

EASTER ROSS TOWN WALLS – A PLANT COUNT

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Fortrose



Invergordon



Twenty 10 metre sections of walls

- 20 mortared walls on Tain, Invergordon and Alness examined
- Numbers of individual plants counted in 10m sections
- The observations were limited to the vertical parts of the walls and excluded the bases and tops which have a different flora.
- Positions of plants on the wall were recorded
- Commonest plants were *Asplenium ruta-muraria* (Wall-rue) , *Asplenium trichomanes* (Maidenhair Spleenwort) and *Cymbalaria muralis* (Ivy-leaved Toadflax)(table 1)
- Other species were *Poa annua*, *Linaria purpurea*, *Epilobium sp*, *Taraxacum*, *Cardamine sp*, *Pseudofumaria lutea*, *Arabidopsis thaliana*, *Hedera helix*, *Mycelis muralis* and *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, *Ribes nigrum*, *Symphoricarpos albus*.

Table 1

Species	Number of plants 0-1 m above ground	Number of plants 1-2m above ground	total
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	2	102	104
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	13	77	90
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	41	26	67
<i>Poa annua</i>	17	12	29
<i>Linaria purpurea</i>	8	16	24
<i>Epilobium</i> sp	16	2	18
<i>Taraxacum</i>	2	8	10
<i>Cardamine</i> sp.	4	6	10
other	5	20	25
Total	108	269	377

Comment

- *Asplenium* plants were considerably more numerous in the upper (1-2m) wall sections than the lower (0-1m) wall sections. This was not the case for *Cymbalaria muralis*, unlike the previous similar Dundee study (Ballinger 2024).
- Sea mists (haar) may favour *Asplenium* growth
- The increased number of plants in the upper parts of the wall was entirely accounted for by *Asplenium* plants in this sample.
- The zonation may be accounted for by herbicide application near the wall base or salt on roads in winter. Light and water exposure may also differ. Sometimes there may be structural differences in different parts of the wall.
- Ballinger B.(2024) Dundee Walls –A Plant Count. BSS News 123 20-22