

Trichomanes speciosum (gametophyte)

The credit for records in VC5 go to Matt Stribley who in 2008 had the foresight to look for *speciosum* on rocks adjacent the River Barle and to Fred Rumsey as BSBI referee for ferns who determined or confirmed most if not all of the VC5 records. Fred on two occasions at SRPG field meetings has shown us the *speciosum* growing at Alfoxton, so I thought it might be interesting to have a look at the overall picture for this species in VC5 and possibly encourage the search for more sites which there undoubtedly are. Helena has done an excellent summary on the Rare Plant Register, this is just a little bit more on the habitat in VC5 and also a couple of new records this year not on RPR.

This is Horner woods, an excellent site for *speciosum*. West facing and an altitude of 142m, (in the same wood at 200m it can be found on south facing rocks).



The rocks are some sort of gritstone, I believe sandstone, so they hold water but are not wet.



When you get closer the deep cracks in the rocks are evident and these are the likely locations for *speciosum*. The green on the front of the rocks are bryophytes. A torch is an essential part of the kit. I think of the four Horner Woods monads we now have *speciosum* recorded in three of them.



Silcombe woods

This is a stream at Silcombe Woods on the coast west of Culbone. The feature to note is the rocks on the left side of picture. The rocks are north west facing at an altitude of 111m.

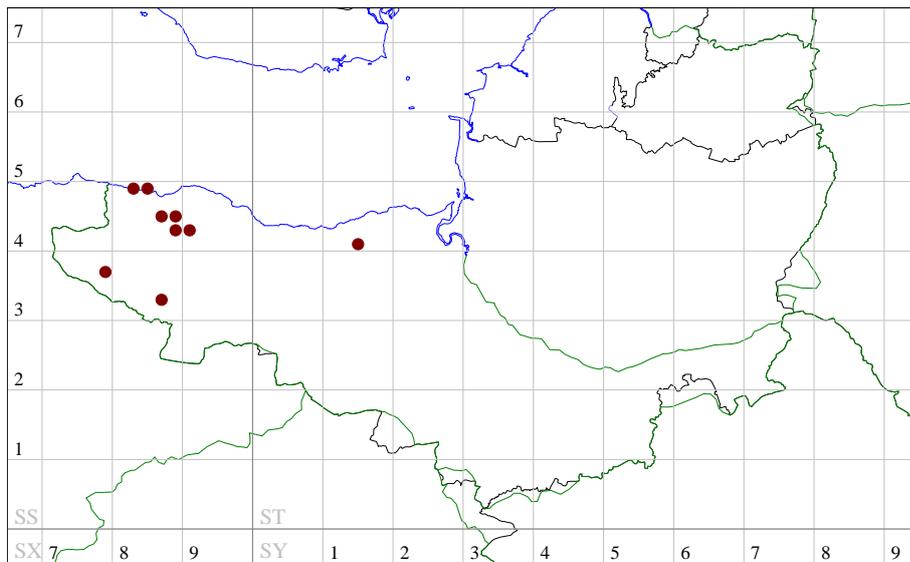


Close up the rocks have few cracks but in fact this time small patches grew on the surface just under the overhang. *Speciosum* has been found at two sites on the coastal woodland between Porlock weir and the Devon border this year, both on rocks above tumbling streams and there is no reason not to look for it in other monads along this stretch of coast.

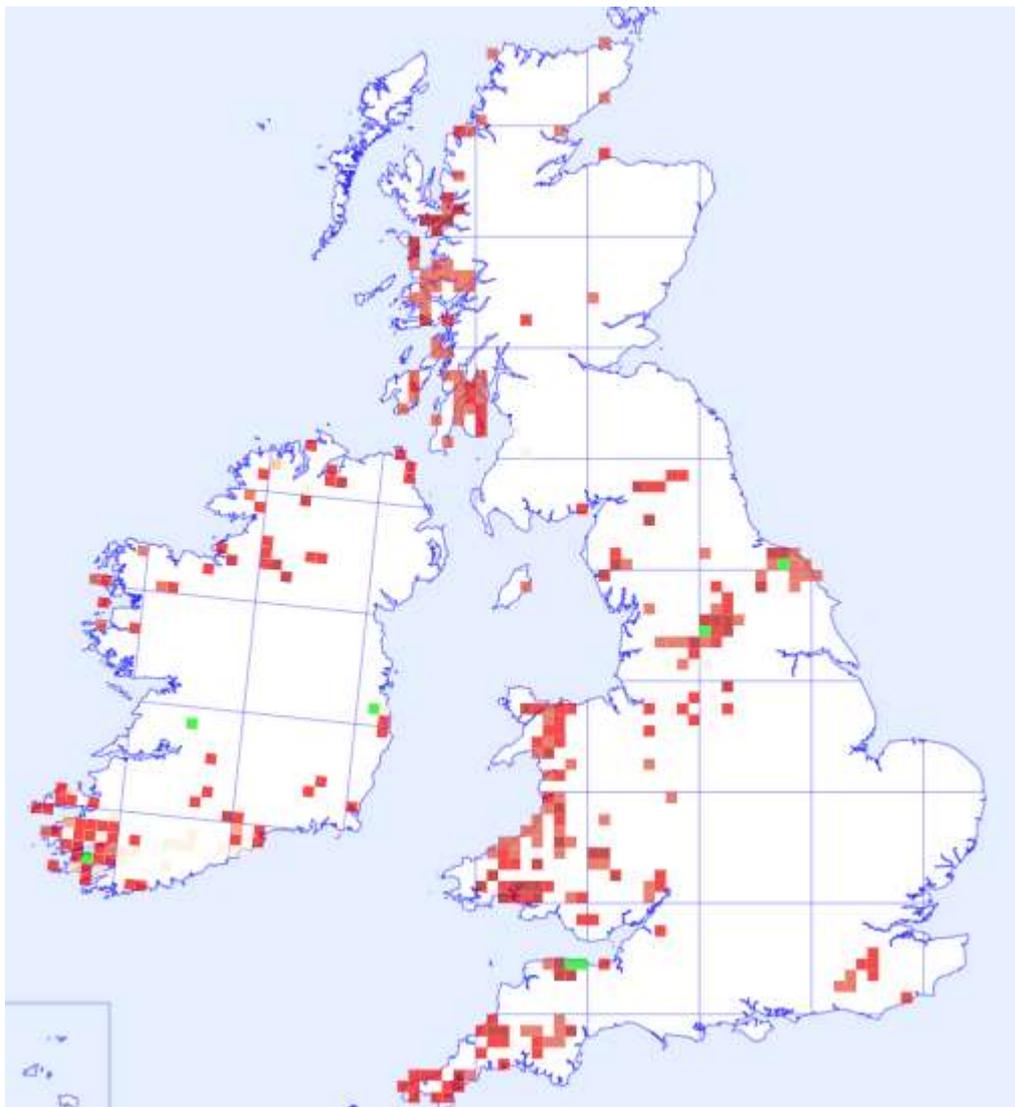


This is an excellent winter challenge, the rocks are often much more visible in the winter before bracken and such like tends to obscure them and fills the gap before the *Taraxacum* season.

Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern)



The overall position in VC5, on the RPR as scarce at the moment.



Lastly the UK distribution, almost certainly it will be found in more monads in VC5 in the future.

Best wishes

Graham