

Dumfriesshire Botany Group at Kingholm 15 September 2021

Seven of us met up at the skate park car park just north of Kingholm Quay. This was a convenient meeting place for visiting the two monads. The main objective was to look at the last remnant of saltmarsh behind the sea wall just to the north of the Quay and to visit Castledykes Park.

The Holm is a flat area separated from the tidal River Nith by a big seawall. It extends from the Quay to the southern edge of Dumfries. At the north end it is drained and maintained for recreation, cricket and allotments. At the southern end it still receives tidal flow coming through the harbour into a remnant creek system. The saltmarsh transitions to natural grassland which is unmanaged apart from footpaths. We crossed this area finding one of two species rich patches though the sea wall was more interesting. Here we picked up two wild onions, **Wild Onion (or Crow Garlic)** *Allium vineale*, normally with an inflorescence predominantly of bulbils and **Keeled Garlic**, *Allium carinatum* with an inflorescence of normal flowers and a few bulbils. The willows on the sea wall included **White Willow** *Salix alba* and **Eastern Crack Willow** *Salix euxinia* with its fawn varnished twigs. A surprise was to find **False-acacia** *Robinia pseudoacacia* thriving and suckering along the sea wall. While no doubt planted originally this is far north for this north American native and this is its first noted occurrence in a wild setting in Dumfriesshire.

We walked across and around the allotments. While always a good place to check for plants associated with cultivation it depends on the enthusiasm of the allotment holder. Sure enough some plots were pretty weed free while others were thick with **Lesser Swine -cress** *Lepidium didymium* which spilled onto the pathways and occasional **Fat-hen** *Chenopodium album*. A dump used by the Council horticulture section and allotment holders had other interesting things like Red Goosefoot *Chenopodium rubrum*, **Butterfly-bush**, *Buddleja davidii*, **Canadian Fleabane** *Erigeron canadensis* and **Scarlet pimpernel** *Lysimachia arvensis*.

We moved on the Castledykes Park for lunch. This is an historic area once



Yellow Corydalis Glencaple Raod

having a castle captured and torn down by Robert the Bruce. All that is left is a motte and ditch system but this had a good population of Autumn Hawkbit **Hieracium sabaudum**. The area has produced a lot of building stone for Dumfries from the fine red sandstone of Permian age and the old walls and rock faces support some interesting plants including in the area laid out to formal gardens. We met volunteers who are restoring and looking after this area and who are integrating wildlife into their plans. There was a great colony of Royal Fern **Osmunda regalis** that had naturalised on a wet sandstone rockface. In and around the park we saw **Black Spleenwort** *Asplenium Adiantum-nigrum*, **Intermediate Polypody** *Polypodium interjectum* and the southern European **Yellow Corydalis** *Corydalis lutea* an uncommon naturalised plant in the south west of Scotland.



Royal Fern colonising rock face at Castledykes

When we went south into the Kingholm Quay square we saw more saltmarsh or coastal species. At the Quay itself we found the dried remains of **Eastern Rocket** *Sisymbrium orientale* along Kingholm Loaning at its only known site in the VC. The saltmarsh was a little dangerous to explore given the creeks are hidden under vegetation. One of the party went in and saw **Spear-leaved Orache** *Atriplex prostrata*, **Sea Club-rush** *Bolboschoenus maritimus*, **False Fox-sedge** *Carex otrubae*, **Sea Rush** *Juncus maritimus*, **Slender Spike-rush** *Eleocharis uniglumis* and **Sea Plantain** *Plantago maritimus*.

There were 298 records on the day a great result this late in the season.

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