

Brydekirk 21 April 2024

The groups first outing of the year was based at Brydekirk on the River Annan. Seven of us met on the high street under cloudy but dry skies in reasonable temperatures. We explored the village street and around the houses near the bridge before following the Annandale way down river through woodland and grassland. We recorded in two monads during the day. This early in the season many plants are yet to develop but early woodland flowers were evident. The Bluebells were just coming into flower.

The first square NY1870 includes the village as well as a section of river bank and woodland. Brydekirk and its bridge is built from the local red sandstone and a natural outcrop could be seen in what was probably an old quarry in the woodland just south of the village. On the pavements by the currently closed Brig Inn there was a good show of **Common Whitlowgrass** *Erophila verna* alongside **Hairy Bitter-cress** *Cardamine hirsuta* showing its 4 stamens . **Butterfly-bush** *Buddleja davidii* had a foothold on the unused area at the side of the pub as had **Londonpride** *Saxifraga x urbanum*. The riverside was a mix of garden escapes and robust natives. There was **Rock Crane's-bill** *Gernanium macrorrhizum* alongside the path and early growth of **Reed-Sweet-grass** *Glyceria maxima* and **Hemlock Water-dropwort** *Oenanthe crocata* on the river bank. On the grass verge we looked at **Lesser Celandine**, *Ficaria verna verna* with its bulbils and later saw its fertile cousin *Ficaria verna fertilis* in the more undisturbed woodland. A small number of **Winter-cress** *Barbarea vulgaris* plants were growing on regularly sprayed ground by a utility compound. This was most notable for the extensive growth of the **Common Liverwort** *Marchantia polymorpha*.

Once we left the houses the river habitat and woodland becomes more natural and the deeply cleft petals of **Wood Stichwort** *Stellaria nemorum* were soon seen on the riverbank.



Wood Stichwort Brydekirk April 2024

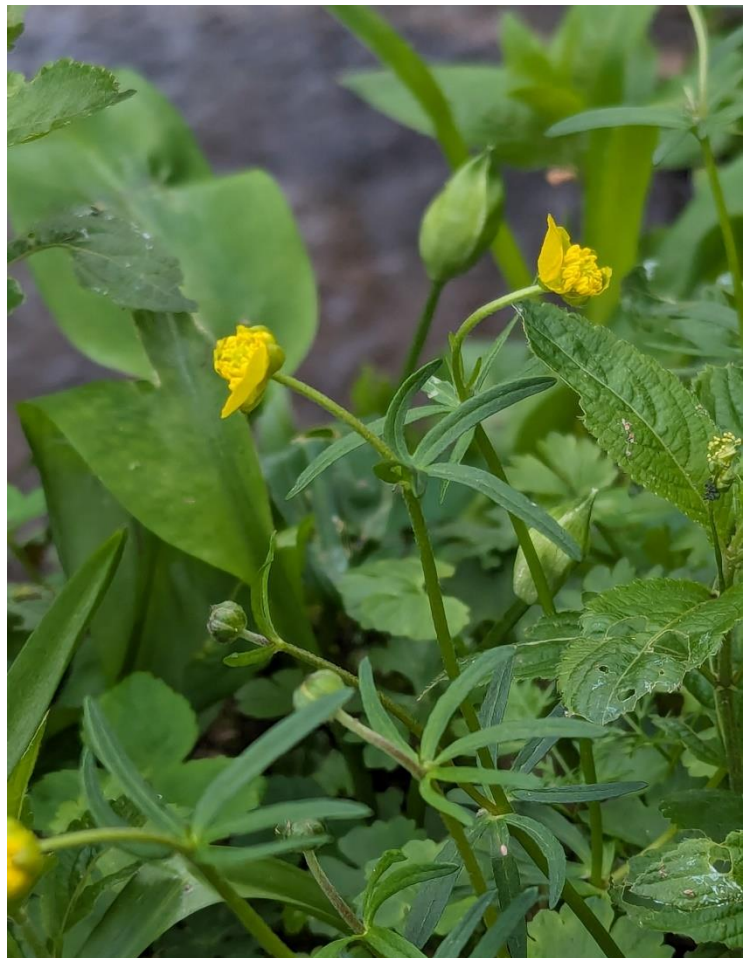
At this time of year just before the **Wild Garlic** *Allium ursinum* reaches full growth it is worth checking for other spring plants because it is hard to see them once it is fully out. Sure enough on the river bank under trees amongst much **Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage** *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* we found the subtle flowers and leaves of **Sanicle** *Sanicula europaea* and the round crenulated leaves of **Meadow Saxifrage** *Saxifraga granulata*. Old woodland on riversides is a typical habitat for the Saxifrage in Dumfriesshire.

There is a short section between the first and second square that we were not going to record but we found a large patch of **Ostrich Fern** *Matteuccia struthiopteris* unfurling its fronds here. This non native from Europe had clearly been washed down stream to

establish here rather than having been planted and we saw it again in our second square so this non native fern does seem to be spreading naturally.

The second square NY1969 has woodland along the riverside and on the bank above the path creating an attractive section of the walk. The woodland is mostly of native species though some coniferous and broadleaved underplanting has occurred. We had lunch on a log under the light spring canopy with **Wych Elm** *Ulmus glabra* and **Guelder-rose** *Viburnum opulus* amongst the trees and shrubs.

Here on the river bank there was more **Meadow Saxifrage** alongside another good old woodland indicator **Goldilocks Buttercup** *Ranunculus auricomius*. Interestingly this species is thought to be made up of many apomicts potentially being divided into many microspecies as on the continent. In Britain no satisfactory system has yet been agreed for these. Other old woodland plants included **Wood Melic** *Melica uniflora* just coming into flower, **Upland Enchanter's-nightshade** *Circaea x intermedia* and **Wood Speedwell** *Veronica montana*



We reached the end of the square at a large shingle bank at the south end of an island in the river. This could not be reached due to the high flow of water. The shingle gave us **Tansy** *Tanacetum vulgare* and **Feverfew** *Tanacetum parthenium*.

Goldilocks Buttercup Brydekirk
April 2024

Total taxa recorded on the day were NY1870 117 and NY1969 159.

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