



△ *M. tenerum* habit (top) and capsules (bottom).
Howard Wallis

The reappearance of *Micromitrium tenerum* in south-east England

Since 1850, this rare species has been recorded from nine sites in Britain, all but two in the south-east (West Kent, Surrey and West and East Sussex). Since 1950 it has been recorded from only three vice-counties, West Sussex, Anglesey and North Devon. The last record was at Roadford Reservoir in North Devon, on the 12 October 2004 by David Holyoak. The last record in its south-eastern stronghold was in West Sussex in 1968.

On the 17 September 2009, Peter Howarth visited Brede High Woods in East Sussex, and after walking south through the wood he found that the water level in Powdermill Reservoir (TQ 800195) was low, so he walked along the northern edge of reservoir edge looking for interesting bryophytes. He soon identified several rosettes of *Riccia cavernosa* as well as another *Riccia* which he felt was a candidate for *R. huebeneriana*. An interesting *Weissia* was on soil at the base of a tree, and a very small fruiting ephemeral (which he was unable to identify in the field) was growing on the exposed mud.

On returning home he was able to examine his samples microscopically, and felt sure he had found *Micromitrium tenerum*, *Riccia huebeneriana*, *R. cavernosa* and possibly *Weissia rostellata*. He passed his samples to the Surrey Recorder who confirmed his findings. Samples

were then sent off to the respective referees for formal confirmation, and at the time of writing this has been received in respect of both *Riccia* species, and *M. tenerum*. According to Church *et al.* (2001), *M. tenerum* is critically endangered in Britain, and *R. huebeneriana* is vulnerable.

On the 21 September Howard Wallis, visited the site, but found that the water level of the reservoir had been raised to facilitate the activities of the fishermen who use the reservoir. However, after several hours of careful searching, another patch of *M. tenerum* was found together with two patches of *R. huebeneriana* and several rosettes of *R. cavernosa*, all in different locations to those found by Peter Howarth. No *Weissia* was found and the tree base supporting this find was almost certainly now under water.

It will be interesting to see if these species reappear in 2010 if the water level drops during the summer months, and the site will continue to require regular monitoring.

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References

- Church, J.M., Hodgetts, N.G., Preston, C.D. & Stewart, N.F. (2001). *British Red Data Books Mosses and Liverworts*. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.