

# Rare and Interesting 19

Oli Pescott presents the latest batch of rare and interesting bryophyte records

Perhaps inevitably, the reduction in people's mobility as a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns has somewhat shrunk our report of rare and interesting bryophyte records collected over the past year. The period has not been without interest however, and some records below reflect the greater attention paid by recorders to sites and habitats that might otherwise have been passed over on the way to more promising or distant terrain. For example, Rachel Carter discovered ("grabbed in passing" was actually her phrase) a second population of *Pylaisia polyantha* for Northamptonshire in a flailed hedge between arable fields during her largely non-bryological lockdown exercise; whilst Sharon Pilkington, on more bryologically-focused, but still COVID-constrained, local outings, found new local populations for two Nationally Scarce mosses, *Pottiopsis caespitosa* and *Weissia sterilis*, as well as *Leucodon sciuroides* growing on tarmac (tarmac appears to be a relatively unusual anthropogenic substrate for this species, at least based on the BBS database, where only one other record mentions it [N. Hodgetts, 1992, Tilbrook Church, v.c. 30], and then from a churchyard path). In keeping with the local theme, Howard Matcham reports what may well be the first wild report of rhizoidal gemmae on *Orthotrichum tenellum* from a Horse



△ Fig 1. *Cololejeunea minutissima* in Nottinghamshire. M. Crittenden.

Chestnut in his garden, an excellently literal illustration of the frequently heard naturalists' dictum that there are still many things to discover in ones' own backyard.

Elsewhere, in any year the find of a new population of *Habrodon perpusillus* would be an exceptional record, and Sam Bosanquet's report of this species from a maple tree in Caerphilly Castle park is exactly that. Given the oddly unexceptional nature of the locations and hosts on which this species has been found, e.g. see also the online Dutch bryophyte Atlas at <https://www.verspreidingsatlas.nl/2765>, this is a species that should clearly be looked for more widely. As always, thanks are due to all the BBS Regional Recorders who sent in their 'Rare & Interesting' records for inclusion.

Nationally rare and scarce species are defined and listed by Pescott (2016).

## Dispersing or increasing

***Cololejeunea minutissima*. 56:** On sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Callis Hagg, Morning Springs Wood, SK467491, 2019, M. Crittenden. Still quite rare in this vice-county (Notts.). In excess of 19 colonies were found, averaging around 1 cm in diameter (Fig. 1).

***Dialytrichia saxicola*. 11:** On a gravestone, 67



△Fig 2. *Dialytrichia saxicola* at Solent Court Farm, Hampshire. J.A. Norton.

m alt., Hambledon churchyard, SU646151, 2020, J.A. Norton. A small patch on the side of a small tree-shaded headstone. Also in the same vice-county on the mortared capping of an old brick wall at Solent Court Farm, Chilling (SU509050), where numerous cushions were observed by the same recorder (Fig. 2).

***Sphaerocarpos texanus*. 11:** On gravel, 3 m alt., Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, SZ610985, 2020, J.A. Norton. The first record for South Hampshire outside of the New Forest.

#### Fruiting, gametangia or with gemmae

***Ctenidium molluscum*. 40:** On a large rock on a hillside under trees, Jones' Rough Local Nature Reserve (LNR), SJ247248, 2020, D.M. Morris & O.L. Pescott. Only occasionally observed fruiting.

***Leptobarbula berica*. 12:** On a horizontal oolitic limestone gravestone, 85 m alt., St Giles' Graveyard, Winchester, SU490294, 2020, J.D. Sleath. A species that is very rarely found fruiting (the BBS database currently has only around eight separate locations recorded). Immature capsules were noted (Fig. 3), on returning 3 weeks later there were only a few bare setae remaining.

***Orthotrichum tenellum*. 13:** On Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) in recorder's garden, Strettington, TQ894071, 2020, H. Matcham. Both leaf and rhizoidal gemmae present. The first have been rarely reported in the British Isles (Sleath, 1999), but the latter appear only to be known from cultured material (Whitehouse, 1987), and this may be the first time that they have been recorded in the wild.

***Syntrichia latifolia*. 35:** On *Tilia*, 290 m alt., Tredegar, SO143086, 2020, S.D.S. Bosanquet.

▽Figure 3. *Leptobarbula berica* with immature capsules, Hampshire. J.D. Sleath.





Frequent unripe sporophytes found on one street tree.

***Trichostomum crispulum*. 11:** On bare chalk in downland, 72 m alt., Portsdown Hill, SU659063, 2020, J.A. Norton. With mature capsules.

### Nationally rare or scarce

***Acaulon triquetrum*. 10:** Calcareous cliff turf, 75 m alt., Tennyson Down, Freshwater, SZ337855, 2020, G.R.L. Greiff & C.R. Pope. Locally frequent. Last recorded in this area in the 1920s by J. Groves. Extant at two other sites on the island.

***Bryum canariense*. 40:** Open south-facing limestone cliff ledge, Jones' Rough LNR, SJ247248, 2020, D.M. Morris & O.L. Pescott. Long known from the Oswestry Hills (for example from Llanymynech Hill and Blodwel Rock), but this is a new site.

***Fissidens rivularis*. 6:** On a stone in a stream, 200 m alt., East Twin Brook, Burrington Combe, ST479579, 2020, S.L. Pilkington. Only the third population recorded for North Somerset.

***Habrodon perpusillus*. 41:** *Acer* sp., 90 m alt., Caerphilly Castle, Dafydd Williams Park, ST153869, 2020, S.D.S. Bosanquet. Small patches on the south side of an urban parkland maple.

***Microbryum starckeanum*. 6:** Eroded limestone grassland slope, 155 m alt., Cheddar Gorge, ST473545, 2020, A. Branson, C. Halpin, P. Martin & S.L. Pilkington. A new species for Cheddar Gorge, and further inland than all other populations known from North Somerset.

***Microbryum starckeanum*. 11:** Sandy gravel on a west-facing coastal bank, 4 m alt., Lee-on-the-Solent, SZ566998, 2020, J.A. Norton.



△Figure 4. *Pottiopsis caespitosa* at Bratton Camp, Wiltshire. S.L. Pilkington.

The second record for the vice-county.

***Nardia insecta*. 67:** On a thin layer of soil, a few inches above the water level, Chirdon Burn, NY6880, 2020, G.P. Rothero, D.G. Long, A. McClay & J. O'Reilly. A similar group failed to refine this species at its classic location in the Seven Linns gorge in 2019; on this occasion, however, Gordon discovered a new location, along the burn just upstream from the gorge. Last recorded in the area in 2006 by Hodgetts and Lansdown.

***Poblia flexuosa*. 1:** Disturbed ground in a former mine, 110 m alt., South Crofty Mine, Pool, SW663407, 2020, S.L. Pilkington. A new site for a rare moss in West Cornwall.

***Pottiopsis caespitosa*. 8:** On a small chalk exposure by the side of a path, 165 m alt., Bratton Camp, ST904518, 2020, S.L. Pilkington. Found whilst exercising locally during the COVID-19 lockdown; much further west than other Wiltshire populations (Fig. 4). (See also *Weissia sterilis* below).

***Pylaisia polyantha*. 32:** In a flailed farmland hedgerow between arable fields, 100 m alt., nr Long Buckby, SP611663, 2020, R.H. Carter.

Only the second county record, despite the very ordinary habitat.

***Riccia crystallina*. 11:** On bare mineral soil, 38 m alt., Denny Wood campsite, New Forest, SU333067, 2007, N.A. Sanderson. This was reported new to South Hampshire at a campsite in the New Forest in 2018 (Hodgetts, 2019), and subsequently at two other campsites (Pescott, 2019), but Neil Sanderson has since discovered that he had photographed it at one of these localities, the Denny Wood campsite, in February 2007. It could possibly have become established in the vice-county well before this date.

***Seligeria acutifolia*. 6:** On a slope with rocky outcrops, 215 m alt., Battlefields, Upper Langridge, ST724699, 2020, M. Rayner conf. S.L. Pilkington & T.L. Blockeel. A species last recorded from this area in 1962 at Bathford Hill.

***Sphaerocarpos michelii*. 14:** Between gaps in brick and paving slabs, Eastbourne,

TV610987, 2020, S. Rubinstein. First recorded in central Eastbourne (its only Sussex location) in 2007 by A.E. Spiers. Found in abundance in 2020 on nine streets by S. Rubinstein and on a few more by B. Scott. **28:** Arable, 53 m alt., Stanfield Civil Parish, TF945202, 2019, M. Ghullam. Only two records this century for West Norfolk were able to be identified to this species (as they were fruiting), and only a handful since the beginning of the 19th century.

***Targionia hypophylla*. 2:** South-facing low rock face along a roadside, Pillaton, SX379635, 2020, M.J. Stribley. A new site for the species. Known only from one other Cornish location, but not seen there since the 1990s.

***Tortula wilsonii*. 11:** In semi-shade under elm (*Ulmus*) scrub on steep south-facing sheltered bank next to a coastal saline lagoon, 2 m alt., Anglesey Lagoon, Gosport, SZ604987, 2020, J.A. Norton conf. S.L. Pilkington. Two large colonies and a few smaller ones (>10,000 plants

▽Fig 5. *Tortula wilsonii* at Anglesey Lagoon, Hampshire. J.A. Norton.





total). The second record for the vice-county (the first was on the coast near Lymington in 1974; Fig. 5).

***Weissia squarrosa*. 31:** Barer higher areas of wet track with much short *Carex pendula*, 17 m alt., Monks Wood National Nature Reserve, TL195800, 2020, C.D. Preston & M. Burton conf. S.D.S. Bosanquet. Last recorded in 1967 from fields outside Monks Wood. The track is in a deer enclosure and not recently mown.

***Weissia sterilis*. 8:** Rich, west-facing unimproved chalk grassland slope, 180 m alt., Picquet Hill, Edington, ST925524, 2020, S.L. Pilkington. Another lockdown local exercise find. A new site for this species, and also another site for *Pottiopsis caespitosa*. **9:** Sparsely vegetated scrape, 75 m alt., Down Farm, ST997146, 2020, S.L. Pilkington & O.L. Pescott. On weathered chalk in a scraped experimental plot (see Hawes *et al.*, 2020). Sporophytes present but rare.

▽ Fig 6. *Breutelia chrysocoma* site at Dowstone Clough, Derbyshire. T.L. Blockeel.



### Regionally notable

***Blasia pusilla*. 27:** In a boggy area of recently dug pond, 40 m alt., Templewood Estate, Frogshall, TG253382, 2020, M. Ghullam. Growing at the base of a *Carex* species with *Riccardia chamedryfolia* nearby. A very rare species in Norfolk as a whole.

***Breutelia chrysocoma*. 57:** In grassy vegetation on a sloping bank above a stream among scattered plants of heather (Fig. 6), Dowstone Clough, Bleaklow Hill, SK073953, 2020, T.L. Blockeel. A large stand. Although *Breutelia* has a few localities on the limestone of the White Peak in Derbyshire, it has not been found on the gritstone moors of the South Pennines since the 19th century. It was formerly known from Kinder Scout (Derbyshire), Stayley Brushes (Cheshire) and several sites further north in South Lancashire. It is thought to be extinct in the latter two vice-counties. Its discovery on the gritstone of Bleaklow Hill in the High Peak of Derbyshire was therefore



△Fig 7. *Leucodon sciuroides* var. *sciuroides* on urban tarmac, Somerset. S.L. Pilkington.

most unexpected.

***Bryum donianum*. 11:** On gravel, 3 m alt., Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, SZ610985, 2020, J.A. Norton. The second record for the vice-county. The first records were made by Rod Stern around Ramalley Bridge in 2006.

***Ctenidium molluscum*. 29:** Open, base-rich turf by drain and old clay banks in open hawthorn (*Crataegus*) scrub, 5 m alt., Bassenhally Pit, Whittlesey, TL285984, 2020, J.J. Graham. Rediscovered after 33 years at this, its only site in the north of the county.

***Dialytrichia mucronata*. 29:** On concrete side of gutter at base of the eastern wall of church, 20 m alt., Newton churchyard, TL435491, 2020, C.D. Preston. A dense colony 4 m long. Only the third locality (second post-1950) for the county.

***Entosthodon fascicularis*. 13:** In grass on a sea wall, Thorney Island, SU746029, 2020, P. Budd. Fruiting abundantly.

***Fissidens crassipes*. 28:** On the side of the

River Stiffkey, 15 m alt., Great Walsingham, TF942376, 2019, M. Padfield conf. M. Ghullam. The second recent (21st century) record for West Norfolk.

***Fossombronina caespitiformis*. 17:** On a river bank about 10 m from the water, River Mole, Gatwick, TQ269421, 2019, B. Scott. This is the first record for Surrey since 1973, when it was recorded for Cranleigh by J.C. Gardiner.

***Frullania tamarisci*. 23:** North west-facing chalk grassland turf, 200 m alt., Watlington Hill, SU701936, 2020, D.M. Morris & O.L. Pescott. A few strands in an area of around 4 m<sup>2</sup> growing through abundant *Trichostomum crispulum*. A classic site for the species in its (degraded) "hepatic mat" habitat in Oxfordshire, although not reported for Watlington since 1978 (Francis Rose in Porley, 1999). Given the trouble that the recorders had in relocating the few tiny strands only minutes after the initial detection, this is perhaps not surprising.

***Grimmia trichophylla*. 13:** On a wall, Holy Sepulchre churchyard, Warminghurst, TQ116168, 2020, B. Scott. There are very few recent Sussex records of this moss. **28:** Top of a brick church wall, 70 m alt., Tittleshall, St Mary the Virgin, TF894211, 2019, M. Ghullam. Only one patch. An unusual plant in Norfolk and only the second record for v.c. 28 this century.

***Jubula hutchinsiae*. 1:** Sea cave, River Cove, SW473406, 2019, M.J. Stribley. Known only from one other site in the vice-county. Also found in two further sea caves to the west of this site.

***Lepidozia reptans*. 10:** Former conifer plantation, 175 m alt., Brighstone Forest, SZ428849, 2020, G.R.L. Greiff. Historically recorded from around five other locations on the Isle of Wight, but only one since 2000.



***Lophocolea fragrans*. 10:** Ancient calcareous woodland, 130 m alt., Greatwood Copse, Shanklin, SZ573800, 2020, G.R.L. Greiff. Otherwise known from just a single nearby site, where it was last recorded in 1987.

***Pogonatum nanum*. 27:** On the sandy edge of a pit, 25 m alt., Bryant's Heath (Site of Special Scientific Interest), Felmingham, TG257293, 2020, M. Ghullam. The fifth record of the species in the vice-county since the millennium.

***Pterogonium gracile*. 10:** Ancient calcareous woodland, 112 m alt., Mudless Copse, Newport, SZ448870, 2020, G.R.L. Greiff. A single colony on an old ash tree. Only known from this locality on the Isle of Wight.

***Reboulia hemispherica*. 2:** South-facing low rock face along a roadside, Pillaton, SX379635, 2019, T. Purches. A new site, and the first record for the species in the vice-county since 1966.

***Riccia subbifurca*. 10:** Arable-woodland margin, 40 m alt., Northpark Copse, Newport, SZ438885, 2020, G.R.L. Greiff conf. J.A. Norton. The second record for the Isle of Wight (the previous record was in 2002).

***Thuidium assimile*. 29:** In open chalky turf, 20 m alt., Newton churchyard, TL435491, 2020, C.D. Preston conf. T.L. Blockeel. Scattered and locally frequent in a limited area only. A new locality, and the first record since 2005.

### Unusual habitat or substrate

***Leucodon sciuroides* var. *sciuroides*. 6:** Urban pavement tarmac (Fig. 7), 50 m alt., Wells, ST536457, 2020, S.L. Pilkington. Not an uncommon epiphyte in the area, but the first sighting of it on the ground.

***Nowellia curvifolia*. 27:** On decorticated fallen Poplar (*Populus*) trees, 42 m alt., Metton Carrs South, Felbrigg Hall Estate, TG1937,

2018, M. Ghullam. This is the first time that *Nowellia* has been found other than on conifers in Norfolk & Suffolk.

### Contributors and checkers of records

T.L. Blockeel, S.D.S. Bosanquet, A. Branson, P. Budd, M. Burton, R.H. Carter, M. Crittenden, M. Ghullam, J.J. Graham, G.R.L. Greiff, C. Halpin, D.G. Long, P. Martin, H. Matcham, A. McClay, D.M. Morris, J.A. Norton, J. O'Reilly, M. Padfield, O.L. Pescott, S.L. Pilkington, C.R. Pope, C.D. Preston, T. Purches, M. Rayner, G.P. Rothero, S. Rubinstein, N.A. Sanderson, B. Scott, J.D. Sleath & M.J. Stribley.

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**Oli L. Pescott**

e olipes@ceh.ac.uk