
- *Carex oederi* (Small-fruited Yellow-sedge)
- *Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia* (Rusty Willow)
- *Valeriana officinalis* (Common Valerian)

Also, many introductions were recorded for the first time, though Muck is particularly difficult in terms of knowing which introductions to record. *Phormium tenax* (New Zealand Flax) was found planted on the edge of a forestry plantation, the first record for VC104.

*Fumaria bastardii* (Tall Ramping-fumitory) was a good find with only two previous sites in VC104 (on Muck and Eigg) and no record since 1999.

## Raasay

A *Hieracium* specimen from 2016 was determined as *H. praesigne* (Distinguished Hawkweed). This turns out to be only the eighth record for Scotland – and the second for the east coast of Raasay. It was previously recorded by Alan Stirling in 1969 at Druim an Aonaich, 4 km north of the new site and in a different 10 km square.

## June to December 2016

Skye Botany Group met three times visiting Raasay, Eynort and Glen Sligachan where we found a single plant of *Eriocaulon aquaticum* (Pipewort) in the River Sligachan. Whilst there is plenty about in nearby lochans, this is the first time actually in a river. The Inverness Botany Group also visited Skye and Raasay.

Records were made in the last tetrad in VC 104 with 100% land and no records ever. There are still four tetrads with 20 -80% land and no records, mostly quite difficult to get to, plus more with <7% land, and then there are tetrads with earlier records but none since 1999 or earlier (nine with 100% land and five more with >20% land).

A short talk on a year in the life of a BSBI Vice-county Recorder was given at the Scottish Annual Meeting of BSBI and BSS.

About 12,000 records were made in VC104 in 2016. As ever, many thanks to all, too many to mention individually, who have contributed this year.

### Skye

*Mentha x piperita* (Peppermint (*M. aquatica x spicata*)) was recorded from a roadside. There are only a few VC 104 records for this hybrid, though it may have been overlooked.

The putative *Huperzia selago subsp. arctica* near Sligachan is now thought to be a hybrid, probably of this and *Huperzia selago subsp. selago*. This is the current view of all such Scottish specimens except some from Shetland that may be pure *subsp. arctica*.

The odd-looking *Lycopodium* plants in the Kyleakin Hills that looked close to *Lycopodium lagopus* (One-cone Clubmoss) are probably just environmentally stressed *Lycopodium clavatum*, though the taxonomy of these taxa remains in flux.

*Diphasiastrum alpinum* (Alpine Clubmoss) was recorded from an altitude of just 92m, which is about the lowest ever recorded in the British Isles

The pavements of Portree yielded Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) and Garden Pansy (*Viola x wittrockiana*), both second records for Skye.

### Raasay

Site Condition Monitoring of vascular plants in the Raasay SSSI was undertaken. The target species were *Arabidopsis petraea* (Northern Rock-cress), *Dryas octopetala* (Mountain Avens), *Epipactis atrorubens* (Dark-red Helleborine), *Potamogeton filiformis* (Slender-leaved Pondweed), *Pyrola rotundifolia* (Round-leaved Wintergreen) and *Sorbus rupicola* (Rock Whitebeam). Overall these species were found to be doing pretty well.



Two new sites were found for *Trichophorum x foersteri*, the hybrid between *Trichophorum germanicum* (Deergrass) and *Trichophorum cespitosum* (Northern Deergrass). (Two new sites were also added on Skye.)

## January to June 2016

Over 7,000 records were made in the first half of the year. The Skye Botany Group met only once in the first half of 2016, a second date being abandoned owing to poor weather.

### Skye

*Huperzia selago subsp. arctica* was found near Sligachan, a first for VC104.

Re-examination of images from 2009 suggests that some *Lycopodium* plants in the Kyleakin Hills are close to *Lycopodium lagopus* (One-cone Clubmoss). A return visit is needed.

There have been a number of garden escapes recorded on Skye this year for the first time in VC104:

- Perhaps the most unexpected record this half-year is of *Phyteuma spicatum* (Spiked Rampion) in the middle of the path up to the highest point of the Cuillins, Sgùrr Alasdair, though only at an altitude of about 220m. This is the blue form grown in gardens and sometimes called *subsp. coeruleum*, but this remains a very peculiar site.
- *Rodgersia podophylla* (Rodgersia) was recorded at Ardvasar.
- *Escallonia x langleyensis* and *Euphorbia amygdaloides subsp. robbiae* (Turkish Wood Spurge) are established by the roadside at Elishadder.
- *Geranium macrorrhizum* (Rock Crane's-bill) was noted in two locations, Kyleakin and Uig.
- Two records awaiting confirmation are *Euphorbia cyparissias* (Cypress Spurge) at Kyleakin and *Geranium shikokianum* (Japanese Marbled Cranesbill) near Lusa.

In the realm of locally uncommon species, several pre-2000 sites for *Equisetum pratense* (Shady Horsetail) were re-found and some new sites added. Three sites for *Orthilia secunda* (Serrated Wintergreen) were found in NG46. *Melica nutans* (Mountain Melick) and *Ranunculus hederaceus* (Ivy-leaved Crowfoot) were added to NG71.

*X Dactyloдения st-quintinii* (*Gymnadenia borealis* x *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) near Torrin is new to NG52, and *Baldellia ranunculoides* (Lesser Water-plantain) was recorded from the Broadford River, downstream from its known location in Loch Cill Chriod.

A new site was reported near Calligary for *Cephalanthera longifolia* (Narrow-leaved Helleborine), not far from a known site, but five days later the single plant had disappeared.

*Platanthera x hybrida* (*P. chlorantha* x *bifolia*) from Ard Dorch last year has been confirmed.

Visits were made to Harlosh Island, Tarner Island and Staffin Island. There were no previous records for Tarner or Staffin Islands and nearly all those for Harlosh Island were listed as NG23 and so do not show up on tetrad-based distribution maps. *Carex paniculata* (Greater Tussock-sedge) on Harlosh Island was the most interesting addition.

Over 1,300 Skye records were extracted from the data collected for SNH's Scottish Saltmarsh Survey. The biggest effects were on *Carex oederi* (Small-fruited Yellow-sedge) and *Eleocharis uniglumis* (Slender Spike-rush), each with quite a few new sites.

Alan Underhill's Skye Records which date from 1989 to 1999 became available and include the first records for the vice-county for *Geranium himalayense* (Himalayan Crane's-bill) and *Nepeta x faassenii* (Garden Cat-mint) near Linicro.

### **Small Isles**

*Kalmia procumbens* (Trailing Azalea) was found on Beinn nan Stac, Rum. This is a first for Rum, being previously known in the vice-county only from the Cuillin and the Kyleakin Hills on Skye.

*Cirsium x celakovskianum* (*C. arvense* x *palustre*) was found on Muck. This is a first for the vice-county and perhaps needs to be looked for elsewhere.

### **Raasay**

*Gunnera tinctoria* (Giant-rhubarb) has been planted near the car park in Inverarish and looks well set to become established – a first for Raasay. It will complement the *Cortaderia richardii* (Early Pampas-grass)!

Ten years since it was last checked, the *Allium vineale* (Wild Onion) on Sìthean Mòr looks much as it did in 1991 when first recorded. It remains the only known location in the vice-county.

Records mentioned here were made by M. Braithwaite, S. J Bungard, T. Godfrey, M. Henriksen, M. Ingram, I. Strachan, T. Swainbank, S. Terry. Many thanks to all.