

# SOMERSET RARE PLANTS GROUP

Recording all plants growing wild in Somerset, not just the rarities



## Meeting Report



Clevedon Pill. Photo: HJC

### Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021 at Clevedon Pill

**Leader: Helena Crouch**

**Report: Helena Crouch**

Five members met in sunshine by the church for a walk along the coast south of Clevedon, following the route taken on a previous SRPG walk, led by John Martin in 2011. To our delight, we found White Ramping-fumitory (*Fumaria capreolata*) in flower by the sea wall, exactly where it was seen on the former walk. Nearby, we saw a Small Copper. We walked along the sea wall above the saltmarsh, heading for Gullhouse Point, where we searched in vain for Sea Wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*). On the narrow strip of saltmarsh, we recorded Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*), both Greater and Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia media* and *S. marina*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*), Long-bracted Sedge (*Carex extensa*) and Common Sea-lavender (*Limonium vulgare*).

By lunchtime, our number had dwindled to four. We sat on logs at the back of the saltmarsh, amongst several large plants of Sea Clover (*Trifolium squamosum*). This species is distinctively hairy, like Red Clover (*T. pratense*) which we found in bud nearby, however the stipules of Sea Clover have long wispy pointed free sections, whereas those of Red Clover have only a short pointed free section beyond the fused parts.

Heading south from Gullhouse Point, we found more large plants of Sea Clover, and recorded Thrift (*Armeria maritima*) on the saltmarsh, as well as English Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia anglica*) and the skeletal remains of Annual Sea-blite (*Suaeda maritima*). Although the English Scurvygrass was in flower, the Thrift was still only tight buds here. It was fine all day, but the saltmarsh was bleak, with a biting cold wind - all agreed that this was not a great time of year to visit this habitat!



Thrift (*Armeria maritima*) on the saltmarsh. Photo: HJC

One of our aims for the day was to update records for Sea Wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*). As in 2011, we found it in abundance along the edges of the low cliffs above the upper saltmarsh, the silvery foliage glistening in the sun. We also found it growing in the tarmac of the road along the sea wall!



Sea Wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*). Photo: HJC

We returned along the same route: another member departed when we reached the bridge over the Blind Yeo. The remaining three explored the bank of the Blind Yeo, adding more species to our list, including Fringed Water-lily (*Nymphoides peltata*), which we identified using 'The Vegetative Key to the British Flora' from a leaf fished out by the leader. This was a new hectad record for this invasive aquatic species. Returning across the saltmarsh, we recorded more Long-bracted Sedge (*Carex extensa*) and also Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*).

For our final mission, we clambered across rocks on the beach to visit the Tree Medick (*Medicago arborea*) which was first recorded on the cliff at Wain's Hill in 1973 by Miss I.F. Gravestock and Mrs H.R.H. Lance. To our delight, it was in full flower:



Tree Medick (*Medicago arborea*) on the cliffs of Wain's Hill, Clevedon. Photo: HJC

Back at the harbour, a third member departed. Alastair and I ascended Wain's Hill, where we met up with Liz and Clive, primarily to search for Dwarf Mouse-ear (*Cerastium pumilum*). This small spring annual was last recorded here in 1997, not seen in the hectad since then. We failed to find any, but we did find abundant Little Mouse-ear (*C. semidecandrum*) and Sea Mouse-ear (*C. diffusum*). On rock outcrops and in sparse turf we saw tiny plants of Early Forget-me-not (*Myosotis ramosissima*), Rue-leaved Saxifrage (*Saxifraga tridactylites*), Fern-grass (*Catapodium rigidum*) and a few vegetative rosettes of Kidney-vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*). Wild Clary (*Salvia verbenaca*) was beginning to flower, forming a stunning patch on some rock outcrops, but our star record was for Spring-sedge (*Carex caryophyllea*), which had not been recorded for the hectad since 1997.

It had been an excellent meeting, with sunshine all day. Even the Severn Estuary mud was glistening appealingly!



Severn mud at Clevedon. Photo: HJC