

# Rare and interesting bryophytes in Britain and Ireland

M.O. Hill

CEH Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2LS; [moh@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:moh@ceh.ac.uk)

## Background

This new feature for *Field Bryology* was announced last July (*Bulletin* **81**: 35). It is intended to enhance current awareness of interesting bryological finds, by providing a place to publish details of notable records that supplement the annual lists of new vice-county records and other amendments to the *Census Catalogue*.

## What is an interesting record?

An 'interesting record' is not a new vice-county record or a 'debracketing'; those are matters for our Recorders (Gordon Rothero and Tim Blackstock; addresses inside front cover). The categories that will be accepted are listed below, but if you have another reason for thinking a record interesting, let me know.

- A** *Altitude*. A record from an unusually high or low altitude.
- D** *Dispersing*. New records of a species that may be increasing in frequency. Expanding aliens are an obvious example. Equally, *Orthotrichum stramineum* has started appearing more frequently in Cambridgeshire. This will be noted in the annual bryophyte report for *Nature in Cambridgeshire*, but it is also of more general interest as an example of an increasing epiphyte.
- F** *Fruiting*. Fruiting material of a rarely fruiting species.
- G** *Gametangia*. Male or female organs present in a species in which sex organs are rarely found, or in which one sex is rarely found.

- H** *Habitat*. A record of a species in an unusual habitat.
- N** *National*. A new site for a nationally rare species.
- P** *Previously under-recorded*. A species that may be frequent but which appears to have been overlooked in the past. The distinction between these and dispersing species may sometimes be hard to judge, but do your best.
- R** *Rare*. A second or occasionally a third or fourth record for a vice-county of a regionally rare species. For example, Bob Finch recently found *Sphagnum denticulatum* at Wicken Fen. This species is currently known at only one other locality in v.-c. 29, and the record is interesting as yet another immigrant to this famous site. Note that the species does not have to be nationally rare (*S. denticulatum* is nationally common) but it does need to be regionally rare.
- S** *Status*. A status report for a Red Data Book or other notable species at a known site. I will be selective about which records are included, and will omit species that are due to be reported on elsewhere, e.g. as part of a 'Back from the Brink' study.
- V** *Vegetatively reproducing*. A record of tubers, gemmae, bulbils, protonema-gemmae, etc. on a species that rarely produces them, or on which they have been rarely reported.

## Sending in your rare and interesting records

Just e-mail your records to the Recording Secretary, Mark Hill, at [moh@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:moh@ceh.ac.uk), or send them to me on paper at Monks Wood. Please

say why you think your record is interesting. I may be quite unaware of what previous records are known for a vice-county. In doubtful cases, Regional Recorders will be consulted to confirm which records are genuinely interesting.

Note that a second record from a vice-county is not necessarily interesting. Thus, if you have been recording for the Survey of Bryophytes of Arable Land and have the second record of *Bryum violaceum* for an Irish vice-county, then I will probably bounce back your record with the comment 'boring' (as the Aussies said of the England 2003 rugby team). On the other hand, if you find *B. violaceum* at a notably high altitude on a Scottish mountain, that would be interesting, though not wholly credible. I reserve the right to challenge records and, in extreme cases, to demand sight of specimens supporting records that seem doubtful. The great majority of your records should be checked microscopically, but field records are acceptable if there is absolutely no doubt of them. Old records from herbaria may be as interesting as new records, but I do not want to include your backlogs unless you have only just tumbled to an interesting fact. In 2004, I shall ordinarily accept your records only for 2003 and 2004; similar guidelines will apply in subsequent years. Please give grid references as accurately as possible up to 8 figures, and to at least 1-km square (4 figure) accuracy as a minimum.

If there are more records than would fill the allocated column space, then the Recording Secretary will prune them down to size, with absolute discretion as to what to select. Electronic details of published records will be sent to the Biological Records Centre (BRC) and the Threatened Bryophyte Database.

### Records for 2002/03

Records are presented in a similar format to new vice-county records and amendments to the *Census Catalogue*. Numbers and nomenclature follow Blockeel & Long (1998), *A Check-list and*

*Census Catalogue of British and Irish Bryophytes*, with subsequent amendments where appropriate.

### Liverworts

- 38.4. *Scapania cuspiduligera*. 57:** on thin soil on side of small grit boulder on stream bank, 210 m alt., Bar Brook, Baslow, SK265738, September 2003, Blockeel. Confirmation of the isolated Peak District locality for this liverwort; it was found only on a single boulder. The locality is influenced by slightly basic seepage from the overlying drift. **S.**
- 53.1. *Porella platyphylla*. 29:** fruiting plants on tree-root in wood, parkland of Wimpole Hall, TL336521, November 2003, Cheffings. This species, not previously found fruiting in the county, had capsules blackening and nearly ripe, outside the normal season of June-September indicated in Paton's Flora. Capsules were apparently developing normally in spite of the exceptional drought during August-October. **F.**
- 54.3. *Frullania microphylla* b var. *deciduiifolia*. 42:** on sandstone crag with much *F. tamarisci*, north face of Fan Nedd, Heol Senni, 450 m alt., SN910192, April 2000, Bosanquet. The second v.-c. 42 and third south Wales record. Interestingly, H.H. Knight and W.E. Nicholson recorded *F. microphylla* from Fan Nedd in 1926, and their record is listed as var. *microphylla* in the latest *Census Catalogue*. **N.**
- 84.3. *Riccia huebeneriana*. 64:** on dry cracked mud, with *Pseudophemerum nitidum* and *Littorella uniflora*, Lumley Moor Reservoir, SE22157094, November 2003, Hodgetts. A new site for this species, which was so abundant and dense as to colour a whole band of the draw-down zone purple. **N.**

### Mosses

- 1.22. *Sphagnum denticulatum*. 29:** patch on ground in open *Betula* carr, Compartment 2, Wicken Fen, TL548699, April 2003, Finch, field record conf. Hill. Another calcifuge immigrant to this famous site. Also the second post-1950 record for the county. **D, R.**
- 14.4. *Ditrichum lineare*. 44:** male, female and fruiting plants, locally abundant on frost-heaved soil on steep north-facing slope, Craig Beinon, Mynydd Mallaen, SN7545, March 2003, Bosanquet. The first record of fruiting *D. lineare* in the British Isles and the second v.-c. 44 record of the species. **F.**
- 18.1. *Cheilothela chloropus*. 3:** patches over several square metres, with other low mosses on unshaded damp sand near edge of dune-slack, ca 5 m alt., Greenland Lake Slack, Dawlish Warren, SX9879, April 2003, Holyoak 03-81. The first record from

- sand dunes in Britain of a nationally rare species hitherto known here only from thin soil over limestone hills or cliffs. **H, N.**
- 32.1. *Paraleucobryum longifolium*. 90:** on base of boulder on steep rocky slope by waterfalls, Falls of Fee, NO243749, July 2002, Long 31275, E. The second recent record for the county, and first confirmation since August 1880 of the original Angus locality discovered by the Rev. J. Fergusson. **N, S.**
- 54.16. *Didymodon tomaculosus*. H21:** loamy soil (pH 7.5) at edges of stubble field (spring wheat), N of Lawless Poultry Farm, Tonlegee, 50 m alt., O146484, November 2003, Bosanquet & Preston, conf. Blockeel, herb. Bosanquet and CGE. Female plants present. The second Co. Dublin and fourth Irish record. The initial H21 site, found in 2003, was the first where male plants had been seen and it is interesting that both sexes are now known from this vice-county. **N.**
- 65.9. *Syntichia latifolia*. 2:** on steep bark of *Alnus* tree ca 2.5 m above water in inundation-zone beside river, ca 65 m alt., by R. Tamar NW of Tamartown, SX333911, March 2003, Holyoak 03-31. With three immature capsules; sporophytes are very rare in this species and hitherto unrecorded from Cornwall. **F.**
- 67.1. *Coscinodon cribrosus*. 45:** on slaty rocks by path down to beach, Pwllcrochan, St Nicholas, SM886363, November 2003, Bosanquet. The latest in a series of records of *Coscinodon* from the coast of Dyfed, making it much more widespread in the region than the Atlas indicates; 16 colonies are now known at widely spaced localities between Aberystwyth and Pendine. **P.**
- 72.1. *Glyphomitrium daviesii*. 45:** 21 tufts on igneous block in tor, Mynydd Dinas, SN005369, May 2003, Bosanquet. The second recent record for Pembrokeshire and Wales. The first record was of a single tuft 13 km ESE of Mynydd Dinas (see p 40 of this issue of *Field Bryology*). **R.**
- 80.3. *Physcomitrium sphaericum*. 64:** with *Aphanorhegma patens* on soft mud and decaying plant remains in draw-down zone of Beaver Dam Reservoir, SE21775463, November 2003, Hodgetts. A new site for this rare species. **R.**
- 83.1. *Ephemerum recurvifolium*. 57:** on bare soil by small exposure of Magnesian Limestone, 95 m alt., Pleasley Vale, SK530652, November 2002, Blockeel & M.A. Pearman. The second record for Derbyshire, and the first record of this species from the Permian ('Magnesian') Limestone. **H, R.**
- 97.23a. *Bryum subelegans sensu* Hodgetts. 57:** on old wall in limestone dale, 155 m alt., Bradford Dale, Youlgreave, SK199636, September 2003, Blockeel & C.C. Townsend. The taxonomy of this species was recently elucidated by Hodgetts (2001). This low-lying locality suggests that it is not an exclusively montane species. **N.**
- 97.42. *Bryum sauteri*. H35:** on slightly shaded damp soil at edge of small patch of concrete among granitic boulders of summit of hill, ca 525 m alt., at W summit of Edenadooish, B96982056, May 2002, Holyoak 02-438. The highest altitude recorded for this mainly lowland species. **A.**
- 102.6. *Plagiomnium undulatum*. 29:** fruiting plants in swampy woodland by River Snail, Fordham Abbey, TL6369, and Fordham Hall Yard Wood, TL632700, February 2003, Walker *et al.* Although this is a common species in Cambridgeshire, it has very rarely been found in fruit. Plants at Fordham bore up to nine capsules in an inflorescence. **F.**
- 106.1. *Meesia uliginosa*. 52:** in small area of unshaded moss carpet on damp sand in dune-slack with short open vegetation, ca 10 m alt., Tywyn Aberffraw, SH3669, September 2001, Holyoak 01-928. Confirms survival of the species at its only locality in Wales, where it was last seen in 1968. **S.**
- 194.2. *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*. 2:** part of moss carpet on damp china-clay spoil, slightly shaded by *Ulex europaeus* bush, ca 180 m alt., Greensplat, SW993552, February 2002, Holyoak 02-320. With numerous near-mature capsules; the first record from Cornwall since 1904 of sporophytes on this very common moss. **F.**

#### Contributors of records and people who have checked them

T.L. Blockeel, S.D.S. Bosanquet, C.M. Cheffings, R.A. Finch, M.O. Hill, N.G. Hodgetts, D.T. Holyoak, D.G. Long, C.D. Preston, K.J. Walker.

#### Reference

Hodgetts NG. 2001. A re-evaluation of *Bryum subelegans* Kindb. in Britain. *Journal of Bryology* 23: 177-180.