



During a recent survey of Surrey Wildlife Trust land, **Howard Wallis** recorded a bulbiferous *Pohlia* species that turned out to be a species outside its normal range.

The appearance of *Pohlia camptotrachela* in Surrey – a major range extension

△ *P. camptotrachela*. H. Wallis

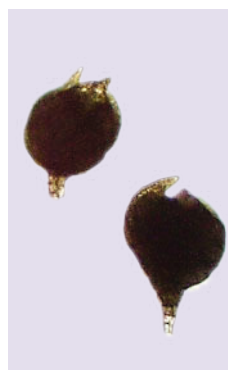
The small acrocarpous moss *Pohlia camptotrachela* occurs in western England, west Wales and Scotland, extending north to Shetland. In the south of England the most easterly records are from Oxfordshire, Somerset, the Isle of Wight and an old record from south Hampshire. There are no records from south-east England or East Anglia.

I often work closely with the Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT), and in July this year they asked me if I would look at the Bagmoor, Royal and Elstead Commons complex which is situated to the north of the Thursley Common National Nature Reserve. Bagmoor Common is a 14 hectare site owned by the SWT. Royal and

Elstead Commons are more extensive and owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) but with public access. The Commons are currently subject to public consultation regarding future management options.

Bagmoor Common is a mixture of open, wet and dry heath, and mixed and coniferous woodland. On the 16 August 2011, I was approaching Bagmoor Common on a footpath from Royal Common, another wider path was coming in from the right and at the point where the two paths joined there was an old, damp wheel rut (approximately SU923423). I stopped to look, as such ruts are often good sites for members of the Fossombroniaceae. I found several patches of a small bulbiferous

Pohlia with numbers of bulbils in the upper leaf axils. The bulbils appeared small, glossy, round and yellowish in appearance and I suspected that it was not the common *Pohlia annotina* which was also present in the same wheel rut. Later that day, microscopical examination convinced me that I had found *Pohlia camptotrachela*. The bulbils were quite distinctive, more or less globose, with 2–4 tooth-like, incurved primordia of 1–2 cells, mostly stipitate (supported on a stalk), and measuring 83–130 × 80–110 µm. Since I had never seen this species before, and it was outside the normal distribution range, I sent it to the appropriate referee who was able to confirm my determination. I sent copies of my report, including details of my find, to the SWT and



△ *P. camptotrachela* bulbils. H. Wallis

▷ *P. camptotrachela* bulbils in leaf axils. H. Wallis



▽ *P. camptotrachela* habitat at Bagmoor Common (SU923423). H. Wallis



▽ *P. camptotrachela* habitat at Elstead Common (SU903422). H. Wallis



to Natural England as Bagmoor, Royal and Elstead Commons are part of the larger Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SSSI. The find represents the first record of *Pohlia camptotrachela* for Surrey and for south-east England.

I commenced surveying on Elstead Common on 12 September, 2011. The common is mostly dwarf shrub heath, and lowland, acidic grassland. There are a couple of drains, and some boggy areas and wet heath, and there is a fringe of mainly coniferous woodland on the southern, western and northern boundaries. There are a number of footpaths and bridleways, some quite overgrown. The bridleways have been used for tracked vehicles as the area is MoD land, and the paths and bridleways are often heavily rutted in the boggy areas. During my first visit I walked the whole area, recording species of particular interest. I had recorded *Fossombronia foveolata*, *Cladopodiella francisci* and *Riccardia incurvata* in this area in the past, so I was on the lookout for these species, and re-found all three. I was also looking for *Pohlia camptotrachela* in the wheel ruts as some of the habitat was similar to that at Bagmoor Common, but I did not record it on this occasion.

I made my second visit on the 15 September, 2011, concentrating on the footpaths and bridleways. Starting from the Moat car park at SU899416 I initially walked east along a bridleway towards a junction of bridleways and paths. Near here I recorded a *Pohlia* in an old, deep and damp wheel rut at SU902417, associating with *Fossombronia foveolata* and *Solenostoma gracillimum*. This *Pohlia* was subsequently confirmed microscopically as *Pohlia camptotrachela*. The common *Pohlia annotina* was also present. I continued walking and recording, turning north and keeping to the

west side of the common, following footpaths and bridleways. I recorded *Pohlia camptotrachela* again at SU903422, also in a damp wheel rut and again associating with *Fossombronia foveolata* and *Solenostoma gracillimum*. Reaching the woods to the north, I turned east, and then south on a wide loop to return to the car park, recording all the way. I made my final record of *Pohlia camptotrachela* at SU905418, at the side of the shaded and partly flooded bridleway, this time with *Solenostoma gracillimum* and *Riccardia incurvata* as associates.

I think it is interesting to note that all four Surrey records have been associated with trackways that have been used by mainly MoD vehicles and it may be that range extension of this species has occurred due to plants or bulbils being transferred on the tyres of such vehicles. It seems likely that this is a relatively recent introduction, as Thursley and Elstead Commons have been extensively studied in the past, both by myself and others.

Finally it was pleasing to note how plentiful the *Fossombronia foveolata* is currently. Over the 2 days recording at Elstead Common, I found it fruiting at a total of 12 different locations, either in wet wheel ruts or on the damp sides of footpaths and bridleways, commonly associating with *Solenostoma gracillimum*. Surrey continues to be a key vice-county for this species.

Acknowledgments

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