PRODUCING A FLORA OF RAASAY AND RONA

I have recently published a Flora of Raasay and Rona on the World Wide Web at http://www.users.waitrose.com/~suisnish/. Here is how this came about.

The major part of the effort was field work. In 1992 I started recording all vascular plants on Raasay in 1 km square units. To maintain separate plant lists for Raasay including Fladday and Eilean Tigh, I chose to split the relevant squares, giving 98 units. The recording went through several overlapping stages including:

◊ Writing records in a notebook.
◊ Using bespoke recording cards – based on observations to date.
◊ Use of distribution maps prepared using Alan Morton’s “DMAP” software - http://www.dmap.co.uk/.
◊ Manipulating various databases to list missing species.

On Rona, I have been more restricted. Apart from particularly interesting species, records were only made, until recently, at the 10 km square level which now sit on my Website. Tetrad records are in the making and will be added to the Flora later.

Considerable library work was undertaken. Luckily my job took me to many universities where I explored their resources of botanical literature. The most important paper is the 1937 Flora by J. W. Heslop Harrison et al. and the earliest record, by James Boswell, is from 1773.
Writing up - I produced the species list and commentary by 2006 but baulked at getting all the distribution maps and words in appropriate format for printing. I decided therefore to publish my flora on the Web.

The process of publication forces one to consider things that might otherwise have continued to be neglected such as - have I really got Japanese Larch or is it all the hybrid? I haven’t sorted that out yet but I probably shall do now that my uncertainty has gone public!

Please logon and enjoy my Flora. Comments to my e-mail address - suisnish@waitrose.com – will be most welcome.

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