



## Ballymacormick Point, Groomsport

Leader: Margaret Marshall

29th May 2018



Sea Squill (*Scilla verna*)



Thrift (*Armeria maritima*)

This was a joint visit of the BNFC with members of the **Groomsport Village Association** who are working enthusiastically to enhance the village; they have planted apple trees in a neglected piece of land and their plant boxes include herbs with a pair of scissors attached so passers-by can help themselves.

They are anxious to see improvements at Ballymacormick with the ambition to create an eco-zone and have been in consultation with the National Trust and North Down and Ards Council.

*John Crockard* of the Groomsport Village Association had contacted BNFC in 2017 and *Lesley Crawshaw* and *Margaret Marshall* had a botanical walk at Ballymacormick with members of the Group in September 2017.

On a fine May evening a large group of BNFC members and Groomsport residents set off on a walk along Ballymacormick Point, a mixed habitat of sea-shore, sea marsh, rocky areas and Gorse scrub. Along the lane we saw the **Mediterranean Three-cornered Garlic** (*Allium triquetrum*) with its 3-angled stems, now naturalised in Co.Down. Another coastal plant is **Tree Mallow** (*Lavatera arborea*) which can withstand Atlantic gales but does not tolerate frost. We found the purple flowers of the **Chinese Duke of Argyll's Tea plant** climbing through a privet hedge. People were warned that **Hemlock Water Dropwort** (*Oenanthe crocata*) is poisonous.

Spring brings a riot of colour to Ballymacormick, the blue of the county flower of Down, **Sea Squill** (*Scilla verna*). The yellow of **Birdsfoot Trefoil** (*Lotus corniculatus*), the pink of **Thrift** (*Armeria maritima*) and the whites of **Sea Campion** (*Silene uniflora*) and **Sea Mayweed** (*Tripleurospermum maritimum*). The sea marsh area is distinctive with **Sea Milkwort** (*Glaux maritima*). **Sea Arrow-grass** (*Triglochin maritima*), **Lesser Sea-spurrey** (*Spergularia marina*) and **Glasswort** (*Salicornia europaea*); this has fleshy leaves to cope with the saltiness and soda used to be extracted from it for use in glass-making. **Yellow Flag Iris** (*Iris pseudacorus*) was flourishing in damp areas and **Great Willowherb** (*Epilobium hirstum*) and **Rosebay Willowherb** (*Chamerion angustifolium*) would soon be in flower.

It was agreed that paths could be improved but should still be kept suitable for pedestrian-use only and that Gorse, brambles and rough grasses should be kept under control to allow more desirable plants to flourish and hence to improve conditions for other wildlife. The Groomsport Village association would continue to work with the National Trust and the Council to make the area more accessible and to improve its value as a habitat.