

Spotlight



Action for Mediterranean rarities at Talland Bay

Big machinery is far too rarely put into operation for bryophyte conservation, so it was a pleasure to oversee digger works at Talland Barton Farm SSSI, Cornwall, in January 2018, funded by Natural England. This brilliant little site supports an impressive assemblage of rare species, amongst them the Mediterranean *Tortula canescens* and *T. cuneifolia*, both confined to the west-facing wall of a small, disused stone quarry. Encroaching vegetation, especially bramble and ivy, is a constant threat, growing over the quarry walls and shading-out the rare mosses. It was last cleared, by hand, in 2011. This year, a more robust approach was adopted, with a JCB used to clear and level the quarry floor so that ponies now have easy access to graze the walls. Monitoring is planned for spring 2019 to see how the habitat develops and mosses respond. The digger driver, a Janner named Roy, with an impressively colourful language, was on the very cusp of his retirement and clearly pleased to have, finally, engaged with the conservation of our threatened bryophytes.

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