

Plants in Vice-County 104: 2007 Review

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), *Crocasmia 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 wichurae* (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.

Stephen Bungard

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Circulation:

Neil Barrett
John Birks
Douglas Bremner
John Chester
Roger & Pat Cottis
Carl Farmer
Lynne Farrell
Crawford Godfrey
Morag Henriksen
Sarah Kay

Alex Lockton
Jim McIntosh
James Merryweather
Chris Mitchell
David Pearman
Annabel & Chris Pendlebury
Bill and Deirdre Peppé
John Philips
Terry Swainbank
Mike Taylor

Alex Turner
Steve Varwell
Mike Wilcox

Copies by post/hand:

Mrs C W Murray
Andrew Currie
Kirsty Creighton
Mary Reckitt