Marchantia ruderalis on the Move: a Singularly Ropey Habitat

Aside from the delights of seeing esoteric taxa in wild and remote places, one of the less predictable surprises awaiting beady-eyed bryologists is the discovery of plants growing in bizarre habitats and perhaps even more so if these happen to be mobile. What immediately springs to mind here are colonies of the mosses *Bryum argenteum, Campylopus introflexus* and *Ceratodon purpureus* along car window ledges and particularly on the rotting woodwork of old shooting brakes. Turning to water transport, cracks on the hulls of old barges frequently support the same three mosses but hitherto there appear to be no similar records for liverworts. Here we illustrate a vigorous colony of *Marchantia ruderalis* on the rope-covered fender of a barge moored on the Grand Union Canal in the Lea Valley, East London. The thalli were covered with gemma cups but sex organs were not observed.

As far as we are aware this is the first record of a mobile habitat for *Marchantia ruderalis* which elsewhere in the London conurbation mainly occurs in cracks between paving slabs and as weed in greenhouses and garden centres. *Lunularia cruciata*, the only other common complex thalloid in Middlesex V-C 21 has rather different ecology; viz on earth banks particularly along streams and on bare, generally shaded, damp soil in parks and gardens. The other four complex thalloids in Middlesex (*Conocephalum conicum, Riccia fluitans, R. glauca, R. sorocarpa*) are restricted to very few localities.

The discovery of *Marchantia ruderalis* growing at all angles on a ropey substratum suggests that it might be a candidate for planting on Green Walls in London, particularly those that are north facing and have a constant water supply. To date, we have seen the mosses *Brachythecium rutabulum, Bryum capillare, B. dichotomum Campylopus introflexus* and *Funaria hygrometrica* on these walls, but never a liverwort.

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