

Plants in Vice-County 104: A Review of January - 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 Ellishadder.
- *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 Chrìosd.

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.

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