

Dumfriesshire Botany Group at Tynron Doon 30 June 2021

On a hot sunny day seven of us met at the base of the Craigturra Scar where a track led up onto the hill ground. The monad included Tynron Doon at just over 300m with its dramatic hill fort.

Craigturra is a significant area of south facing rock and scree that has in the last couple of years had the conifer plantation removed. It had been replanted but some areas of scree and rock ledges were never planted and in the next rotation more areas have been left free of trees and more broadleaves have been included in the design.

There was an older record for Grater Butterfly Orchid at the base of the Scar which we did not find possibly due to the ground disturbance associated with the tree removal. Notable on the Scar was the abundance of **Sheep's-bit** *Jasione montana*, giving a blue haze in places. On the rather acid rocks



Sheep's-bit on rocky slopes of Craigturra

plants were very dried up. The most notable plant was probably **Black Spleenwort**, *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* alongside the less common **Maidenhair Spleenwort**, *Asplenium trichomanes* Ssp. *trichomanes* which has smaller more triangular leaves and is more delicate than the commoner subspecies more often seen on walls and buildings. On the track used to take out the timber there were species such as **Heath Grousel**, *Senecio sylvaticus*, **Trailing St John's-wort**, *Hypericum humifusum*, **Small Cudweed**, *Logfia minima* and **Prickly Sedge** *Carex muricata* Ssp. *pairae*. A notably large patch of **Wall Cotoneaster**, *Cotoneaster horizontalis* was growing near the top of the craigs and had clearly been there for years to have reached this size.

Above Craigturra the hillside opened out into a mosaic of grassland and heath. Where the Craigturra Burn ran down a very nice flushed community occurred and we had lunch here after some nice finds such as **Whorled Caraway**, *Carum verticillatum*, **Heath Fragrant-orchid**, *Gymnadenia borealis*, **Tawney Sedge** *Carex hostiana* and the three commoner Marsh orchids, Heath Spotted, Common Spotted and Northern Marsh, amongst others.

In the afternoon we explored the hill slopes above this as we made our way to the east of the monad. These were quite steep and proved interesting with rocky exposures and thin soils,



Trailing St John's-wort on track by Craigturra

sometimes flushed, supporting a good calcicolous flora. For example there was **Rock Rose** *Helianthemum nummularium*, **Wild Thyme** *Thymus drucei* and **Common Milkwort** *Polygala vulgaris*, much less common than its Heath Milkwort cousin here in Dumfriesshire. There are older records for **Juniper** *Juniperus communis*, here and we found a couple of rather desperate looking bushes on these slopes. They did not appear to be thriving and the combination of grazing and drought may be slowly taking its toll. We are not far here from the Tyron Juniper SSSI and this area is the main stronghold of what is left of Juniper in the wild in the County.



Lunch above Craigturra

We finally made it onto the Tynron Doon where there were great views of mid Nithsdale. Then it was a walk back down to the road to get back to the cars. This took us along some wet ground on the bottom of the valley where we added quite a long list of typical woodland and wetland species including some puzzling bushes we later identified as recently flailed Lime and hazel. The species total was an impressive 237 for this monad.

Chris Miles