

## CITATION

**TORRS TO MASON'S WALK**  
**SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**  
Dumfries and Galloway

Site code: 1553

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NX710437

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 83, 84  
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 312

AREA: 161.41 hectares

## NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological:	Stratigraphy:	Wenlock
Biological:	Coastlands:	Maritime Cliff
	Coastlands:	Saltmarsh
	Coastlands:	Shingle
	Vascular plants:	Vascular plant assemblage

## DESCRIPTION

This site stretches approximately 9km along the coast, approximately 5km south of Kirkcudbright, and is notified for geological features, coastal habitats and plants.

This coast exhibits unrivalled sections through the Silurian turbidites sequences of the southern Southern Uplands. These include Llandoverly and Wenlock strata, the Raeberry Castle and Ross formations respectively, as well as the problematic rocks variously assigned within the Silurian. These sediments have been interpreted as representing part of an accretionary prism formed on the northern continental margin of the Iapetus Ocean. The turbidites of the Ross formation yield graptolites from numerous localities here, allowing these rocks to be dated as being of Wenlock age. This, taken with graptolite determinations from the Raeberry Castle formation, place the rocks of the area firmly in the lower and middle Silurian and make the site one of considerable significance. This is a key locality in studies of sedimentation and stratigraphic relationship in the Silurian of the Southern Uplands, their structure bearing on the evolution of the continental plate forming the northern margin of the Iapetus Ocean.

The site is botanically one of the richest coastal areas in the Stewartry District, reflecting the variety of habitats developed over the exposed Silurian rocks. There are numerous storm terraces of flat stones and shingle supporting such rare and localised plants as oysterplant *Mertensia maritime*, sea-kale and sea radish.

The base of the cliffs has developed small areas of saltmarsh with lax-flowered sea-lavender *Limonium humile*; base-rich grassland with yellow-vetch, hare's foot clover, carline thistle and seaside centauray.

The cliffs support extensive communities of rock samphire, rock sea-spurrey *Spergularia rupicola* and English stonecrop. Acid maritime grassland, maritime heath, flushes, cliff scrub with juniper and coastal woodland are also represented.

## **NOTIFICATION HISTORY**

First notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as part of the former Kirkcudbright Bay SSSI: 1956.

Re-notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as Balmae Coast SSSI: 1968 and 1974.

Re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 31 March 1987 with a net increase in area of 33ha.

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 13 July 2010.

## **REMARKS**

Measured area of site corrected (from 168ha).