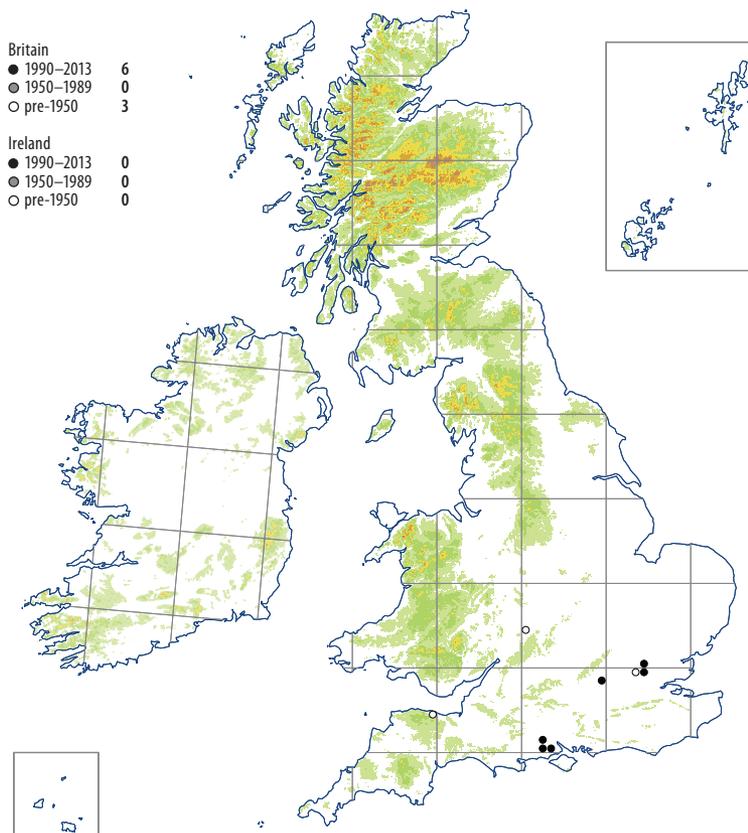


Zygodon forsteri



Occurring in a narrow range of microhabitats on the trunks and branches of trees, usually beech, sometimes where water streams down in wet weather below the scars left by shed branches and similar old bark wounds, but more often (at least in Epping Forest) in hollows and crevices on the exposed roots of old trees, where it may be associated with *Dicranoweisia cirrata* and both varieties of *Zygodon viridissimus*. It favours areas with well-spaced mature beech trees where the shade is not too dense. Although most populations are on beech it has been recorded exceptionally from birch, oak and field maple, and once on an old wooden fence-post. Altitudinal range: 50–115 m.

It is still present in Epping Forest (whence came the felled tree on which it was originally discovered by Edward Forster



in a Walthamstow timber yard, ca 1790), at Burnham Beeches (where it was discovered by W.E. Nicholson in 1902) and in the New Forest (where it was discovered by M.C.F. Proctor in 1954). Recent intensive surveys have greatly increased the number of trees from which it is known. However it is thought to be in decline from the loss of old beech trees, as many of the veteran pollarded beeches in Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches are of a similar age and are rapidly being lost. The gaps left by dead and dying trees are filled by dense thickets of birch, bramble and bracken among the regenerating beech (Adams & Rumsey, 2005). In spite of the production of spores and gemmae, it appears to have poor ability for long-distance dispersal.

Autoicous; capsules are regularly produced, but are often eaten by invertebrates. Adams (2009) reported that only 1% of capsules in Epping Forest mature to release their spores. Gemmae are produced in nature on the often extensive perennial protonema and also in culture (Pressel, 2007).

Suboceanic Southern-temperate. W and S Europe east to Germany, Switzerland, Greece and Bulgaria. Madeira, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey. In the southern part of its range it does not have such a strong association with beech, occurring for example on *Quercus ilex* in N Africa and *Abies cephalonica* in Greece.

M.C.F. Proctor, rev. T.L. Blockeel

◀ Rufus Stone, New Forest, South Hampshire, 2010. Peter Creed