

Bryophyte Report for Hampshire & Isle of Wight

John Norton

Progress on data entry and mapping

This report covers the period December 2024 to July 2025. Between December and May I spent a lot of time entering a backlog of my own records, mainly for the two counties from 2021 to 2024, and also compiled other records sent to me. The 2021 records and some from earlier dates have been submitted to BRC (Biological Records Centre) who administer the British Bryological Society's (BBS) database, but I have held on to the others as the BRC are in the process of transferring the database to iRecord. When this process is completed I should be able to import the rest myself.

With these records fully up to date I was able to redo the distribution maps on my website (hantswightbryology.net). For both counties there are now indexed pages of maps at 5 km square (quadrant) scale, plus a set of hectad maps for Hampshire. Jonathan Sleath wrote an account of bryophytes in North Hampshire (VC12) and this has also been added to the website (but the VC11 account now needs updating). The Hampshire bryophyte records have been sent to Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre for use by them in servicing data requests and biodiversity planning. I also provided comments on bryophytes for their work on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire, a draft of which was published in May 2025: hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/draft-strategy. I have started reviewing the Hampshire data for an update to my Hampshire Rare and Notable Bryophytes Register, the last version of which was issued in January 2022. This should be completed by next spring if I have time to do it over the winter.

Taking into account some recent taxonomic revisions and discoveries of new species in Hampshire and Isle of Wight the current total taxa recorded are: VC10 – 387, VC 11 – 484 and VC12 – 433. In Hampshire as a whole there are 513 taxa, corresponding to 501 full species (some species have two or more distinct subspecies or varieties which are normally recorded as such).

Meetings reports

A summary is given below of all the meetings during the period, with comments on some of the more interesting records. Fuller reports of some of these are available on the BBS website (britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk) (click on *Events*, *Local*, *Southern Group*). Details of future meetings are usually shown on my own website

(hantswightbryology.net) but if you want to be notified of meetings (which are often arranged at short notice) please contact me to be added to the Southern Group email list (john@hantswightbryology.net). The first meeting of the 2025/26 winter season will as usual be held jointly with the Wessex Bryology Group, and this year we plan to visit Marlborough Deepes in the New Forest on Sunday 26 October.

Pig Bush and Rowbarrow, New Forest (SU3604), 1 February 2025

Six people attended this meeting, the location of which was billed as Frame Wood, the idea being to walk there from the Pig Bush car park, but the bryology proved interesting enough to slow us down considerably, so we only managed to record the woodland at Pig Bush itself and Rowbarrow to the south, returning via some wet heath at Halfpenny Green. At Pig Bush car park there was some *Lophocolea semiteres* on a grassy edge. Visits to the New Forest over the past few years have confirmed that this non-native liverwort is now quite widespread here, though still under-recorded. In Pig Bush a small depression produced *Fissidens exilis* on a lump of clay and *Cephalozia lunulifolia* on a rotting log. Here and also at Rowbarrow we found the New Forest old tree trunk specialists *Frullania fragilifolia* and *Zygodon rupestris*. In wet heath south of Pig Bush a nice find was *Odontoschisma francisci* on the bank of a rutted track and a single small patch of *Hypnum imponens* on another track. At Rowbarrow we added most of the expected woodland floor species and some epiphytes, including *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Neckera complanata*, *Dicranum montanum* and the unexpected *Fissidens incurvus* on a stream bank. Checking old logs eventually resulted in a small patch of *Cephalozia curvifolia* (previously *Nowellia curvifolia*) which is now recorded in six 5 km squares in the New Forest, but still apparently quite scarce in the county. We had hoped to find *Scapania gracilis* which Francis Rose had recorded in Frame Wood in 1974 but were unsuccessful. At Halfpenny Green some large patches of *Scapania undulata* were recorded by a small watercourse.

In all we recorded a good total of 87 taxa, comprising 25 liverworts and 62 mosses. *Lophocolea semiteres* and *Fissidens incurvus* were new to SU30 and with microscope checks we confirmed the presence of both *Leucobryum glaucum* and *L. albidum*.

South-east Gosport (SZ69), 9 March 2025

I organised this meeting to demonstrate some of the rarer and more interesting coastal bryophytes that I have discovered in my home town over the past ten years or so. Around ten people attended, and the weather was pleasant with some sunshine. We started at Gilkicker Point (SZ607977) where we looked at some presumed *Fissidens crispus* on the bank of the larger of the two SSSI lagoons under a *Quercus ilex* tree. *Tortula pallida* was also spotted here at the water's edge and *Rhynchostegium megapolitanum* was seen nearby on the grassy bank of the lagoon. On the north-west side of the fort we looked at some patches of *Tortella flavovirens* by a saltmarsh depression and the group admired some tiny fruiting patches of *Didymodon tophaceus* subsp. *sicculus* on the bank at the edge of the main area of saltmarsh, also growing under *Quercus ilex* (see last issue of *Flora News*). On a sunny bank here there were some small patches of *Scleropodium touretii*. After lunch we walked back to the other side of the fort to look for *Tortula acaulon* var. *papillosa* on a recently constructed shingle embankment, without success, but found some small colonies of *Entosthodon fascicularis*. I then showed the party a better patch of fruiting *Tortula pallida* on the seaward end of the main lagoon (the photo shown opposite was taken a few weeks later).



Hypnum imponens, Rowbarrow, New Forest,
1 February 2025. John Norton



Tortula pallida, Gilkicker Lagoons SSSI,
Gosport, 2 April 2025. John Norton

We moved on to Fort Road car park (SZ613981) to see *Bryum algovicum*, but the only likely plants of this were not fruiting. Rue-leaved Saxifrage *Saxifraga tridactylites* was just coming into flower here. We then moved on to Anglesey Lagoon (SZ605987) to see a fine colony of *Tortula wilsonii* and visited a small bund of acid soil by the road at Ewer Common (SZ608988) where we saw *Sphaerocarpos europaeus*, *Pleurodium acuminatum* and *Riccia glauca*. Finally, we stopped at Workhouse Lake (SZ609993) to see *Grimmia laevigata* on the concrete bridge, along with *G. orbicularis* and *G. pulvinata*. Unfortunately, we had spent too long at Gilkicker, so there was no time to visit Haslar Cemetery to look at a colony of *Bryum donianum*.

Danebury Hill near Stockbridge (SU3237), 5 April 2025

This meeting was kindly organised by Jonathan Sleath. Unfortunately the visit took place after a prolonged period of sunny and dry weather (which continued for another month), which made the bryology difficult; however, the total list of 53 taxa was quite respectable. Part of the reason for planning the visit here was to look for *Campylophyllopsis calcarea* on the mound of the hill fort where we knew there were plentiful Beech trees. During the trip to Shipton Bellinger in 2024 we had realised that a favoured habitat of this uncommon species was the exposed roots of mature Beech trees in chalky habitats. Walking around the hill fort mound we started inspecting the beeches and found some nice epiphytes on the lower trunks, including *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Anomodon viticulosus* and *Porella platyphylla*, but after an early lunch some small fruiting patches of *Campylophyllopsis calcarea* were soon discovered and admired on the eastern end of the hill fort. This is the first record for SU33. Other highlights were *Oxyrrhynchium schleicheri* which Jonathan spotted behind the toilet block in the car park at the start of the meeting, a tiny patch of *Weissia brachycarpa* var. *obliqua* with some *W. angustifolia* on a chalky bank and some rather sickly and dried up *Brachythecium glareosum* in an area of trampled grassland.



Jonathan Sleath photographing *Campylophyllopsis calcarea* on Beech roots, Danebury Hill, 5 April 2025. John Norton

Isle of Wight visit

I made a trip to the Isle of Wight during 18–22 March 2025, visiting various sites in the east of the Island, joined by George Greiff on 20th and 21st. Most of the recording was uneventful, but on 20th George and I started at St Catherine's Point (SZ4975), where George showed me a large patch of *Didymodon acutus*, which he had found on a previous visit. Another smaller colony was found nearby. We explored the woodland and scrub at Rocken End without seeing too much of interest but did notice that *Aloina aloides* had colonised large patches of bare mud from a recent slippage, but *A. ambigua*, for which a fruiting voucher is still needed for the Isle of Wight, could not be found.

On 21 March we visited Shanklin cliffs (SZ5881 & 5882) to have a look at the only British colony of *Philonotis marchica*, which since our previous two visits in 2019 seemed to have declined, possibly because of a reduction in active seepages with dripping water due to the preceding very dry winter. The dryness had also reduced the amount of hornworts and liverworts (such as *Blasia pusilla*) on the lower cliffs, which usually grow here in

abundance. However, at the start of the esplanade here, by the car park, a low section of cliff with a good seepage is more easily accessible and looking here first George passed me a specimen of something with long, fine leaves which looked like *Campylopus pyriformis*. I nearly threw the specimen away but when I later looked at it under the microscope I realised there was something odd about it and after going through various possibilities I eventually identified it as *Dicranella subulata*. This is only the second record for the Isle of Wight since a Newport record by Rev H.M. Livens in 1906. I also examined a *Bryum* collected from a mound of wet sandy soil at the base of the cliff and was surprised to discover this was easily identifiable due to the presence of clusters of tiny tubers characteristic of *B. sauteri* – and surprisingly completely new for the Isle of Wight (though quite a scarce species and not one I'd seen before).

Later that afternoon I had a look around Ventnor Botanic Garden in the hope of re-finding the non-native *Leptotheca gaudichaudii*, which is well known as an occasional stowaway on tree-ferns imported from Australasia. George had seen this here in 2021, but I had overlooked the record and not included it in these reports until now. Details are given below.

I was back on the Island during the BSBI *Taraxacum* field meeting which was held between 25 and 28 April. During the trip I heard that bryophyte hunter extraordinaire Jamie Warren had been on the Island and had re-found *Cephaloziella turneri* (a nationally Near Threatened and declining tiny liverwort) along the stream in the north of Parkhurst Forest. This was recorded here between 1908 and 1926 and then again at the BBS meeting of 1964, but not since so was an excellent re-find. I had a brief look for it after the *Taraxacum* meeting had finished but armed only with a 6-figure grid reference it was not surprising that I was unsuccessful (I think Jamie has spent several hours looking for it!).



Dicranella subulata specimen from Shanklin cliffs, collected 21 March 2025. John Norton



The distinctive tiny tubers of *Bryum sauteri*, Shanklin cliffs 21 March 2025. John Norton

New vice-county records

Details of new records and debracketers for the period January to July 2025 are given below (includes records not published in previous *Flora News* reports). These are records for which vouchers have been or will be submitted to the national BBS herbarium in Cardiff, and which are listed in annual reports in *Field Bryology*, the BBS magazine. Debracketers are species which have been seen for the first time since 1970 (by convention species which were last recorded prior to this date are listed in the bryophyte vice-county census catalogues in parentheses).

Liverworts

***Cephaloziella turneri*, VC10.** Parkhurst Forest, SZ476917, 25 April 2025. Stream side. J. Warren, conf. N. Hodgetts. Debracketer (only known VC10 site, previously recorded 1908–1926 and during BBS meeting of 1964).

Mosses

***Bryum sauteri*, VC10.** Shanklin cliffs, SZ58828218, 21 March 2025. On slumped sandy substrate at foot of cliff. With abundant small pyriform tubers. J. Norton & G. Greiff, conf. S. Pilkington. New to VC10.

***Dicranella subulata*, VC10.** Shanklin cliffs, SZ58778192, 21 March 2025. On seepage between wooden revetment at start of roadway. G. Greiff & J. Norton, conf. S. Pilkington. Debracketer for VC10 (2nd record; first in 1906).

***Dicranella varia*, VC12.** Near Caesar's Camp, SU83965041. S. Pilkington, J. Sleath & J. Norton, conf. S. Pilkington. On damp disused track. (Voucher was required for VC12 since recent taxonomic revision of *D. varia* subspecies.)

***Leptotheca gaudichaudii*, VC10.** Ventnor Botanic Garden, SZ548769, 26 June 2021. G. Greiff & C. Pope, conf. S. Pilkington. On Tree-fern (*Dicksonia*); only a single fern colonised; moss in relatively poor condition with much chlorosis. New to VC10.