

The Pickleridge Sea Kale – gone but not forgotten

In September 2021 I was walking along Pickleridge and noticed a plant at the top of the beach which I did not remember seeing before. I took a photo and consulted with Jane Warr and Stephen Evans and it was identified as a (small and rather scruffy) Sea Kale plant. I was quite excited by this as Peter, in his role as a PCNPA guide at Castlemartin, believed that the only Sea Kale plant in Pembrokeshire was that on Bluckspool Beach at Castlemartin. This particular plant is considered so precious that is fenced in order to stop cattle eating it. So now we had a second one!! On further research I found that there have been others, for example, there was one on West Dale Beach a few years ago which was destroyed by a rock fall.



In April 2022 the plant looked very healthy and was covered with flower buds. In July 2023 it was still there. But it is not there any more – the winter storms must have uprooted it.



But there are plenty of other interesting plants to look for along the top of the beach at Pickleridge. There is Sea Rocket – it seems very variable from year to year which I suppose is to be expected as it is an annual or biennial so is dependant on seeds germinating. It is an attractive short spreading plant with small pink 4-petalled flowers.



And at the other extreme of size is Sea Radish. In 2023 there were some enormous straggly plants of this species, which has 4-petalled yellow flowers and the most unusual knobby seed pods. The whole plant is edible.

Another edible plant growing at Pickleridge is the very familiar Sea Beet. This plant has shiny, thick, leathery leaves which are good to eat, as are the flowers. The only snag is finding some that are not right next to the path if it is used by dogs!



All these plants flourish at the very top edge of the beach just above the high-tide mark and can be found nowhere else.

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