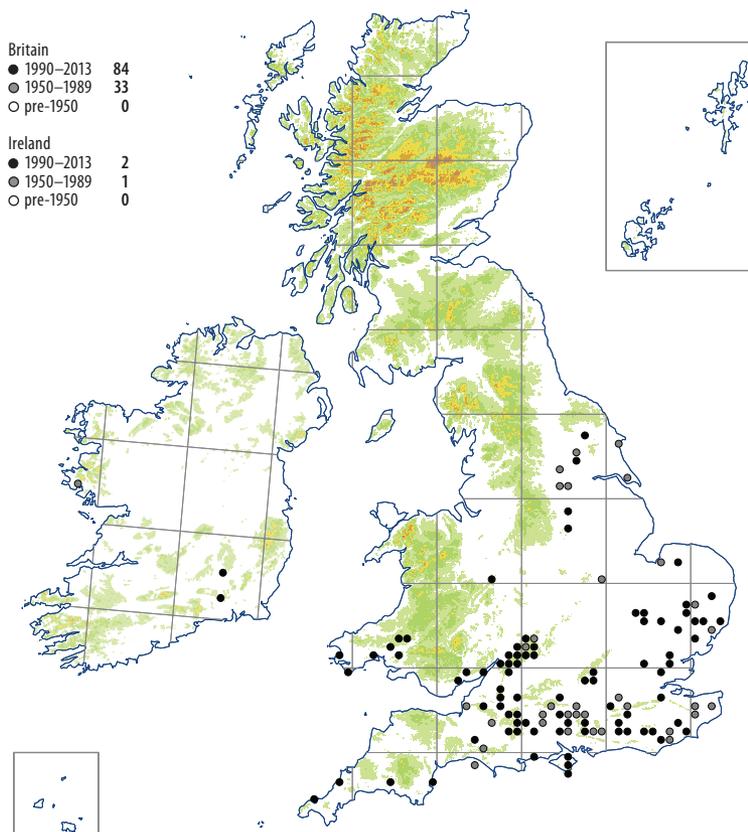
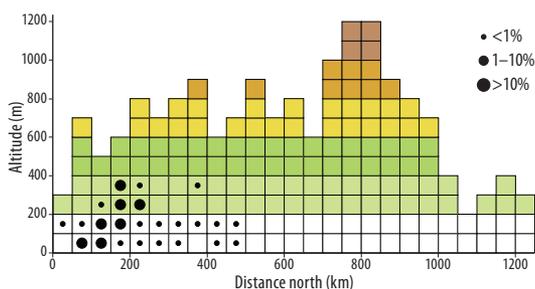


Leptobarbula berica



A minute moss of sheltered base-rich rock. It occurs naturally on shaded limestone, especially on the softer limestones such as Oolitic and Magnesian, growing both on detached stones and larger rocks, chiefly in woodland, but also in old quarries and rock cuttings, less often on grassy banks and even arable fields. Its associates include *Didymodon tophaceus*, *D. sinuosus*, *Fissidens pusillus*, *Tortella inflexa* and *T. tortuosa*. It is equally if not more common on man-made structures, including shaded brickwork and stonework, gutters, paving stones and the mortar of walls. Many sites are in churchyards, often at the base of sheltered north-facing walls and on gravestones, and it is often associated there with *Tortula marginata*. Altitudinal range: 10–290 m.

The earliest British record is from the bowl of a font in Winstead churchyard, SE Yorkshire in 1948, but its



occurrence was not published until many years later (Appleyard *et al.*, 1985). Records have accumulated steadily, but it is unlikely that the species has spread significantly in recent years, having been overlooked in the past or confused with similar species.

There are probably some errors in the mapping as *Leptobarbula berica* is readily confused with *Gymnostomum calcareum* and *Gyroweisia tenuis*. It can be particularly difficult to distinguish from some forms of *G. tenuis* in the absence of capsules, as both species have similar gemmae (Whitehouse & During, 1986).

Dioicous; males are much rarer than females; capsules are very rare, mature in spring. Gemmae are produced on the protonema (Appleyard *et al.*, 1985).

Mediterranean-Atlantic. A very common species (and often with capsules) in the Mediterranean region, extending north to northern France, Belgium, the Netherlands and central Germany. Madeira, N Africa. SW Asia, east to Georgia and Azerbaijan.

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