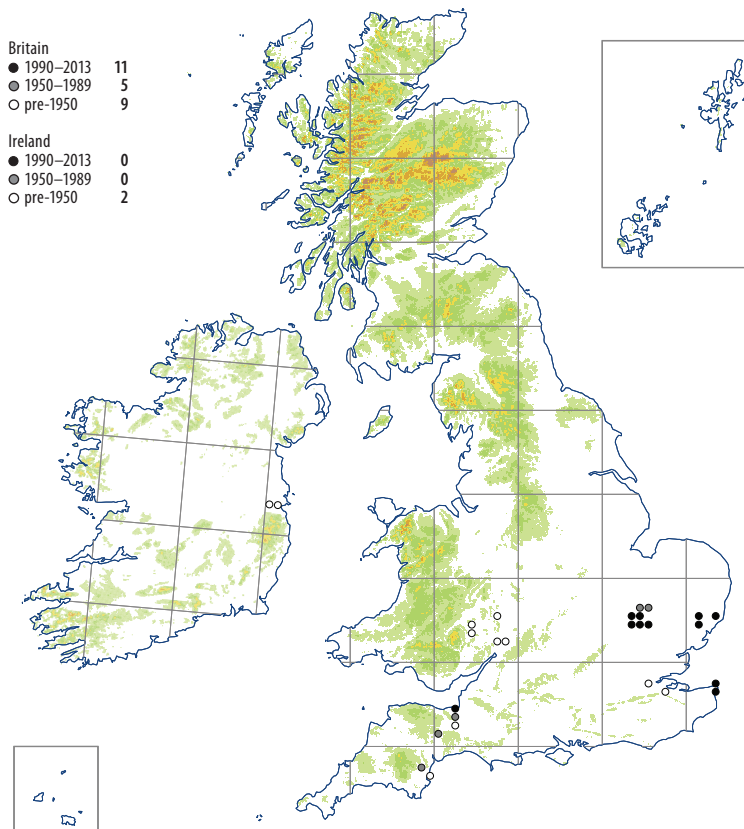


Tortula vahliana



Most occurrences are on chalk, where it grows chiefly as pure patches on shaded, moist chalky-clay banks along roadsides, in road cuttings and disused chalk pits, where it is often found under scrub; associated species can include *Leiocolea turbinata*, *Barbula convoluta*, *Fissidens viridulus*, *Seligeria calcarea*, *Tortula marginata* and *T. muralis*. In Kent it was recorded on hard-packed soil on chalk embankments between exposed roots of trees in wooded parkland, with *Hennediella stanfordensis* and *Microbryum davallianum* var. *commutatum* growing nearby. It is now very rare on other limestones; some older western records were from sandstone. Its habitat at its old sites in Ireland are not well documented, though one was from a 'mud wall', perhaps a mud-capped wall of the kind that once provided habitats for *Aloina* and *Pterygoneurum* species. Altitudinal range: 5–70 m.

The population in Cambridgeshire appears to be relatively stable and new sites have been found in Kent and Suffolk

since 1990. The decline at its western sites is of long-standing. Doubtless suitable habitat was lost to road improvements during the 20th century.

Autoicous; capsules are frequent, but very few appear to mature, being adversely affected by late spring frosts.

Older records on the map have been confirmed from herbarium specimens by C.D. Preston and H.L.K. Whitehouse.

Mediterranean-Atlantic. Widespread in the Mediterranean region and northwards along the Atlantic seaboard to Britain and the Netherlands. Macaronesia, N Africa. Turkey, Azerbaijan. Reported recently from S America (Peru).

H.J.B. Birks, rev. T.L. Blockeel