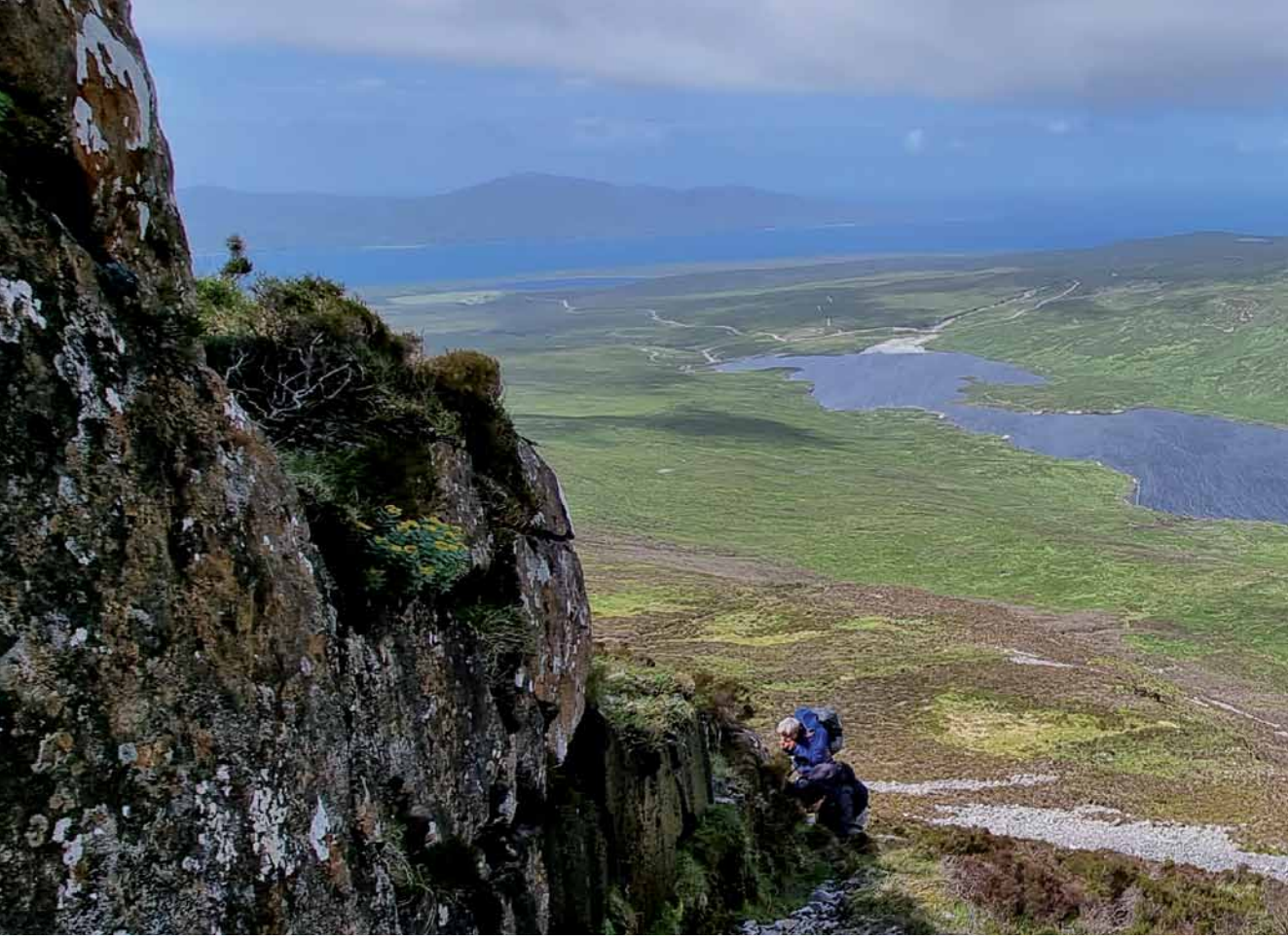


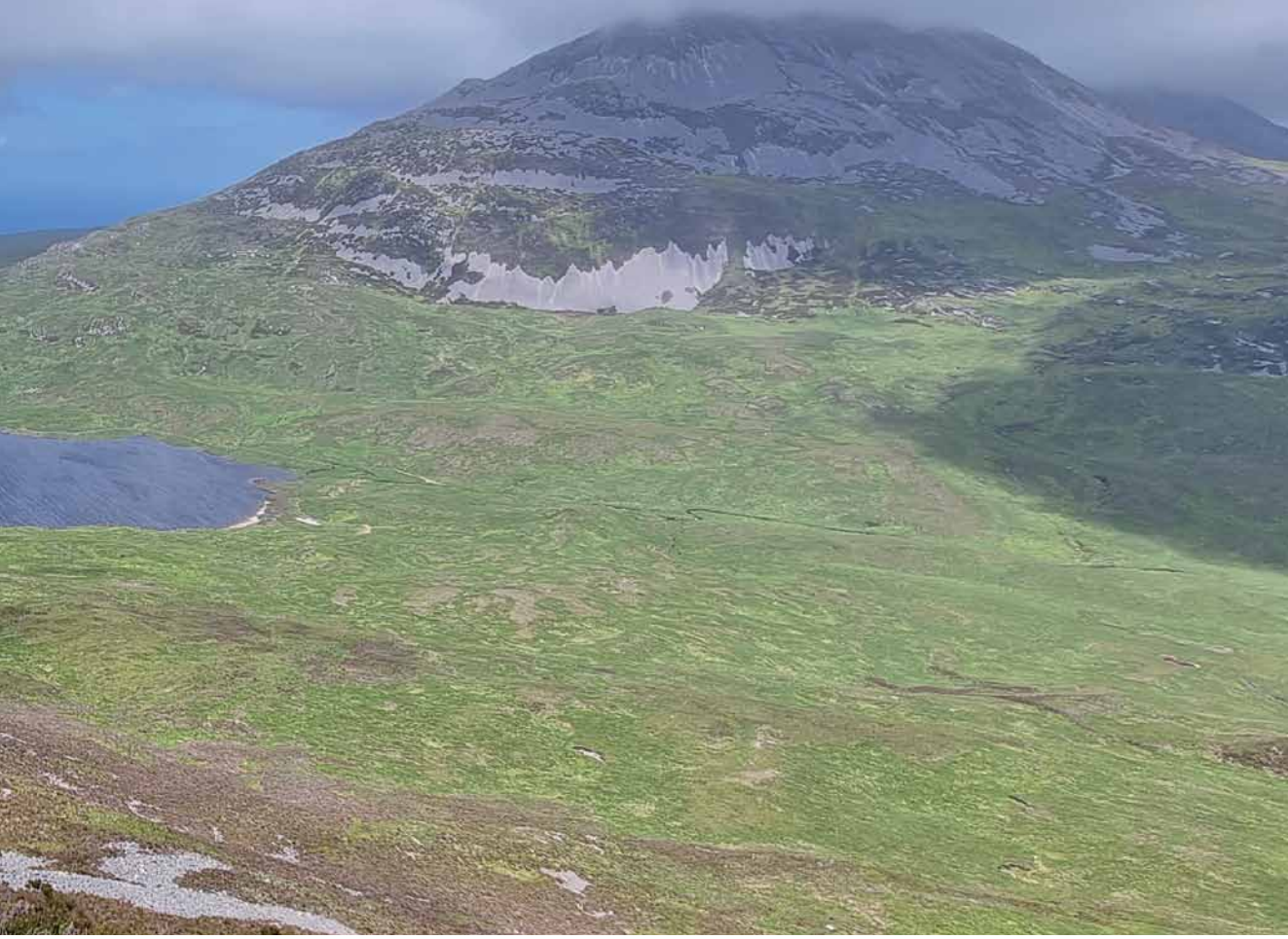
△ Figure 1. Looking north from Aonach-bheinn, with bryologists exploring the basalt dykes. *Rory Whytock*

BBS Summer meeting 2022: Jura, 19–24 June

Rory Whytock reports on a much delayed Summer meeting to Jura

After being delayed twice, the proposed summer meeting in Jura (vc 102) finally came to fruition. The postponements were all down to the COVID-19 pandemic which meant that all group events were cancelled in the preceding years. Although many of the restrictions had ended by the time the British Bryological Society descended upon the island of Jura, care was still needed as many of the island's residents had not been exposed to the virus owing to the isolated location of the island.

Most members of the group travelled to the island on 18 June. For many of us, it was a long journey consisting of travelling to Kintyre in Argyll, to get the ferry to Islay. Once on Islay, there was a short drive to the other ferry terminal on the island at Port Askaig where we got another ferry to cross the sound of Jura on to the island itself. There is only one road, which runs along



the eastern side of the island, so navigating is pretty simple once there.

Jura is dominated by hills, known as the Paps of Jura, which can be seen from some distance, even from mainland Scotland. Situated in a western, highly oceanic climate, there is much bryological interest to be enjoyed. The main focus of the meeting was to explore remote locations which are otherwise difficult to access and allow members to become familiar with the rarities recorded on the island.

A total of 17 people attended the meeting: Matt Adamson, Neil Bell, Fiona Cameron, Mary Christie, Claire Halpin, Gordon Haycock, Nick Hodgetts, Hamlyn Jones, Liz Kungu, David Long, Peter Martin, Sean O'Leary, Gordon Rothero, Clare Shaw, Philippa Thompson, Sharon Yardy and myself (Rory Whytock). In the account below, all new vice-county records (nvcrs) are denoted with an asterisk (*).

19 June

In the morning, everyone met in the Craighouse Village Hall which was our base for the week. After introductions and pleasantries were out of the way, a plan was hatched to go to the south side of the island where Fiona had organised vehicle access to search the areas around Gleann Astaile. Three groups were formed, one tackled the low ground around Aoineadh an Reithe (NR4575), one recorded the habitats around Lochan Gleann Astaile (NR4771) and the final group recorded the north-facing side of Aonach-bheinn (NR4870), overlooking the lochan (Fig. 1).

The group tackling Aoineadh an Reithe consisted of Liz, Fiona and Clare Shaw. The main purpose of this group was to explore virgin coastal ground north of the known *Cyclodictyon laetevirens* population. While the area did not yield any new *C. laetevirens* populations, a very

△ Figure 2. *Racomitrium ellipticum*, Lochan Gleann Astaile. *Claire Halpin*

△ Figure 3. Plentiful *Campylopus setifolius* at the base of crags on the north slope of Aonach-bheinn. *Rory Whytock*

respectable total of 111 species was recorded from two monads. Notable finds in this area included *Drepanolejeunea hamatifolia* and *Dicranum scottianum,* both found on coastal crags.

All other members parked at the western side of Lochan Gleann Astaile, where we started as one group exploring the margins of the lochan. In order to cover more ground David Long, Claire Halpin and Gordon Haycock split off to further explore the lochan and surrounding habitats, which did not disappoint. A total of 90 species was recorded including *Herbertus hutchinsiae, Plagiochila spinulosa, Pleurozia purpurea* and *Racomitrium ellipticum* (Fig. 2). *Campylopus setifolius* (Fig. 3) was also recorded; this was, perhaps surprisingly, only the third record for vc 102. David also managed no less than three nvcrs, *Gymnomitrion obtusum*, Polytrichum longisetum** and *Sphagnum medium**.

The remaining members, myself, Nick, Gordon Rothero, Matt, Pete and Sean, ascended the north-facing slope of Aonach-bheinn. After walking through what seemed like endless *Molinia caerulea* to get to the heaths and rocky outcrops further up the hill, the rewards were worth it. Once we started exploring the wet heath, the expected oceanic species began to appear, including similar species to those seen by the group exploring Lochan Gleann Astaile. They included *Bazzania tricrenata, Colura calyptrifolia, Herbertus hutchinsiae, Plagiochila spinulosa, Pleurozia purpurea* and another new location for *Campylopus setifolius*. *Racomitrium ellipticum* was a treat to see, as always; it seemed to be confined to small basalt outcrops that were slightly base-rich in nature.

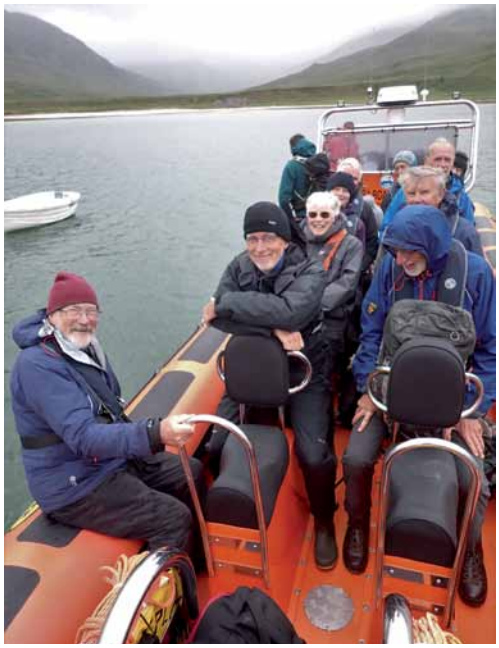
Much of the island is dominated by quartzite, which is a very hard, glass-like, acidic rock which does not encourage diversity. Despite this, small basalt outcrops that are more base-rich than the quartzite provided some relief by providing a different substrate for an additional number of species. It was on these dykes that species such as *Saccogyna viticulosa*, *Chionomola cylindrotheca*, Entosthodon obtusus* and *Glyphomitrium daviesii* (Fig. 4) were recorded.

△ Figure 4. *Glyphomitrium daviesii* on a basalt outcrop at Aonach-bheinn. *Claire Halpin*

20 June

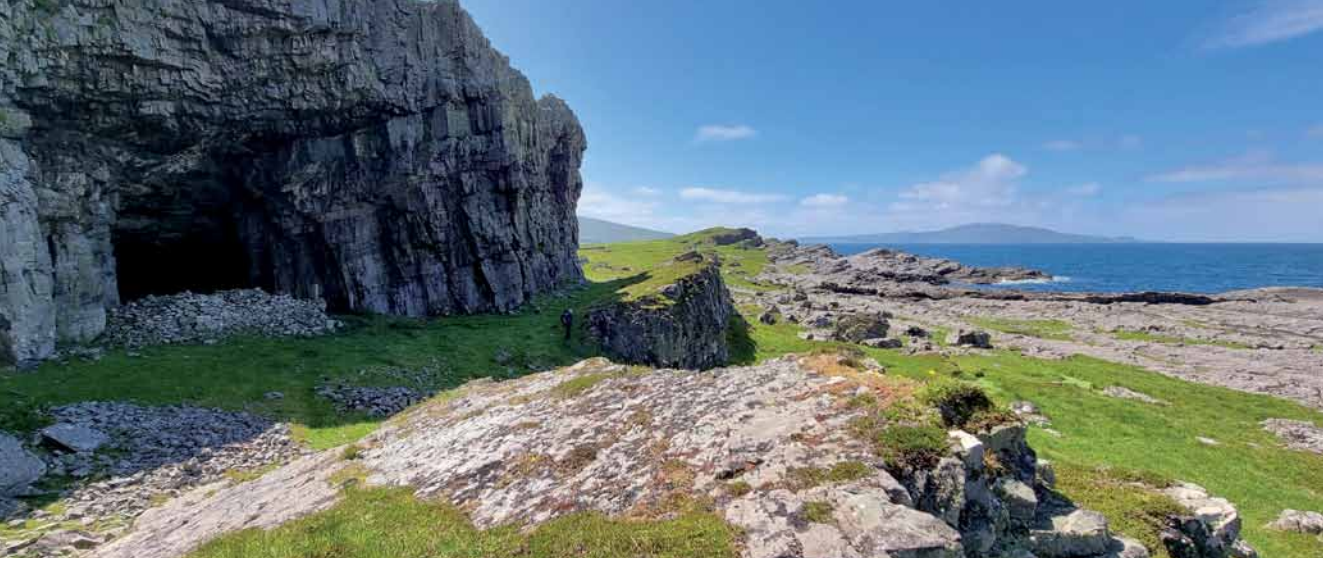
There was a real buzz of excitement about today's exploration – a boat trip (on a RIB) to Ruantallain (NR5083), a remote location on the west cost of Jura with no previous records. Unfortunately, it was with sadness that we learnt that Fiona, who had spent great time and energy in organising the trip to Jura, had caught COVID-19 and was now unable to join in any more outings for the rest of the week.

We boarded the RIB (Fig. 5) which took us to our destination through the Sound of Islay, and along the way the group were treated to good views of their first sea eagles of the trip. Upon arrival at the bay in Ruantallain, a small rowing boat was used to transport the members to the shore, two at a time. Sharon, Pete and I eagerly volunteered to do the rowing. It quickly became apparent that the shore was a lot further away than it appeared and it was going to take quite a lot of journeys to get everyone over. We three rowers were left in no doubt that we were due a few beers in the pub that evening!



△ Figure 5. Participants eager to get off the boat and explore. *Philippa Thompson*

Once safely on land, the recording started in earnest. Initial recording efforts focused on the coastal cliffs and caves (Fig. 6), in the small hope that new *C. laetevirens* populations might well be discovered. While this did not turn out to be the case, interesting finds were made, with no less than 310 species recorded in the day. The first species of note was *Dicranum scottianum* which was frequent on the low coastal cliffs. *Plagiochila* species were well represented, including *P. bifaria, P. spinulosa* and a single location for *P. exigua* found by Sean O'Leary. David Long found a population of *Radula aquilegia* near a natural stone arch, while in this same vicinity there was a nice big patch of *Lophocolea fragrans* found in a small cave which showed all the promise of harbouring *C. laetevirens*, but this was unfortunately absent. Other notable finds made during the day were *Weissia perssonii*, found by Nick Hodgetts, and a new location for



△ Figure 6. Ruantallain's beautiful coastline showing the cliffs and caves. *Rory Whytock*

Glyphomitrium daviesii.

The return journey via the (multiple) small rowing boat trips and then the RIB back around the island was taking its toll on the group. This was mainly due to the rain which had suddenly come in once we had all boarded the RIB, bringing with it a sudden drop in temperature; this combined with the tiredness led to everyone hunkering down on the RIB with barely a word spoken on the trip back. Nevertheless, it was a very worthwhile trip indeed that was enjoyed by all.

▽ Figure 7. *Anthoceros punctatus* in a ditch in Ardfernal village. *David Long*

21 June

After such a long day, a slightly easier couple of locations were decided upon. The group split in two, with one heading to a large coastal ravine called Allt Bun an Eas (NR4576) on the south-west side of Jura where there were big waterfalls and caves to explore. Highlights of this location were *Grimmia muehlenbeckii, Rhabdoweisia crenulata** and *Schistidium elegantulum**, all found by Sean O'Leary. *Drepanolejeunea hamatifolia* and *Glyphomitrium daviesii* topped off the nice finds at this site.

The other group explored the eastern side of the island around the coast and village of Ardfernal (NR5671). Here we had a good diversity of habitats to explore and therefore a nice species list at the end of the day. A walk along the shoreline provided a good display of coastal species, including *Frullania microphylla* var. *microphylla, Hennediella heimii, Nogopterium gracile, Tortella flavovirens* and *Weissia perssonii*. Gordon Rothero was the first to get the group excited by a find of *Pseudomarsupidium decipiens* nestled among the coastal rocks. This was quickly followed by Nick Hodgetts finding some *Harpanthus scutatus* in the same area.

Once we were finished around the coast and headed into the village of Ardfernal, David Long found a superb population of freely fruiting *Anthoceros punctatus* (Fig. 7). A range of small *Bryum* species were also recorded in the small

hamlet, including *B. rubens, B. ruderale* and my find of *B. tenuisetum**. The list for the day at Ardfernal came to 253 species which was an impressive total for the relatively small area searched.

22 June

Today was the second and final outing on the RIB, allowing us to explore Glenbatrick (NR5180) on the south side of Loch Tarbert on the west coast of Jura. Our newly formed Olympic rowing team were back out in force, as before, taking people off the rib using the small rowing boat to get everyone on to a small slipway. From here we split into two groups, one heading east and one heading west. Being on north-facing ground made quite the difference from the mainly south-facing ground at Ruantallain on the other side of Loch Tarbert. While we recorded a similar range of species, there were some notable species that were not seen at Ruantallain.

It was not long before the group heading west were clambering over basalt dykes and squeezing into caves in an eager search for rarities. The first species that got the group excited was *Psuedomarsupidium decipiens*, which was present in small quantities. *Lepidozia cupressina* was locally frequent, although looking a bit parched as a result of an extended period of drought in the late spring/early summer. Though slightly hard to find, *Harpanthus scutatus* was recorded by both Sean and myself.

Nick and I had started heading to the next set of small crags when we noticed that there was quite some commotion from the rest of the group in the area which they had just visited. We were sure that they had just found something amazing, perhaps a new *Cyclodictyon laetevirens* population? But as it turned out, Gordon Rothero had just lost his phone! Though fortunately for him, the group are just as adept at finding phones as they are bryophytes.

The group heading east had a similar range of species. Oceanic species recorded by this group included *Herbertus hutchinsiae, Lepidozia cupressina, Plagiochila spinulosa* and *Pseudomarsupidium decipiens*, more frequent here than they were west of the Glenbatrick slipway. David Long found *Dicranodontium uncinatum* nestled in some caves, a notable addition to the species list and the first time it had been recorded on the trip. Other species of note included *Lophocolea fragrans, Grimmia lisae, Stereodon callichrous* and *Thuidium delicatulum*. This was the last day out using the boats, and while it was a thrilling adventure for all, the designated rowers were quite ready for a rest.

Clare Shaw and Gordon Haycock did not go out in the boats on this day, instead they headed up the Coir' an Uisge Dheirg burn *en route* to Dubh Bheinn to the west of Craighouse. They managed to achieve a great list of records with some interesting species such as *Gymnomitrion crenulatum, Plagiochila exigua* and *Bryoerythrophyllum ferruginascens*.

23 June

Today was the first day of heading into the 'proper' hills on the island, or the Paps of Jura (Pap is an old Norse word for breast, the name given to the hills because of their distinctive conical shape). We started out as one big group, heading for Loch na Fùdarlaich (NR5376) at the base of Corra Bheinn before we started recording. The route took us along the Evan's walk, which is meant to be a path. However, there was no single path along this route, instead there were hundreds, all criss-crossing each other in a variety of directions. While there may have been a single path at some point, over time the high numbers of red deer on the island have forged their own paths to the point that Evan's walk

△ Figure 8. *Adelanthus lindbergianus* in its sole population on Jura, growing with *Herbertus hutchinsiae*. *Neil Bell*

was now a figment of anyone's imagination. The best way of navigating seemed to be to pick the path that seemed closest to our intended westerly direction. We did make it out of this labyrinth of *Molinia caerulea,* but it cannot be described as a pleasant walk in.

Once this was eventually navigated, we split into three groups. Those who wanted to see *Adelanthus lindenbergianus* headed to the known population at the north-eastern side of Bheinn Shiantaidh (NR5174). The other groups either headed up the slopes of Corra Bheinn or explored around the Loch na Fùdarlaich.

The group exploring Bheinn Shiantaidh duly found *A. lindenbergianus* (Fig. 8) at the location originally found by Gordon Rothero, though no new populations were found on this occasion.

The group that explored Corra Bheinn found a nice range of species, and, owing to the higher altitude, a few delightful additional species not yet seen during the week. Although there was an exciting flurry of species that we had not recorded, such as *Plagiochila carringtonii* and *Scapania ornithopoides*, the species list came to an almost abrupt end after the first half hour. This is largely a result of the quartzite-dominated geology of Jura which restricts diversity. Some basalt exposed on crags further up the hill provided some relief by harbouring *Rhabdoweisia crenulata* and *R. crispata*. Though diversity was low, the group were diligently searching through the hepatic mat in the small hope that a new population of *Adelanthus lindenbergianus* might be found. Whilst this did not happen, Gordon Rothero did provide some reprieve at the end of the day by finding *Scapania nimbosa*, the only record of the species during the meeting.

The group that explored Loch na Fùdarlaich

collated a good list of species for two monads. Species of note included *Anastrepta orcadensis, Calypogeia azurea, Herbertus hutchinsiae, Marsupella aquatica, Pleurozia purpurea* and *Grimmia ramondii*.

24 June

A storm was forecast in the afternoon of the following day (our intended day of travel) which threatened to affect our scheduled ferry off the island, encouraging everyone to leave with haste. Because of this, today was the last day of recording. Everyone headed for the north-east side of the island around Ardlussa (NR6487) as we hadn't done any recording in this area during the meeting. We split into several groups to try to cover as much ground as possible.

The first group recorded a deeply incised ravine which is part of the Doire Dhonn SSSI (NR6690). The ravine did not disappoint. Shortly after entering the ravine, I was standing in front of a large sheet of *Jubula hutchinsiae*. Although it was in a slightly awkward spot to view, it was in good quantity so everyone was able to see it. The finds continued to come thick and fast here, with a rich assemblage of Lejeuneaceae being recorded including *Aphanolejeunea microscopica, Drepanolejeunea hamatifolia* and *Harpalejeunea molleri*. Just before leaving the top of the ravine, *Marchesinia mackaii* and *Tetrodontium brownianum** and were found on vertical rock faces on opposite sides of the ravine.

Given the diversity of the ravine, Gordon and I were keen to explore the lower stretches of the watercourse. This effort was duly paid off with Gordon finding the first of several populations of *Radula aquilegia*. Additional species from this stretch included *Harpanthus scutatus* and *Heterocladium wulfsbergii*. Further out along the coast, more *Radula aquilegia* was found on the rocks by the shore and another nice population

△ Figure 9. *Pseudomarsupidium decipiens*, Dhoire Dhonn SSSI. *Rory Whytock*

of *Pseudomarsupidium decipiens* (Fig. 9) in a small crevice under a tree.

The other section of the SSSI, which included Atlantic oak woodlands to the south of the ravine, was covered by another group. They managed another good haul of species, such as *Microlejeunea ulicina, Plagiochila punctata, Grimmia hartmanii, Ulota calvescens* and more *Pseudomarsupidium decipiens* (while we had seen our fair share of this species, we were still not bored of finding it).

Another of the groups explored two monads at Lussa Bay, just to the south of Ardlussa village. Numerous interesting species were seen in the area including *Trichocolea tomentella* (Fig. 10), *Rhynchostegiella tenella, Ulota hutchinsiae* and *Didymodon icmadophilus**, found by Sean O'Leary. Peter Martin also managed an

△ Figure 10. *Trichocolea tomentella* in woodland, Lussa Bay. *Claire Halpin*

interesting find of *Tortella inclinata** on a wall by the road.

Summary

Overall, the week was a great success with many new areas and species recorded. Our efforts resulted in 2689 records from 33 monads and 25 nvcrs. Interestingly, despite being the rarest species on the island and a particular draw for many of our group, *Cyclodictyon laetevirens* was not recorded during the week-long meeting. While visiting the known site was discussed (several times!), it has been recorded relatively recently and there was more of a desire within the group to find a new population than to 'twitch' a known one. The fact that many seemingly suitable locations were explored and no new populations found puts more emphasis on how important the known population is on the island. Re-finding *Adelanthus lindbergianus* was a slightly different proposition, however, as that had only been seen once since its original discovery and checking on the known population and looking for further populations in the area was thought to be more important.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Fiona Cameron for organising the meeting. The whole group felt particularly sorry for Fiona's situation when she was unable to attend after the first day in the field but, rest assured, the meeting was a great success. Indeed, the trip felt like a group effort. Thanks are also due to Fiona, for her organisation of the event, Gordon for stepping in to lead the event following Fiona's departure, the three rowers who helped get the members on and off the RIB, Claire Halpin for meticulously sorting out all the records for the meeting, and the landowners for providing access. Those interested in the records made during the meeting should be able to download them from the event record on the BBS website.

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