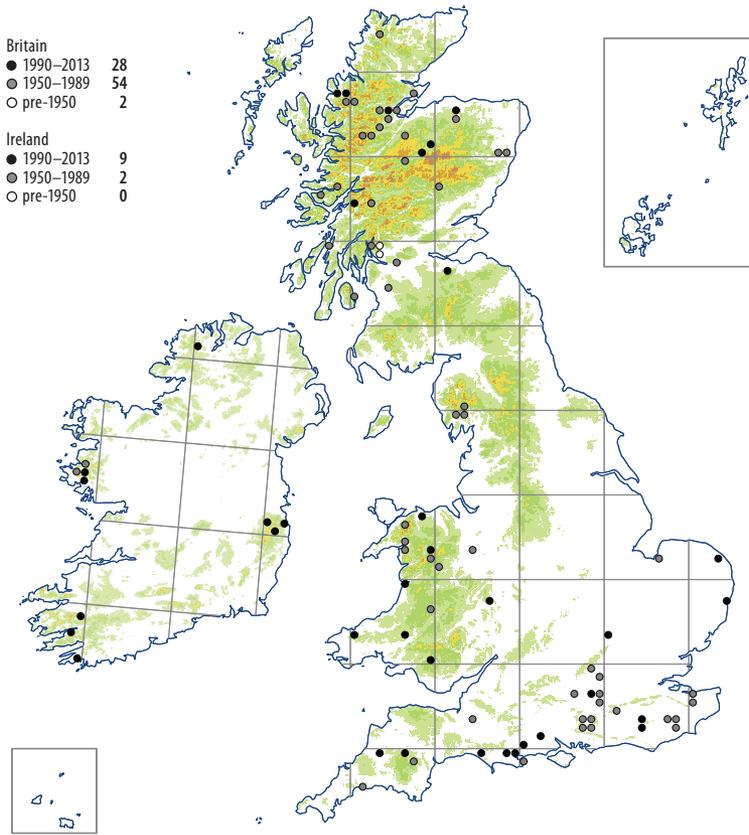


# Aneura mirabilis



This species, the only mycoheterotrophic liverwort in Britain, is found among loose peat or leaf litter a few centimetres below ground level. Its commonest habitat is under *Sphagnum* (especially *S. fallax*, *S. fimbriatum*, *S. palustre* and *S. squarrosum*) in boggy birch woods, but it also grows between the tussocks in wet *Molinia* communities, and has been found under *Pellia* in oak woodland. Paton (1999) says that *Aneura mirabilis* is found in situations that are periodically wet, but not permanently saturated, i.e. along the acrotelm-catatelm boundary. *A. mirabilis* is parasitic on an endophytic basidiomycete fungus which it shares with a *Betula* mycorrhiza (Read *et al.*, 2000; Bidartondo & Duckett, 2010). The liverwort obtains all its carbon from the fungus, which in turn gets all its carbon from *Betula*. Altitudinal range: 5–320 m.

Sequencing studies have shown *A. mirabilis* to be nested within *Aneura* (Wickett & Goffinet, 2008), so it is now subsumed in this genus with the loss of its most apt original name *Cryptothallus*.

Dioicous. Sporophytes are frequent, throughout the year, emergent above the plant material below which *A. mirabilis* grows. Gemmae are unknown.

As this liverwort grows underground and has to be burrowed for, its distribution in Britain, Ireland and elsewhere is certainly very imperfectly known. It is more often discovered during group meetings than during solo recording because of the number of patches of sphagnum that need to be rolled back before a population is located.

European Boreal-montane. Recorded to date from Scandinavia, European Russia, Germany, Austria, France, Portugal and Greenland.

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