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Newsletter

Spring 2019

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View from the Chair, April 2019

Since the last 'View' in December 2018 there has been one major event – our AGM- and two forays, so the season is off to a swinging start.

The AGM was the usual joyful affair with a nice lunch (thank you Kathleen, Ali and Lynne), a splendid talk from our President, Geoffrey Kibby, much chat and a foray round the Risley Moss reserve at the end.

Both forays were well-attended – 15 people on the last one, to Rixton clay Pits, which I managed to attend and good numbers of (mostly small) fungi recorded. So do keep coming because the more eyes there are the more fungi we see and it's also a delightful day out in the fresh air with a group of like-minded people.

There are forays at least every month from now on and if you have lost your foray programme details can be found on our web page and Lynne posts notices on our Facebook page.

Of special note is the Beginners' foray and Microscope workshop on 16 June for which over 15 people have already expressed interest, so we may need to hold a second workshop to accommodate everyone. Do please let me know if you intend to come but haven't yet said so.

Also worth special mention are our TWO residential outings: to the Isle of Man (3 – 7 Oct., contact John Watt if interested and note that our past President, Bruce Ing will be going) and our usual and, again, possibly last weekend at Keswick Convention Centre (22 – 23 Sept.), for which you should send a booking form to me.

The Editor tells me there is very little space left in this Newsletter so it remains for me simply to wish you all a great fungus season. Enjoy your fungi!

Irene Ridge, Chair.

Editorial

This issue of the Newsletter includes several reports on forays carried by the Group and an account of the talk given by our President, Geoffrey Kibby at the AGM. Also included is an article on the BMS overseas trip to Slovakia in 2017 and details of an amazing find by one of our members at the bottom of their compost bin. I am very pleased to include a report by Ali McKernan about his work on educating children about fungi. Ali has recently been elected to the BMS Fungal Education and Outreach Committee as their Primary Schools Adviser.

Many thanks to all those members who have contributed articles for this issue and to Mike Walton for typesetting and organising the printing and posting of the newsletter. Articles can be submitted to me by email. Pictures of fungi to accompany articles are very welcome preferably sent as separate attachments. Please note that it is important to show due diligence when including any photographs (or other material) that have not been taken by yourself by getting permission and including the name of the photographer (or copyright holder) so that due credit can be given in the newsletter.

Paul F. Hamlyn

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RAVENMEOLS AND LIFEBOAT ROAD, FORMBY - 28 October 2018

Tony Carter

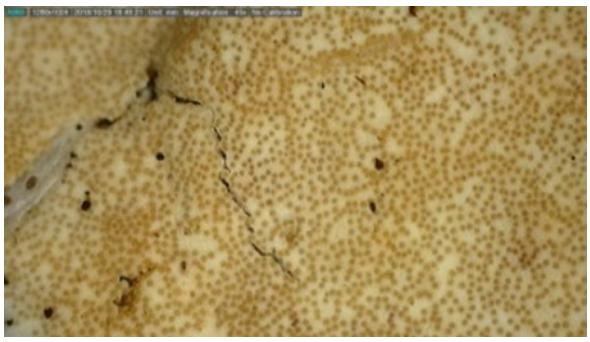
Sixteen members attended on a beautiful autumn day.

First stop was at Ravenmeols Sandhills Reserve where we checked on the decreasing patch of *Tulostoma brumale* (Winter Stalkball). We also recorded some rarities in *Hebeloma dunense* and *Inocybe dunensis*, in the dunes (where else?).

We then moved to the pinewoods beside the caravan site. Not many fruitbodies but a good variety of species: *Hygrocybe conicoides* (Dune Waxcap), *Inocybe phaeoleuca*, *Schizophyllum amplum* (Poplar Bells), *Tricholoma sulphureum* (Sulphur Knight), and *cingulatum* (Girdled Knight - left).

Also found was a conifer species, *Russula caerulea* (**Humpback Brittlegill** - above, left) and *Clitocybe gibba* (**Common Funnel** - above, right)

John Watt collected an Ascomycete, (right) growing on a fallen tree. It was a puzzle and John sought advice from Peter Thompson (who wrote the Ascomycete book). He determined it as *Arachnocrea stipata*, another rarity.



After lunch we moved to an area of scrub woodland. Highlights from this area were *Omphalina subhepatica*, *Melanoleuca excissa* (Smoky Cavalier), *Macrolepiota mastoidea* (Slender Parasol) and a lovely patch of *Geastrum schmidelii* (Dwarf Earthstar - left)).

We returned to the starting point via the dune meadow. A bit disappointing but we did record *Agaricus litoralis* (below - left) and *Arrhenia lilacinicolor*.

81 species recorded. Quite a few dune specialists not found in other habitats and a couple of rarities. Not a bad foray.

NWFG Foray reports 2018

John Watt

This is a brief summary of notable finds during forays in 2018

13 May **Roudsea** with Arnside Natural History Society -**39** records: including 6 rusts, 10 ascomycetess, and *Hymenochaetopsis corrugata*, Glue crust.

24 June **Moor Piece NR** - **25** records including *Phallus duplicatus* once again, as in June last year, previously in August; and *P. impudicus*.

12 August **Loggerheads - 86** records; including *Pluteus phlebophorus, P. romellii, P. pouzarianus,* and *P. cervinus.*

19 August **Clock Face** - **48** records including *Tephrocybe confusa,*

Anthracoma melaloma, and *A. maurilaba, Trichophaea abundans,* and *Auriscalpium vulgare*

2 September **Gait Barrows - 79** records including *Entoloma poliopus, Inocybe obsoleta, ,* and *Inocybe kuthani*

9 September **Wigan Flashes - 102** records including *Leccinum albostipitatum*, *Crepidotus cesatii, C. molli, and C. caspari* (previously been recognised under four synonyms: *lundeli, subtilis, inhonestus, sambuci*) *Anthracobia melaloma, A. macrocystis, Torula herbarum* (on Himalayan Balsam), and *Cortinarius barbatus*

16 September **Ainsdale NNR - 96** records (as compared with only 21 records on 2 November 2017). Finds included *Crepidotus calolepis, Inocybe dunensis, Lepiota cortinarius* var *cortinarius, Tolypocladium ophioglossoides* – Snaketongue Truffle Club – and *Clitopilus hobsonii*.

23 September **Rixton Clay Pits - 75** records including *Russula pseudointegra, R luteolacta,* 5 different *Inocybe* species, *Cortinarius barbatus, C. largus, C. hinnuleus,* and *C . subbalaustinus.*

28 September **Keswick** at the following sites:

Cliburn Moss - 75 records including *Gomphidius rosea* under Pines with *Suilllus bovinus,* and *Coprinopsis*

poliomalla on Dog faeces, *Thelophora palmate,* and *Auriscalpium vulgare* on pine cone

Aira Force - **42** records including *Cortinarius armillatus*

Great Wood - **5** records

Bowderstone - 23 records

Burtness Wood - 21 records

Hutton-in-the-Forest - **107** records including *Asterophora parasitica*, 5 species of *Parasola*, and 3 of *Helvella*.

7 October **Moore NR - 50** records including Spotted Blewit (*Lepista panaeolus*), Hare's Ear (*Otidea onotica*) and *Stropharia pseudocyanea*.

14 October **Turn Slack Clough – 70** records including *Psilocybe turficola, Conocybe alboradicans, Stropharia pseudocyanea,* and *Paneaolus olivaceus.*

21 October **Errwood: Goyt Valley - 89** records including *Coprinellus xanthrothrix, Pleurotus dryinus, Geoglossum umbratile, Hypocrea schweinitzii, Cortinarius largus, Cortinarius tabularis, Pholiota limonella* (cf *cerifera / aurivella*)*, Pleurotus dryinus, macrotyphula fistulosa,* and *M. contorta*

28 October **Ravenmeols/ Lifeoboat Road - 80** records including , *Schizophyllum amplum, Hebeloma dunense, inocybe fuscidula, Lepiota ermine,* and *Crepidotus calolepis*

4 November **Lytham Hall - 98** records (as compared with 90 on 29 October 2017) including *Pholiota connisans, Pholiota gummosa,* and *Psilocybe cyanescens*

In summary, there were a total of 1004 records on NWFG forays which, added to records on forays at Wigan Flashes (102) and Turn Slack Clough (approx. 50) gave an overall total of approximately **1150** for the year.

BMS overseas tour to Slovakia 2017

John Watt

Some of our more experienced mycologists in the British Mycological Society have over the years established personal contacts with colleagues in Europe and such links have facilitated a series of overseas forays. Slavomir Adamcik, from the Slovak Academy of Sciences, had come to Gregynnog for the BMS autumn foray in Wales in 2004. So it was that this connection had led to his offering to host the BMS overseas foray in eastern Slovakia last September 2017, in which he was ably helped by 3 local mycology colleagues.

His preliminary descriptions of the foray sites in the Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area mountains and in the UNESCO World-Heritage Beech Forests in the Poloniny National Park sounded so wonderful that I myself resolved to make such a trip for the first time. My feelings of still being a rather inexperienced mycologist were somewhat allayed having attended a few UK-based BMS residential forays, and one member on the present trip had more of a foraging background but this proved no stumbling block to his participation and enjoyment.

So I was one of twelve BMS members who flew in to Kosiče to transfer to a very comfortable hotel by Lake Ŝirava which had a large room available for us to use as our lab at all times. Here our hosts had set up 4 high-power microscopes for communal use although some BMS members somehow always manage to transport their own compact equipment by air travel, a point which had given me considerable cause for hesitation. I had purchased a head-band loop system offering 9x magnification which was quite helpful, and took slides and reagents. I took my laptop which has MycoKey4 loaded, but also took some of Geoffrey Kibby's keys and my Buzcacki and Eyssartier all of which were frequently borrowed by others, which I was pleased about.

Following a dry summer, Slovakia was experiencing wet weather so it was a promising start to immediately find *Crucibulum laeve* (Common Bird's Nest) in great profusion amongst the woodchips in the hotel flower beds (left). While it appeared that there could be foraying opportunities all around, our hosts had prepared a programme of 12 visits by coach to sites likely to yield the most interesting finds. Some of these sites had featured in a publication in 2007 listing numerous rare species. At some

sites such as the ancient beech and silver fir forests a ranger accompanied us and we were less than half a km from the border with Ukraine at one point. The surveys at these sites in the Carpathian mountains was an important exercise to increase the documented mycology recordings in particular of wood decay fungi; and by the same token of rare grassland species at other sites such as *Hodophilus, Dermoloma, Clavaria, Clavariopsis* and *Ramariopsis* species amongst others. Slavomir and colleagues are working intensively on the taxonomy of *Russulae* species and some of these other groups.

One visit took us to a wet grassland site notable for the mass of the blue *Iris sibirica* (not in flower) and Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale).* The numerous *Ramariopsis* specimens found there were at first sight not in evidence until one knelt down and parted the dead iris and sedge foliage (left). Twelve voucher specimens of this species were collected from this and other grassland sites for later determination by our hosts. Many sites were equally memorable for me for their late show of butterflies such as Pale Clouded Yellow (*Colias hyale)* and displays of wildflowers in the landscape like Field Eryngo (*Eryngium campestre)* and Marsh Gentians (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*).

We frequently saw *M. procera and M.mastoidea* growing in the meadows but were somewhat surprised to see an impressive abundance of the former growing within the Fagus woodlands themselves, recorded there previously by our hosts in such woods. The woodlands visited varied in their altitude

and species mixture but most notable

were the ancient beech forests, and a number of fungal associates were found there often in great abundance. I had never seen so many Porcelain fungus *(Oudemansiella mucida)* and the mycorrhizal *Hygrophorus eburneus* (right) was encountered frequently.

Saprobic on dead beech wood was the *Hericium corralloides,* (above) again not uncommon. Silver fir (*Abies alba)* grew with the beech and hosted the lovely *Lactarius salmonicolor* (right).

Agarics growing on dead wood, such as *Pholiota adiposa* and *cerifera* were positively identified with the aid of microscopy, but many brackets and toothed crusts were already known to our hosts such as *Dentipellis fragilis; Pycnoporellus fulgens,* and *Haplopilus nidulans* which turns purple after applying a drop of KOH. Robust brackets included Quercus-associated *Phellinus robustus* (right); *Phellinus ingarius; Fomitopsis pinicola,* whilst on smaller scale was *Schizophyllum commune* (below) with a worldwide distribution though not so common in the

UK. The name may be familiar to you however for it had been the subject of much early mycological research into mating types, which in this case led to the finding of 28,000 sexes on two alleles ! This species is an annual gilled bracket but its cousin, *Schizophyllum amplum,* (opposite left) lacks gills and was found on *Populus* as is typical.

There were so many other intriguing finds – *Phleoginea faginea*; *Multiclaviculata mucida*, but I especially liked *Artomyces pyxidatus* (above right) which is

exceedingly rare in UK. I have so many good memories from this trip – landscapes and the companions – but as enduring as anything, were the salamanders exploring the wet woods after the earlier dry spell.

Wigan Flashes Local Nature Reserve (Lancashire Wildlife Trust)

September 9th, 2018

Christopher Bowden

Once again, we had a most successful foray to this interesting and important reserve on the outskirts of Wigan, this time in rather better weather than last year. The Flashes (or lakes) are a legacy of the town's industrial past and were formed as a result of mining subsidence. Natural colonization and large-scale reclamation work have helped heal the industrial scars which were the legacy of this site, turning the area into the amenity it is today.

The habitat includes large areas of open water, reedbed, fen, rough grassland, wet woodland and scrub. This year, several acres had been affected by 3 arson attacks, so we will have to wait and see what regeneration of that particular area will produce. In general, over 200 species of bird have been recorded on the Reserve and, due to reedbed improvement, it is the third most important site in the UK for water rail. According to the BTO, only the Somerset Levels and the Severn Estuary, both of which receive a lot of publicity nationally, can match this Local Nature Reserve for this red-billed wader. Additionally, it is one of the top areas for willow tits, Britain’s most endangered small bird.

The final count from our foray was an impressive 102 species, 74 of which had not been recorded on our previous visit in October 2017. I am indebted to Tony Carter, Paul Hamlyn, Tim Rogers, John Taylor and John Watt for their invaluable

assistance in confirming the identity of many of the species and, of course to all the members who attended and kept this rookie reporter on the straight and narrow!

Due to the substrate, many of the species recorded were on soil and, with large areas of wet woodland, several were found on dead twigs not readily identifiable. So, we had 3 species of *Scleroderma* (*areolatum, citrinum and verruscosum*) and 4 species of *Crepidotus* (*caspari, cesatii, lundellii and mollis*). On finding *Lactarius pyrogalus*, I was reminded of the advice I received from one Tony Carter on my first foray: "You'll never become a mycologist unless you learn to taste-we used to be quite a large group." By the end of this foray, our numbers had halved! And Phillips states that *pyrogalus* is 'Suspect, avoid'!! Likewise, *Lepiota cristata,* found later in the foray.

Two nice finds were *Entoloma pleopodium* (widespread but uncommon) and *E. hebes* (occasional); another occasional species was the Wrinkled Shield *Pluteus phlebophorous* - also one to avoid, and one that plays havoc with my spellchecker!

Finally, to round off the afternoon, a rather splendid specimen of *Leccinum albostipitatum* (right) under Aspen (*Populus tremula*). In 2019, we will be visiting the site much earlier in the season to see what might be around in summer in what is still a wetland, carr environment. So, if a canalside picnic in July takes your fancy, please join us.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Problem species, problem genera;
where citizen science (that's you all!) can contribute

Geoffrey Kibby

(Reported by Paul F. Hamlyn)

The first thing is recognising that there is a problem when a collected specimen looks a little odd or does not quite fit the keys. If it keys out to a non-British species do not automatically assume that you must be wrong. Get a second opinion and think about getting it DNA sequenced. For example a specimen appeared to be the grey-capped *Tricholoma portentosum* but on microscopic

examination the spores were wrong. DNA sequencing indicated *Tricholoma umbonatum* which would be new to Britain however this species is characterised by a rather pale almost white cap. So we may have come across a species new to science.

Melanoleuca is considered one of the most complex and difficult genera with a large number of described species but few distinctive features among species. Added to the profusion of names is the difficulty of deciding which literature to follow; almost every author has their own interpretation of the various species. Marcel Bon lists 77, British Fungus-Flora 23, Funga Nordica 18 and Flora Agaricina Neerlandica 14. Species new to Britain are also being found. *Melanoleuca castaneofusca* originally from Sardinia was added to the British list in 2016 and is now common in Southern England. Clearly extensive DNA analysis to clarify the classical species, along with those more recently described, is badly needed.

Ongoing projects on Geoglossum, Trichoglossum and Microglossum have already achieved great results with extensive help from local field mycologists – a good example of citizen science. Our knowledge of waxcaps has improved enormously that in large part is due to the efforts of local mycologists contributions to ongoing DNA projects. But some puzzles still remain such as the *Gliophorus psittacinus* complex and it looks as though there are at least 4 species (instead of 2) in *Hygrophoropsis* and 6 instead of 2 species of *Hydnum* - 2 of them associated with *Helianthemum*. There is also the need to determine field characters, if they exist that relate to the DNA results.

Getting your specimens sequenced* is not that difficult and works out around £20 a specimen using the services of ALVALAB (www.alvalab.es). It is important to slowly dry the fungus tissue over a day since overheating can result in DNA degradation. The resulting computer file in SnapGene® format can be assessed using the free SnapGene® Viewer (available from www.snapgene.com) to obtain the DNA sequence. The sequence can then be compared with those in public databases (e.g. GenBank) and ideally matched against a type sequence (or epitype if the type specimen cannot be sequenced).

*Note: *Molecular analyses begins with the extraction of DNA from the sample and amplification of a specific phylogenetically informative region followed by purification of the amplified DNA before sequencing. The ITS (Nuclear Ribosomal Internal Transcribed Spacer) region is the most widely sequenced DNA region used in the molecular ecology of fungi and has been recommended as a universal DNA barcode sequence for fungi.*

Adventures in Fungi

Ali McKernan

The world of fungi is never dull, and my experiences of outreach this year is testament to that - it's taken me to places I never expected! From the young to the old, new friends to 'virtual friends' (thanks to the internet) - 2018 had plenty going on.

A new venture in outreach was through social media - a new frontier for me. Facebook can be a great platform for learning, whether it be ID's, sharing knowledge or consolidating what you already know, I've found it to be really quite valuable. I've helped others and others have helped me. Thanks to Lynne for setting up and running the NWFG's page so well - it's growing marvellously well.

YouTube is a video platform anyone can watch, and I make 'Beginner's Guide's to Fungi' under the guise of 'TheFungiGuy'. I've made a dozen or so short films that are a bit daft and whimsical - it turns out the grown ups love them more than the children. About 800 folk have now subscribed and one film now has over 20,000 views - I think it must be the macabre in people as it's the Deathcap guide that's so popular!

Thanks to Irene I was asked to write an article for the Wildlife Trusts children's magazine - 'A Day in the Life of a Mycologist' (I made it clear I wasn't really one). I think they were quite pleased with the piece, as later in the year they approached me to do a full day 'Takeover' of their Instagram account - enter social media platform No 3! (Instagram is an image based sharing space on phones, and these guys are pretty big, with over 60,000 followers.) I spent most of the ever fabulous Keswick weekend making a series of short videos introducing all things fungi to

the public, whilst also promoting our own group as well as UK Fungus Day. I was humbled by the responses and as a result a few hundred nature lovers now 'follow' my weekly posts promoting fungi!

Other new ventures included being invited to a couple of community groups as a guest speaker which was fun. Admittedly, one of them was under my guise as a musician, but seeing as my band let me down, I decided to 'pad it out' by presenting the contents of my basket of fungi I had left over from my previous day's talk. They looked a bit miffed but I reckon myself and the fungi won them over by the end!

My favourite work will always be with children - they're always so naturally engaged by fungi. As always, we celebrated UK Fungus Day in school with lessons, forays and ace artwork. I'm always looking for real life projects for the kids to engage in - I find their self-esteem and self-worth is raised considerably if the work is practical or has tangible outcomes. One such project came our way when my fungi friend Colin put out a call for folk to send him *Trametes versicolour*. His father was poorly with cancer and the immune boosting properties of said fungi have shown to have considerable effects on the healing process during the treatment process. Our children collected turkey tails from the school grounds and a specially organised foray to the woods. They dried them out, wrote letters and visited the post office to send their packages. Colin made a special visit to school to thank the children for their effort - the children were thrilled. Thanks also to the NWFG this year for funding the means for me to work with several small groups inoculating Birch logs with some cool fungi, including *Hericium erinaceus*. They loved the process of drilling, waxing and even just carrying heavy logs around. We're keeping a close eye on them for signs of fruiting!

I look forward to another fungi packed year of new ventures - hopefully to include the first films in a new series I'm making called Myco Heroes. Short interviews with mycologists to celebrate their achievements and find out what makes them tick. The fabulous Irene Ridge and Archie McAdam have been my first guinea pigs, sorry, recruits. Happy Hunting!

Further viewing:

TheFungiGuy on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuM_EFBLSLvOa2omTVOjMg

Paul Stamets on the remarkable benefits of *Trametes* on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWT09ZDqFlE

AGARICUS COMPOSTUS

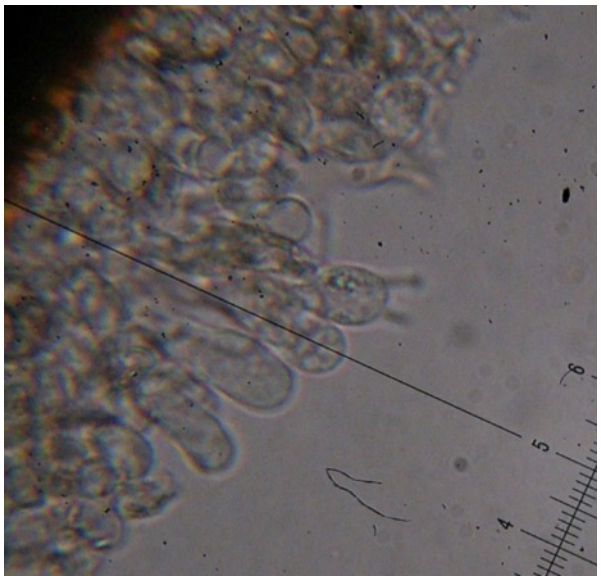
Tony Carter

I have a large black plastic compost bin at home. At the end of March I decided that the contents, having matured for over a year, would be of better use on my garden. So I started to dig it out.

The compost was about three feet deep and filled a good number of sacks.

As I reached nearly to the bottom of the bin, I saw a large mushroom. After a bit of careful scraping I found three more.

Clearly an *Agaricus* species. The largest was 16cms across. The total weight of the group was 0.737kg (1lb 10oz post Brexit).



Under the microscope I saw that they had a two-spored basidia and the spores were correct for *Agaricus bisporus*, the Cultivated Mushroom.

As I regularly add my mushroom peelings to the bin, they have obviously grown from them.I often find fungi, usually inky caps, growing inside bins on the top of the compost but did not expect specimens of this size to be buried under the compost.

But that is how they grow mushrooms.

Keep them in the dark and cover them with .....

A.G.M.

Saturday 29 February 2020

10.30 a.m.
at the Risley Moss Visitor Centre.