



Sutton Poyntz Biodiversity Group

Many of the old walls in Sutton Poyntz are covered in plants, some of which provide habitat for invertebrates such as woodlice, moths and sometimes insects, which may show as plant galls. The banner photograph shows a typical community, which can be classified within a National framework. National Vegetation Classification OV42 *Cymbalaria muralis* community: UK habitats= 68: Phase 1= J2.5

Species present: Plants: ivy-leaved toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*: red valerian *Centranthus ruber* and its gall *Trioza centranthi*; *Campanula* sp. Mosses: *Homalothecium sericeum*: *Tortula muralis*: Fern – black spleenwort *Asplenium adanitum nigrum*: Lichens *Diplotomma alboatrum*, *Caloplaca flavescens*,

Ferns are not seen often. Here we illustrate two of interest:



Rustyback fern *Asplenium ceterach*. This fern is found associated with calcareous rocks and walls. Although recorded south of a line from the Dee to the Thames it can be vulnerable to walls being cleaned. Here it is seen on two walls on the west side of Sutton Road.



Black spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum* is common through Britain favouring calcareous walls. Here there is very little with one plant on Sutton Road and another two on The Weir (see banner picture above).

Flowering Plants:



Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* is a perennial herb of walls, rock cervices and stony banks. It is really a plant of acid places but as here it is also found on limestone. It is mainly a west country plant from Wales southwards.



Ivy-leaved toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis* seems to find its way into the minutest crack in our stonewalls and seems to resist removal. It is found all over Great Britain excluding the Highlands of Scotland.



Mexican fleabane: *Erigeron karvinskianus*. Introduced into Britain in 1856. It is mainly a southern plant preferring frost free and spreads by seed from where-ever it is left to grow. It seems hard to eliminate.

Plant galls

A gall is a reaction by a host plant to an intimate association with another species, e.g. an insect or a fungus, causing the plant tissue to alter. In the case, illustrated on the right the host plant is **red valerian** *Centranthus ruber* (quite common on Sutton Poyntz walls) whilst the invasive species gall is caused by the nymphs of a scale insect ***Trioza centranthi***. There are not many records for this insect on the National Biodiversity Network Atlas but it seems to be increasing here since 2020.



Ivy *Hedera helix*. Often considered a pest but an important plant for pollinating hoverflies and bees such as the ivy-bee *Colletes hedera* discovered in Dorset new to Britain in 2001. Host plant to the holly blue butterfly.

