

Meeting report – Loch Vaa

On a very warm afternoon eleven of us had an enjoyable time exploring Loch Vaa, the bare ground of the drop-down zone around the loch, the adjacent woodland and then the species rich grassland of the nearby cemetery. There were two species I was particularly hoping we would find. The first being the hybrid **Spearwort** *Ranunculus x levenensis* (*R. flammula* x *R. reptans*) (**Lesser Spearwort** x **Creeping Spearwort**). First found at this site in 2006 where it is common around the loch, but very easy to overlook as it looks just like a small **Lesser Spearwort**, unless you look at it closely and realise it is creeping which **Lesser Spearwort** doesn't do but **Creeping Spearwort** does. It is thought that the hybrid **Spearwort** most likely arrived at this site by being brought in by visiting waterfowl to the loch. **Creeping Spearwort** is an extremely rare species in the UK and has never been found in vc95. The hybrid has since been found in vc95 by another loch Avielochan and couple places by the River Spey.

The other species was *Persicaria minor* (**Small Water-pepper**) first found at this site in 2013 and at the time the most northern site in the UK. We soon found one small plant growing with *Persicaria maculosa* (**Redshank**) and *Veronica scutellata* (**Marsh Speedwell**), then Bob Turner soon found lots more plants. There must have been at least hundred plants. This is the only site in vc95.

Below left: *Ranunculus x levenensis*. Below right: *Persicaria minor* (**Small Water-pepper**)



In the loch we found several species including a small piece of *Potamogeton berchtoldii* (**Small Pondweed**) a species not recorded from the loch before. A good stand of *Sparganium angustifolium* (**Floating Bur-reed**) with long narrow leaves floating on the water surface. While on the stoney bottom of the loch and the stoney shore of the loch there were massive of *Littorella uniflora* (**Shoreweed**). While on the stoney shore around the loch there were plenty of *Carex viridula* (**Small-fruited Yellow-sedge**).

Below left: **Small-fruited Yellow-sedge.** Below right: **Floating Bur-reed.**



Left: showing the boathouse and how low the water level was.