

## Dumfriesshire Botany Group at Langholm Moor 4 July 2021



Langholm meeting

Eight of us met at the Tarras Water car park to record on the land now owned by the Langholm Community after they raised funds to buy half of Langholm Moors from Buccleuch Estates. This is to become the Tarras Nature Reserve and is one of the biggest community buy outs in the South of Scotland. They hope they might be able to buy the northern half of the site over the next couple of years.

A good part of the land they purchased lies within the Langholm Moors SSSI, designated for its range of moorland and peatland habitats and birds dependent on them. While they are in the early stages of planning the development of the nature reserve we felt it would be good to provide them with some basic botanical data.

We recorded the monads from just below where the road crosses the Tarras Water towards Middlemoss. The Tarras water has cut a deep valley through the moorland and has a narrow fringe of woodland, supplemented in places by planting. The land either side is blanket bog or dry heath on the steeper slopes. In places these slopes are dominated by bracken. The blanket bog has been actively managed in the last 20 years.

Quite near the start on the rocky slope below the road where bracken has been controlled we found a reasonably extensive colony of **Chickweed-wintergreen** *Lysimachia europaea* (formerly *Trientalis europaea*). This has never been common in Dumfriesshire with less than 10 locations. There is an older record lower down the Tarras suggesting this valley may be crucial for this species.

The blanket bog here is in reasonable condition though there are ditches that could be blocked up in the future to help it become wetter and improve sphagnum growth. It has a good quantity of **Bog Rosemary** *Andromeda polifolia* mixed in with other typical species such as **Heather** *Calluna vulgaris*, **Cross-leaved Heath** *Erica tetralix*, **Crowberry** *Empetrum nigrum*, **Hare's-tail Cottongrass** *Eriophorum vaginatum*, **Common Cottongrass** *Eriophorum angustifolium*, **Common Deergrass** *Trichophorum germanicum*, **Bilberry** *Vaccinium myrtillus*, **Cranberry** *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and **Cowberry** *Vaccinium*

*vitis-idaea*, **Bog Asphodel** *Narthecium ossifragrum* and **Heath Spotted-orchid** *Dactylorhiza maculata*. The latter two gave a colourful display in places.



Chickweed Wintergreen at Langholm

Some of the group ventured down to the Tarras Water where the slightly different geology and exposed rocks supported a slightly richer community including **Rough Hawkbit** *Leontodon hispidus*, **Fairy Flax** *Linum catharticum*, **Common Bird's-foot-trefoil** *Lotus corniculatus*, **Primrose** *Primula vulgaris*, **Devil's-bit Scabious** *Succisa pratensis* and **Wild Thyme** *Thymus drucei*

The onset of rain prevented the group reaching Middlemoss farm house and so a further visit was planned in mid July to complete this and the next square giving us records for three monads. There are though plenty more to visit!

Chris Miles