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Pterigynandrum filiforme: an addition to the 'montane' bryoflora of Suffolk

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Locality and habitat of *Pterigynandrum filiforme* in Suffolk

At the end of January 2005 I was recording bryophytes in a previously unvisited tetrad in King's Forest Wordwell to the south of Brandon in West Suffolk (v.-c. 26). I had struggled to reach 30 species by lunchtime, and had more or less decided to move elsewhere. However, I thought that a few minutes in an area where there were some beech trees might be well spent. This did indeed add a few records but I then came to an open area with some silver birch and what at first I took to be ash trees (Figure 1). The first tree that I looked at had a small patch of a curious moss with curved, thread-like branches (Figure 2). Knowing that *Pterogonium gracile* had been recorded in the early 1900s from Icklingham, just three miles away, I at once assumed that I had refound that species, and it was only later that its true identity was revealed to be *Pterigynandrum filiforme*.

Smith (2004) describes the distribution of *Pterigynandrum* as boreal-montane, and states that it occurs in montane and northern Europe. Its appearance in the lowlands of Suffolk is therefore something of a mystery. The map in the *Atlas* (Hill, Preston & Smith, 2004) shows how far from home it is. The tree on which it was growing turned out to be a species of *Acer*, as yet to be identified. Forest Enterprise records only show that the area was planted with mixed broadleaf trees in 1955.

Whilst I was still under the impression that I had refound *Pterogonium*, I obtained permission from the Elveden estate to visit the site of the old record at Icklingham. It was reported as occurring on the base of a poplar. There are some very old black poplars still at the site and it was undoubtedly on one of them that the *Pterogonium* had been found. There is no sign of it now, and the bark of the trees is so dry, hard and deeply furrowed that I could find no moss of any sort.

As a follow-up, I borrowed a specimen of *Pterogonium* from NWH that had been collected by Arthur Mayfield from 'base of poplar' at Icklingham in 1919; it is correctly named.

Two trees of the same *Acer* species adjacent to that with *Pterigynandrum* had numerous tufts of *Orthotrichum stramineum*, which was also new to v.-c. 26. *O. hyellii* and *Metzgeria furcata* were abundant on another tree, and *Lophocolea semiteres*

was in the same area, so I ended up with quite an interesting list.

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Figure 1. Habitat of *Pterigynandrum filiforme* at King's Forest Wordwell, Suffolk. Photo: Richard Fisk.



Figure 2. *Pterigynandrum filiforme* on *Acer* species at King's Forest Wordwell, Suffolk. Photo: Richard Fisk.