

## Dumfries Botany Group meeting at Hoddam 28 April 2021



### Woodcock Air Hoddam

A maximum of 6 people from 6 households were allowed to meet due to covid restrictions. So six of us met at the car park for the first meeting of the year. The weather was dry but with a cool wind.

Hoddam Estate includes the grounds of the impressive Hoddam Castle, the surrounding policy planting and the woodlands along this stretch of the River Annan. Given the early date and late Spring we were targeting early woodland plants.

We split the day and spent the morning in Woodcock Air, the mixed woodland south of the Annan Lockerbie road. This has mature trees of **Pedunculate Oak**, *Quercus robur*, **Beech**, *Fagus sylvatica* and various mature conifers including **European Silver Fir** *Abies alba*, **Giant Fir** *Abies grandis* and **Western Hemlock-spruce**, *Tsuga heterophylla*. There was a good shrub understory suggesting low deer grazing, not surprising given these woods are popular for walkers. Only a few of the early plants on the woodland floor were actually in flower. These included **Mochatel**, *Adoxa moschatellina*; **Marsh marigold**, *Caltha palustris*; **Hairy Wood-rush**, *Luzula Pilosa*; **Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage**, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*; **Pink Purslane** *Claytonia sibirica*; **Lesser Celandine**, *Ficaria verna ssp fertilis* and *Ficaria verna ssp verna* (with tubers); **Water Avens**, *Geum rivale*, **Wild Hyacinth**, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*; **Dogs**

**Mercury**, *Mercurialis perennis*; **Wood-sorrel**, *Oxalis acetosella*; **Barren Strawberry**, *Potentilla sterilis*; **Primrose**, *Primula vulgaris*; **Dandelion**, *Taraxicum agg.*; **Ivy-leaved Speedwell**, *Veronica hederifolia* and **Common Dog-violet**, *Viola riviniana*.

After the lunch stop back at the car park we went to the river bank by the bridge where **Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage** *Chrysosplenium alternifolium* and **Meadow Saxifrage**, *Saxifraga granulata*, were probably the best finds of the day. We looked at the similarity of the kidney shaped leaves for these given they grow in similar situations and are both early spring plants. These are both poorly recorded in Dumfriesshire this being only the second detailed record for this hectad for the Golden-saxifrage and third for Meadow saxifrage. Both are possible to encounter along stream or river banks in the early Spring.



Alternate-leaved Golden-saxifrage Hoddon

In the afternoon we walked to the castle, which apart from the area used as part of the camp site facilities, is now a ruin occupied by Jackdaws . We saw many of the same things along the river and in the woods leading up to the castle. There are some impressive trees in the policy plantings with a long avenue of **Lime**, *Tilia x europaea* and occasional **Sweet Chestnut**, *Castanea sativa*. Most of the ferns were yet to open but **Soft Shield-fern**, *Polystichum setiferum* is winter green and still showing on the banks. Near the Castle there are paths, tracks and mown grass. In the grass we found **Slender Speedwell**, *Veronica filiformis* with much showier flowers than the **Ivy-leaved Speedwell**

seen in the morning. On the paths there was also **Common Field-speedwell**, *Veronica persica*; **Lesser Trefoil**, *Trifolium dubium* and **Parsely-piert**, *Aphanes arvensis* in flower.

A total of 150 species was recorded on the day.