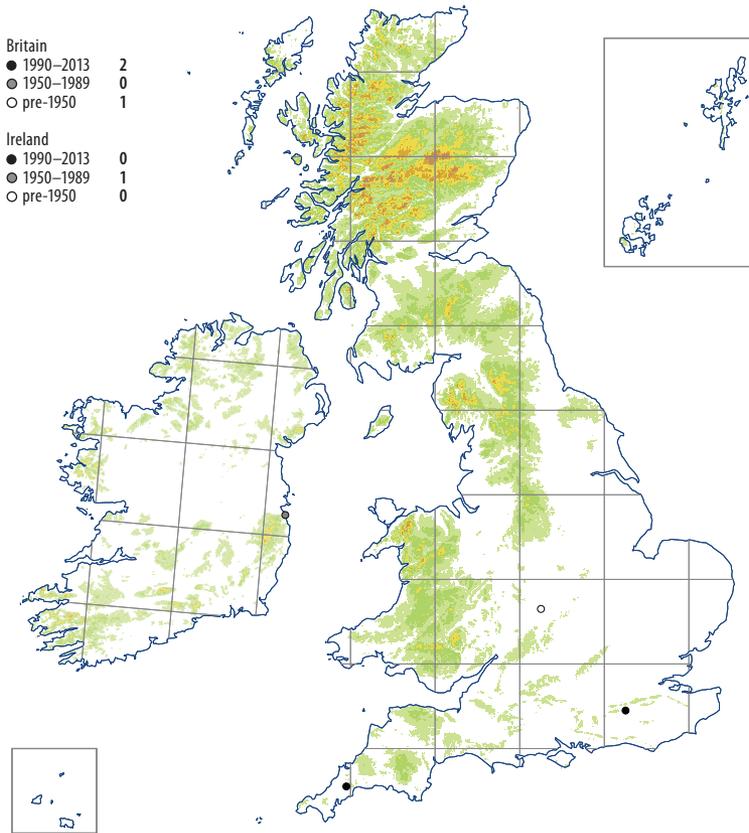


Grimmia crinita



This thermophilous species forms flat grey patches (likened to mouse fur) on dry, basic man-made substrates including weathered concrete and mortar, favouring more or less vertical unshaded walls with warm sunny aspects. It is a poor competitor and apart from *Tortula muralis* no other associated species have been noted. It has always been rare in Britain and Ireland. One small population persisted for 17 years (1872–1889) on a mortared wall of a canal bridge in Warwickshire, and for many years this was the only known population. It was considered extinct, until in 1999 it was discovered in Cornwall on a concrete settling tank in China Clay works,

but the population disappeared soon afterwards. An Irish specimen was subsequently traced, collected in 1950, from the city walls of Dublin but there are no further records. Most recently a small patch was found in 2013 on mortar on a low limestone wall in a Surrey churchyard (Wallis, 2013). Altitudinal range: 50–180 m.

A lack of persistence, perhaps taken together with its apparent absence from natural rock, has given rise to the notion that it is an introduction (Braithwaite (1888–1895) said, “it is not at home with us”). However, it is quite likely that sporadic populations arise as a result of wind-blown spores, but fail to persist in our humid, oceanic climate (Grevén, 2011).

Autoicous; capsules are common, mature in spring.

Submediterranean-Subatlantic. With scattered occurrences in W and C Europe extending to Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania in the east, but predominantly a southern species with its main distribution around the Mediterranean Sea. Macaronesia (Tenerife), N Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). SW Asia to Pakistan, the Himalaya and China.

R.D. Porley



◀ Treviscoe, East Cornwall, 1999. David Holyoak