

Rare and interesting

Oli Pescott & Chris Preston
present the 15th instalment in
this column reporting recent
rare and interesting records.

The selection below comprises a bumper crop of records of nationally rare and scarce species from across Britain and Ireland. Particularly notable are Rory Hodd's records of the Irish red data book species *Ditrichum zonatum*, *Fissidens rufulus*, *Oedipodium griffithianum* and *Scapania nimbosea*, the last three of which are protected in the Republic under the recently updated Flora (Protection) Order legislation (Hodgetts *et al.*, 2015). Rory's fieldwork in south-west Ireland has also increased the known altitudinal maximum for several species. In Britain the discovery of large new populations of *Campylopus shawii* (on the mainland) and *C. subporodictyon* are particularly notable. Richard Fisk's discovery of a second site for *Pterigynandrum filiforme* in Suffolk is perhaps more surprising; as the 2014 Atlas suggests, it may be colonising East Anglia from the continent rather than from its Scottish sites.

Another theme of this year's compilation is rare epiphytes: whilst the 'return of the epiphytes' is by now an extremely well-known refrain, the ongoing spread and range consolidation of rarer species such as *Leucodon sciuroides*, *Orthotrichum obtusifolium*, *O. speciosum* and *Ulota coarctata* suggests that epiphyte communities across lowland Britain may be starting to re-approach

levels of diversity not seen since the 19th Century. The occurrence of *O. obtusifolium* alongside a busy 'A' road in King's Lynn also suggests that current levels of acidic pollution from traffic (i.e. nitrogen oxides and their derivatives) are not so high that they inhibit the colonisation of even our most sensitive epiphytes – an encouraging sign (although this is not to say that these levels of air pollution are not detrimental to human health). By contrast, some of the records document the persistence of species in the same sites, or the same general area, after several decades – *Barbilophozia barbata* after 40 years, *Eucladium verticillatum* after 50, *Riccocarpos natans* after 60, and *Aloina rigida*, *Bryum torquescens* and *Ceratodon conicus* after over a century.

Thank you once again to all of the Regional Recorders who contributed or passed on records.

Altitude

***Cephalozia crassifolia*. H7:** Under dense rhododendron in a stream valley, 150 m alt., Glounroe, Knockmealdown Mountains, R983118, 2015, R.L. Hodd. The previous maximum was 45 m.

***Dumortiera hirsuta*. H1:** In the deep shade of boulders in a gully, 415 m alt., above Lough Callee, Cumeenduff, V83188297, 2014, R.L. Hodd. The previous maximum was 200 m.

***Lejeunea flava* subsp. *moorei*. H1:** On the underside of a rock by a stream in a gully, 225 m alt., The Pocket, Mullaghanattin, V73137600, 2014, R.L. Hodd. The previous maximum was 90 m, and had stood for some considerable time (Ratcliffe, 1961, V68).

***Dicranum majus*. 97:** On gravel amongst broken rocks, 1050 m alt., North of Ledge Route, Ben Nevis, NN16027223, 2015, G.P. Rothero. The previous maximum was 915 m.

***Hypnum uncinulatum*. H3:** On a small willow in a gully above a forestry plantation, 330



△Fig. 1 (left). The north slopes of Ben Bury, Co. Mayo, location of *Scapania nimbosa*, last seen here in 1987. R.L. Hodd.

△Fig. 2 (right). *Sphaerocarpos michelii*, found by John Norton in amenity grassland near Gosport Ferry. J.A. Norton

m alt., Coomroe, head of Gougane Barra, W068653, 2014, R.L. Hodd. The previous maximum was 100 m.

Dispersing or increasing

***Lophocolea semiteres*. 11:** Under a marram grass tussock in low sand dunes, 2 m alt., Sinah Common, Hayling Island, SZ69029910, 2015, J.A. Norton. One of three recent records for v.c. 11 & 12. Before these there were only two records for v.c. 11 and one for v.c. 12. **17:** On soil under conifers, 65 m alt., near Sandpit Hill, SU940613, 2015, BBS S.E. Group meeting. Locally abundant. Another record, for Brookwood Cemetery (SU955561), was also received for v.c. 17 (H.W. Wallis).

***Leucodon sciuroides*. 56:** A very small piece on the trunk of a sycamore, 65 m alt., Clumber Park, SK61107588, 2016, T.L. Blockeel. A second recent record for Nottinghamshire but the first as an epiphyte. The small piece observed is certainly a case of recent colonisation in an area formerly subject to high SO₂ pollution.

***Orthotrichum speciosum*. 28:** Epiphytic on *Quercus robur* growing on the side of a ride, next to a block of conifers, 30 m alt., Brecks Forest, south of Mundford, TL7960792600, 2016, C.R. Stevenson. The fourth record from Norfolk. The oaks along the edges of forest rides in this area can be very rich in epiphytes.

***Orthotrichum stramineum*. 55:** On ash, Whites Wood, SK5412, 2015, U. Hamzaoui, conf. T.L. Blockeel. Increasingly found in v.c. 55. This is the third v.c. record, with the second found the month before in Launde Big Wood

(SK786037).

***Pogonatum urnigerum*. 29:** In light shade of ornamental birches on hoggins of pulverised granite near Criminology Department, Sidgwick Site, Cambridge, TL44295798, 2015, J.D. Shanklin. The second site, on the same substrate as first recorded in v.c. 29 elsewhere in Cambridge (TL4258) in 2014.

***Sematophyllum substrumulosum*. 14:** On a decaying pine log, Bream Wood, Crowborough, TQ52543324, 2016, T.W. Ottley & T.G.J. Rayner. The latest in a spate of recent records; now known from 16 tetrads in East Sussex and 6 in West Sussex.

Fruiting, gametangia or with gemmae

***Ctenidium molluscum*. 13:** On the base of an ash tree, Graffham Down, SU91401644, 2015, T.W. Ottley. Unusual in being 50 cm up a tree and fruiting abundantly.

***Homalothecium lutescens*. 13:** On north-facing downland, Heyshott Down, SU89971679, 2015, T.W. Ottley & T.G.J. Rayner. One large fruiting patch observed.

***Hyocomium armoricum*. 14:** On a stream bank in a ghyll, Ashdown Forest, TQ463277, 2015, T.W. Ottley & T.G.J. Rayner. Unusually luxuriant in this small humid ghyll and bearing numerous capsules.

***Leucobryum juniperoideum*. 14:** On chestnut coppice stools, Gillhope Bank Wood, TQ53532463, 2015, T.W. Ottley. Both species of *Leucobryum* found fruiting abundantly over a large part of the wood.

***Pseudoscleropodium purum*. 13:** On steep

north-facing downland, Heyshott Down, SU90031683, 2015, T.W. Ottley & T.G.J. Rayner. A few capsules on long contorted setae.

Nationally rare or scarce

***Barbilophozia barbata*. H20:** On a stone wall in a woodland, Glendalough, T1057596330, 2015, R.L. Hodd, G.F. Smith *et al.*, conf. S.D.S. Bosanquet. The first Irish record since last seen at this locality in 1975.

***Leiocolea gillmanii*. 97:** On a damp, calcareous crag by a small rill, 705 m alt., Beinn na Socaich, Grey Coires, NN23497490, 2013, G.P. Rothero. A second locality in v.c. 97 on the metamorphic limestone of this rich hill.

***Riccicarpos natans*. 13:** On mud in marsh vegetation at the edge of a lake, Knepp Castle, TQ15912172, 2015, J.M. Hutson, T.W. Ottley & S. Rubinstein. Refound at this site after a gap of 60 years.

***Scapania curta*. 14:** On a damp sandy ride, Rough Wood, TQ52123269, 2015, T.W. Ottley & T.G.J. Rayner. A second recent record from East Sussex.

***Scapania nimbosa*. H27:** On grassy, rocky slopes, 635 m alt., Ben Bury, Mweelrea, L804683, 2015, R.L. Hodd & D. Bourke. Outside of v.c. H1, this is the first Irish record since 1987 for this rare and protected species (Fig. 1).

***Sphaerocarpos michelii*. 11:** Bare, disturbed soil in mown acidic amenity grassland, 2 m alt., Gosport Ferry, SZ62309987, 2015, J.A. Norton, conf. T.W. Ottley. A few small patches (Fig. 2); associates included *Pseudocrossidium hornschurchianum* and *Riccia sorocarpa*. The only other Hampshire records are from a car park and a New Forest campsite.

***Aloina rigida*. 14:** On thin soil over chalk, Southerham, near Lewes, TQ42590912,

2015, T.W. Ottley. Following a cliff fall at Shoreham this is now the only known site in Sussex; it may also be the same location where it was found by William Nicholson in 1900.

***Bryoerythrophyllum caledonicum*. 98:** In flushed bryophyte-rich turf on sloping ground below a crag, 1005 m alt., Bidean nam Bian, NN14155439, 2014, G.P. Rothero. A surprising new site for this Scottish endemic in a well-worked area.

***Bryum torquescens*. 29:** Fruiting in south-facing chalk grassland, Devil's Ditch, TL57616522, M.O. Hill, 2014. The only site in v.c. 29; it was recorded here previously in 1903, 1958 and 1976.

***Campylopus shawii*. 105:** In an area of mire by a large burn, 160 m alt., Coire Mhic Nobuil, Torridon, NG88505931, 2014, C. Rickerby. The first record for v.c. 105 since 1967. **108:** In a flushed sedge/grass mire on a slope, 90 m alt., Allt Ghlas-bheinn, near Kyle of Durness, NC34006079, 2015, G.P. Rothero & I. Evans. A third recent v.c. 108 record for this species, which is rare on the mainland. A very large population with large patches over at least a hectare of the hillside.

***Campylopus subporodictyon*. 105:** On wet quartzite slabs by a large burn, 130 m alt., River Lair, above Achnashellach, NG99384876, 2015, G.P. Rothero & C. Rickerby. A new site containing a large population of this rare oceanic species; there are frequent patches of the moss, some large, extending over c. 1 km of the burn.

***Ceratodon conicus*. 32:** Top of a low earth-retaining wall, 80 m alt., Dallington, SP737620, 2015, J.R. Minney & R.H. Carter. One of two further records for v.c. 32 subsequent to its recent debracketing (Blockeel, 2015). One of H.N. Dixon's records (1893) is from 'near Dallington' and Rachel



△Fig. 3 (above left & right). An old village wall in Dallington, Northants., the site of *Ceratodon conicus*. J.R. Minney. △Fig. 4 (below left & right). The steep northern side of the Sheefry Hills, location of the second recent Irish site for *Oedipodium griffithianum*. R.L. Hodd

Carter speculates that it may have persisted on the same wall, which could be a remnant of an old village wall, for over a century (Fig. 3).

***Daltonia splachnoides*. 98:** On old, planted poplars by a river, 10 m alt., Deer Park, Glenmassan, NS13868455, 2015, G.P. Rothero. Several small cushions on three trees in a site previously sheltered by plantation woodland. This has now been clear-felled and the site is now very open; it will be interesting to see how the moss fares in these new conditions.

***Dicranum undulatum*. 92:** Hummocks in a *Sphagnum*-rich mire, 435 m alt., Coulachan Burn, near Crathie, NO252986, 2005, M. Smedley. The second modern record from v.c. 92 for this elusive species. A third record (Doire Bhraghad, near Linn of Dee, NO069905) was also received.

***Ditrichum zonatum*. H27:** On a rocky montane slope, 670 m alt., Sheefry ridge, Barrclashame, L8431669260, 2015, R.L. Hodd. A new site for this Irish red data book species.

***Fissidens rufulus*. H20:** On rocks by river in a wooded valley, 100 m alt., Knocksink Wood, Enniskerry, O217177, 2015, R.L. Hodd. The

first Wicklow record since 1975 for this rare and protected species.

***Oedipodium griffithianum*. H27:** In loose scree, 715 m alt., Sheefry Ridge, L858692, 2015, R.L. Hodd. A second recent Irish record for this rare and protected species (Fig. 4).

***Orthotrichum obtusifolium*. 18:** A small tuft on a young ash tree by a pond, Mill Wood, Thorndon Country Park, TQ629895, 2015, T. Pyner. The second record for Essex, the first dating from 2006. **28:** A small colony on *Acer campestre* on the side of a road cutting, 2 m alt., King's Lynn, TF61671817, 2016, C.R. Stevenson. About four strands, growing on the edge of a clump of *Syntrichia montana*. A remarkably scruffy habitat on the edge of a slip road off the very busy A17. The second record for Norfolk, the first (of a casual occurrence) made by Alec Smith in 1990.

***Pleurochaete squarrosa*. 11:** Bare soil in chalk grassland, 88 m alt., near Fort Widley, Portsdown Hill, SU65900637, 2015, J.A. Norton. A new site. Previously only recorded in Hampshire from two 10 km squares in the Butser Hill area; the last record was in 2009.

***Poblia scotica*. 108:** In sand and gravel on the



△Fig. 5 (left & right). A fallen beech tree with *Pterigynandrum filiforme* in Brandon, Suffolk. R.J. Fisk

margin of a loch, 270 m alt., Loch Feith an Leothaidh, Assynt, NC18792221, 2014, G.P. Rothero. A second locality for this Scottish endemic in v.c. 108

***Pottiopsis caespitosa*. 29:** On disturbed chalky soil, Orwell Clunch Pit, TL36395070, 2015, C.D. Preston, det. M.O. Hill. Third record and third site in v.c. 29 for a species last recorded in 1984. The material differed from the usual British plant in having immature fruits with longer setae (c. 8 mm rather than c. 3 mm) and strongly corkscrew-twisted cells in the capsule lid; it may be the variant formerly known in Europe as *Trichostomum triumphans* but now regarded as conspecific with this species.

***Pterigynandrum filiforme*. 26:** Horizontal trunk of a fallen beech tree, Brandon TL78218325, 2016, R.J. Fisk. The second record for Suffolk. This site is almost exactly 10 km north of the site in King's Forest where it was found in 2005 and is still present. Richard Fisk reports that, at the original site, the population has decreased slightly, with the plants more or less retreating into crevices in the bark; however, it appears to be in better condition than when Richard last visited it in 2011 (Fig. 5).

***Pylaisia polyantha*. 14:** On the horizontal boughs of two apple trees in an orchard, Moat Farm, Salehurst, TQ76172440, 2015, T.W. Ottley. Only the second recent record from Sussex and, like the previous record, on apple.

***Ulota coarctata*. 14:** A large patch on oak, Ashdown Forest, TQ45332865, 2015, T.W. Ottley. The fourth tuft of this uncommon species found within the forest. **17:** On an oak trunk at a woodland edge, 150 m alt., Box Hill, near Broadwood's Folly, TQ180522, 2015, H.W. Wallis & P. Howarth, conf. T.L.

Blockeel. The second record for Surrey.

***Weissia sterilis*. 11:** In shallow chalky soil on a small north-facing bank, 86 m alt., near Fort Widley, Portsdown Hill, SU65170647, 2014, J.A. Norton. Growing with a number of other chalk grassland specialists including *Didymodon acutus*. Rare in Hampshire with about five recorded localities and the last record in 2009.

Regionally notable

***Fossombronina incurva*. 13:** On damp sand, Bognor Common, TQ01022123, 2015, T.W. Ottley. Possibly the only extant site in Sussex.

***Lejeunea lamacerina*. 17:** Shaded soil bank by footpath, 150 m alt., Box Hill, near Boxhurst, TQ183511, 2015, H.W. Wallis. Currently the only site in Surrey.

***Ptilidium pulcherrimum*. 17:** On a birch trunk, 60 m alt., Lower Puttenham Common, SU908455, 2015, H.W. Wallis. A large patch 100 × 50 mm. One of two recent records, the other in the west of the county at Box Hill.

96: On base of *Betula pendula* on edge of Craskie Burn, 160 m alt., Craskie Estate, Glen Cannich, NH30153398, 2015, M. Ghullam, conf. C.R. Stevenson.

***Riccia cavernosa*. 11:** On bare mud around previously flooded area, 19 m alt., Ibsley, SU14731005, 2013, I. Diack. One of three recent records in v.c. 11 since 1972.

55: Reservoir draw-down zone, Eyebrook Reservoir, SP850952, 2015, U. Hamzaoui. Known historically from many reservoirs in v.c. 55, but only recorded once since the early 90s.

***Riccia glauca*. 55:** An arable field, on base-poor clay, Charnwood Lodge NNR, SK46321449, 2014, U. Hamzaoui, conf. D.G. Long. The

first record since 1992, with a large population in the field.

***Bryum pallens*. 17:** Calcareous soil in short grass, 135 m alt., Deerleap Wood, TQ115486, 2015, H.W. Wallis. The first record since 1994.

***Cinclidium stygium*. 98:** In a limestone flush on a hillside, 590 m alt., Creag Bhan, Glencoe, NN10125350, 2015, G.P. Rothero. A second recent record for this species, which appears to be rare in Argyll.

***Dicranum polysetum*. 17:** Wet birch woodland, 60 m alt., Lower Puttenham Common, SU908454, 2015, H.W. Wallis. The first v.c. record since 1992.

***Didymodon acutus*. 17:** Calcareous soil on the northern rim of a quarry, 150 m alt., near Deerleap Wood, TQ114486, 2015, H.W. Wallis. Rare in Surrey, but possibly increasing.

***Entosthodon fascicularis*. 27:** In an arable field, 5 m alt., Brundall Gardens Country Park, TG31300833, 2015, M. Ghullam & R.W. Ellis, conf. R.J. Fisk. The third v.c. record. Only one plant found, growing with *Dicranella staphylina*.

***Hedwigia integrifolia*. 105:** On slabs at the base of a south east-facing crag, 200 m alt., near Mullach nan Cadaichean, Shieldaig Forest, NG82526911, 2015, G.P. Rothero. The first v.c. record since 1967.

***Hylocomium splendens*. 55:** Heathy grassland south of stream, Bradgate Park, SK532099, 2014, S. Woodward, conf. I. Pedley. Not recorded for v.c. 55 since the 1970s, but recently found here and at Charnwood Lodge NNR.

***Leptobarbula berica*. 27:** On damp shaded brickwork, 15 m alt., Bolwick Hall, Aylsham, TG19912447, 2015, Norfolk & Suffolk Bryology Group, det. R.J. Fisk & T.L. Blockeel. Only the second v.c. record.

***Racomitrium fasciculare*. 17:** Boulder in a sandstone quarry, 235 m alt., Pitch Hill Quarry, TQ080426, 2015, H.W. Wallis & T.W. Ottley. The first v.c. record since 1986.

***Sphagnum subnitens*. 55:** In wet heath, Charnwood Lodge NNR, SK473148, 2015,

U. Hamzaoui, conf. A. Hölzer. The first record for the site, and the first v.c. record since 1972.

***Tetrodontium brownianum*. H20:** Under rocky overhang by stream, above Lough Bray, O1302416321, 2015, R.L. Hodd. A rare species in eastern Ireland.

***Tortula protobryoides*. 17:** Calcareous soil near a small pond, 70 m alt., Priest Hill LNR, TQ230611, 2014, H.W. Wallis. The first v.c. record since 1976.

Unusual habitat or substrate

***Eucladium verticillatum*. 29:** Scattered leafy shoots on wall of chalk clunch behind choir stalls, Orwell church, TL362504, C.D. Preston, 2015. This species still survives on the inside wall of the parish church, where it was first recorded by M.O. Hill in 1966.

***Hypnum hamulosum*. 105:** Epiphytic on low-growing sallow by loch margin, 111 m alt., Loch Veyatie, Assynt, NC19871227, 2011, G.P. Rothero. A more unlikely epiphyte it is difficult to imagine but the loch margin and the loch itself are quite calcareous.

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