



Newsletter

Spring 2020



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View from the Chair, April 2020

Irene Ridge

And the view is indeed bleak just now: Covid-19, lockdown, no forays. Looking back, however, we did manage to have an enjoyable AGM in February with a record number of attenders. After the 'business' section there was the usual splendid talk from Geoffrey Kibby (our President), a summary of which will appear in the next Newsletter, an excellent lunch thanks to Ali and Lynne and rounding everything off a pleasant foray at Risley Moss complete with the usual finds of scarlet elf cups (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*). The minutes of the AGM will be emailed to you so I will say no more – except that our Group is overall in good shape, financially sound and with exciting developments in the DNA work led by Jeanette.

Since the AGM there have been no forays but people still managed to find fungi in their gardens or on local walks and tell us about them via the email group or Facebook. The dry weather hasn't encouraged fungi but there is usually something and at least some rust fungi are developing nicely (plenty of Arum rust, *Puccinia sessilis*, round here just now). When we can resume foraying is anybody's guess but probably not before July at the earliest and whether we can hold the Microscope Workshop on July 4th (the new date) is uncertain. It would still be helpful if you could let me know if you want to attend that workshop. We fervently hope that

our residential foray at Keswick in October can still go ahead and it looks like this really will be the last time. So please do book if you intend to come – **sending your booking forms to Mike Walton** and not to me. Mike took over management of Keswick last time because of my heart problems which meant that sadly I had to miss the foray. The heart problems were resolved by an operation in November and I'm very much better now.

So dear members keep fungi in mind but above all keep safe.

Editorial

In these unprecedented times I hope our newsletter will bring some comfort by reminding you about the great forays we had last year. Unfortunately with the current lock-down it has not been possible at this time to provide a printed copy of the newsletter to members that have requested one. Therefore, Mike will send a pdf copy to all members on the email group until the restrictions are relaxed.

I am delighted to include a report about the 2019 recipients of the BMS 'Field Mycology Award' namely NWFG member Debbie Evans and other mycologists of the 'Welsh Rust Group'. Some of our older members will remember Alan Bamforth (brother of Norman) who sadly passed away last year. I remember Alan attending quite a few NWFG forays during my early years with the group. With many of us spending even more time than usual in the garden or allotment this year I would encourage you to keep a lookout for fungi and send any interesting reports to me for inclusion in the next issue of the newsletter.

Many thanks to all those members who have contributed articles for this issue, and to Mike Walton for typesetting and sending out 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

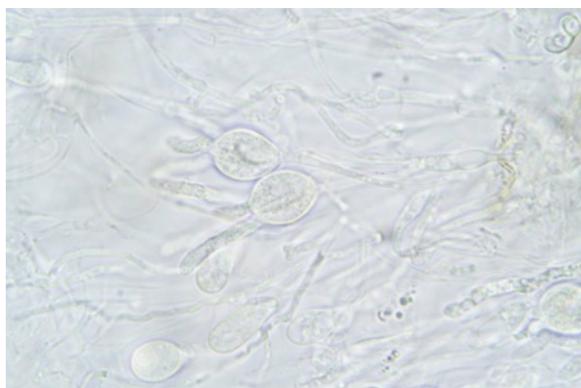
pfhamlyn@gmail.com

Dean Wood Foray, 17 March 2019

John Watt

A group of 9 of us including one member of the public donned wellingtons by Gathurst Station and made our way along to the West Lancashire clough called Dean Wood - (as distinct from the one by Rivington). The (very) wet woodland with dead wood was thought to have offered promise albeit rather early in the season. The West Lancashire BC rangers manage both the lower section owned privately and the upper steeper section and it was the intention to complement the tally of biological records for this site which has a number of vascular plants characteristic of ancient woodland.

The approach path provided 3 separate colonies of *Psathyrella* which though rather dark and without marginal veil remnants were all *P. candolleana*. Amongst the *Tubaria furfuracea* finds was one markedly more orange both in cap colour and spore print. Its cystidia were also more regularly cylindrical than *T. furfuracea* and overall matched the uncommon *Tubaria romagnesiana*. Amongst the few other agarics found was *Gliophorus psittacina* in vegetation along the wooded pathway. More impressive though was the mass of *Sarcoscypha austriaca* growing along many mossy branches.



Nearby a rather dull looking soft resupinate turned out to be the rare *Exidiopsis effusa* with large longitudinally septate basidia (left), sometimes called Hair Ice Crust though not always showing this



feature.

The characteristic appearance of *Tremella foliacea* on *Corylus* indicated the likelihood of this species found nearby as an anamorph on *Stereum rugosum*, with an appearance rather like minute poached eggs on the crust. (right)

One poroid incubated at home overnight had nearly been devoured by maggots but enough was left to identify it as *Ceriporia reticulata*. This is one which could be subsequently recognised in the field with its very shallow rather angular pores and virtually no underlying subiculum layer. Overall, a total of 61 species was identified thanks to members taking home a mixture of resupinates, ascomycetes and leaf rusts and smuts for confirmations of identity.

Turn Slack Clough foray, 3 November 2019

Ken Gartside

Eleven cheery folk braved the chill and very foggy day to foray on this marvellous upland Waxcap site. Of course, usually led by Norman, but illness meant he was unable to do so and we wish him well – especially with the very sad news of his brother Alan's recent death, who was such a stalwart NWFG fungal expert and wonderful character.



We were augmented by Steve Hindle from over in Calderdale who was able to help with a number of finds and ID's. Highlights were a find of five specimens of *Gliophorus reginae* – the Jubilee Waxcap (left) which has been found before here in 2017, but only one then. This is a fairly new species, first described in 2013 with only around a dozen national records.

The pace moved on a little quicker than usual to try and find time in the day to thoroughly search the other side of the Clough for *Clavaria zollingeri*, but sadly no such find this year. However, Beige Coral, *Clavulinopsis umbrinella* and Ivory coral, *Ramariopsis kunzei* turned up to compensate. A total of 17 Waxcap species were found, with some nice colour variants to Parrots and Heath's. These and the Jubilee will be sent off to Kew for DNA sequencing by Steve, who also will be looking into the site potential.

On a misty wintery day, we managed 64 species in total. Tim's *Galerina subclavata* is quite unusual and the *Omphalina griseopallida* not common either. No doubt we missed a good few by a quicker pace! One downside is that the Pink Ballerina was picked and I don't understand why when it is a species that is easily identified and well known, so should be left in situ. It hadn't even opened up to shed spores. As Mycologists, we of course have a look at and take many fungi home for identification, looking at spores and to smell them etc., but there should be at least some NWFG guidance to stop pointless collection of the obvious species, particularly when they are so uncommon. At least the rain held off!



Tricholoma ustale
Burnt Knight

Moore Nature Reserve foray, 13 October 2019

Paul F. Hamlyn

My annual foray for beginners at Moore Nature Reserve carried out since 2003 rarely fails to disappoint but on this occasion, we did struggle to find a good variety of specimens for beginners to examine. There were ten of us including a representative from the Wilmslow Guild Natural History Society. The ground was quite wet although thankfully it did not rain.



We got off to a good start and I was please to come across several specimens of *Geastrum triplex* (Collared Earthstar - left - Paul F Hamlyn) all in good condition. They only seem to grow in one place on the reserve. A very large group of *Tricholoma sculpturatum* (Yellowing Knight) was growing nearby. However, there was no sign of *Cyathus striatus* (Fluted Bird's Nest) seen in great profusion last year.

The heathland area was disappointing there was just the odd specimen around. Clive managed to find *Daldinia fissa* (Gorse Cramp Ball) growing on *Ulex*. This species was present in large numbers ten years ago following the burning of some gorse bushes. In recent years only the odd specimen has turned up.

The woodland area around the old canal bed was a bit more productive and included *Macrotypophula fistulosa* var. *contorta* (Pipe Club - right - Paul F Hamlyn) growing on a fallen branch. Surprisingly we did not record a single specimen of *Amanita muscaria* (Fly agaric) on this foray seen in profusion previous years. I surmise that they must have fruited earlier and had since rotted away. Although somewhat disappointing for beginners 77 species were identified in total thanks to the experienced members taking specimens home for more detailed examination



under the microscopic. All the records have now gone onto the Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland (FRDBI).

FRUITFUL FORAYS ON THE ISLE OF MAN

Overview - Tom Waghorn:

Enthusiasm pays dividends for mycologists. So does sound planning, good leadership and local knowledge. The adding in of an identification masterclass by Bruce Ing contributed to making the North West Fungus Group's first residential foray on the island a resounding success.

Ten members and partners took the ferry crossing from Heysham to Douglas, narrowly escaping the main path of storm Lorenzo though it resulted in a rather wet ride onwards for Kerstin, who was to cycle around the island with some friends afterwards. We enjoyed four comfortable nights in the Falcons Nest Hotel, Isle of Man, from where as it transpired that John had enjoyed a school marine biology field trip some 50 years earlier. The food was excellent, and we had use of a spacious room in which we could spread ourselves and our microscopes around. As usual, the midnight oil came in handy to help to bring the tally of identified macrofungi up to 146, whilst Bruce made 283 records of mainly microfungi (only in part helped by staying on two extra days with Alan Braddock).

The trip had followed an invitation from polymath naturalist Liz Charter of the Isle of Man Fungus Group, and she had prepared a lovely sequence of five or six site visits with excellent mapping and background information. She and other members dined with us in the evenings and worked on identifications and kept the records by the day. Together with her colleagues she helped lead us around a lovely varied sequence of five sites, for which she had earlier prepared excellent mapping and background information. Especially memorable were the broad-leaved woods and tumbling torrent of Glen Helen; the dunes lichen heaths and coastal grassland of Ayre's NNT from where we could look out to the Irish Sea and the Scottish hills from a wooden look-out tower.

There's something romantic about islands. In early October the great golden change of the year was just starting to unfold. So, as well as an abundance of fungi, we noticed luxuriant growths of lichens, mosses and liverworts, testaments to the healthy unpolluted atmosphere of Manxland. Few birds were added to our notebooks though; a flock of Golden Plovers, female Eider duck, a Wheatear and Stonechats. Was the lack of birds at the Curraghs related to the population explosion of red-necked wallabies? Some originally having escaped from a zoo 50 years ago, those bounding herbivorous marsupials are notoriously difficult to count. Using camera traps, latest estimates are of 1,742 plus or minus 455. There are now sightings over three quarters of the island which is 31 miles long and 13

miles at its broadest. Maybe bountiful for the tourist industry and charities with Wallaby towels, mugs and other merchandise. Not popular with naturalists, some of whom point out that the wallaby has no place in the bio-diversity of this enchanting island, and which is blamed for reducing the numbers of hen harriers at their traditional winter roost in the Curraghs; and in damaging nesting territories of other bird species. Not only that, they have a penchant for Royal Fern and Common Wintergreen has become more scarce.

However, they may be bountiful for the tourist industry and charities with Wallaby towels, mugs and other merchandise. Perhaps taking its place alongside the tail-less Manx cat, which we didn't spot during the trip.

Summary of fungal findings - John Watt

Our first outing was to the lovely wooded Glen Helen where we found 39 species including *Porphyrellus porphyrosporus*, and *Aleurodiscus wakefieldii*, which was a new record for the Isle of Man.

After lunch we went to what might have sounded an unlikely site, the grounds of the Nobles Hospital but there are many and varied mature trees in a parkland setting. *Conocybe arrhenii* was new to the Isle of Man and I was pleased to find my first *Entomophthora muscae*, a member of the *Zygomycota* phylum, one which causes the fly to climb to the top of a blade of grass; the better for spore dispersal as the fly's carcass becomes a mass of hyphae and spores.

Our second day took us to the Curraghs, a nice wild area of willow carr and wet woodland, which produced *Tricholoma album* and *Lepiota incarnata* to wrestle over. (It has not been fully established whether Red-necked Wallabies eat fungi but likely.). After lunch we strolled around Milntown House and gardens and viewed an impressive array of Dog Stinkhorn and plenty *Clavaria cinerea*.

The third day we explored the dunes and lichen heath of the Ayres National Nature Reserve in the north of the island. The *Volvopluteus gloiocephalus* was a new species found on the Isle of Man.

Overall the total number of separate species was of the order of 360, of which Bruce had recorded 200 separate taxa of mainly microfungi and 22 myxomycetes. A fair count we felt and helpful towards increasing the coverage of records on the Isle of Man and a great opportunity to get to know our mycological colleagues, who are not so far away and to whom we extend our appreciation for their hospitality.



Pholiota arrhenii (Ringed Conecap)
(Photos John Watt)



Pholiota gummosa (Sticky Scalycap)
with *Entomophthora muscae*

A personal account - Paul F Hamlyn

I took the ferry from Heysham to Douglas and then drove to Port Erin for a weekend of identifying fungi with fellow members of the North West Fungus Group (NWFG) and members of the Isle of Man Fungus Group. The weather was fairly wet, which is good for fungi. Sites visited included Ballaugh Curragh a wetland nature reserve, the Ayres National Nature Reserve a stretch of low-lying sand dune coastline with lichen heath and Milntown House that has mature woodland as well as formal gardens. There are now said to be several hundred wild wallabies living on the island descendants of animals that escaped from a local wildlife park and we came across a couple at Ballaugh Curragh. Evenings were spent doing microscopy prior to dinner.

Port Erin was originally a seaside resort before the decline of the tourist trade and was a very good location for our base. Since I was not involved with the organisation or recording I was able to focus on photography. Unfortunately, on our first day at Glen Helen it hardly stopped raining, so I did not even get my camera out of the bag. However, the other days provided plenty of photo opportunities. Evidently the Island had become virtually devoid of trees over centuries of human occupation until the Victorians decided to develop the glens for the tourist industry.

The trip to Ayres was quite memorable with flooding on the main road and I did wonder if my car would make it through some of the deeper pools. I kept my wellies on just in case. There were quite a few blackening waxcaps around but also some larger specimens that even when left overnight only showed traces of

blackening. Spore measurements confirmed that we had found *Hygrocybe conicoides*, the Dune Waxcap. I found one specimen growing with Marram Grass in the sand dunes and took it back to the workroom thinking that it was an *Entoloma*. After cleaning the grass away from the base of the fruit body a volva could be clearly seen. It turned out to be *Volvopluteus gloiocephalus* (Stubble Rosegill) a new record for the Isle of Man.

We had a great time thanks to the excellent choice of sites and hard work put in by the local organisers.



Members of NWFG and the Isle of Man Fungus Group



Mutinus caninus (Dog Stinkhorn)
at Milntown House



Macrocyttidia cucumis (above)
growing on wood debris
(smells of cucumbers and
has very large cystidia)



Volvopluteus gloiocephalus
(Stubble Rosegill)
(this and previous three photos -
Paul F Hamlyn)

NWFG member, Debbie Evans receives BMS FMCC award

“The BMS Field Mycology Award recognises extraordinary contributions to the advancement of British field mycology. Its recipients have contributed significantly through conservational, taxonomic, recording or educational activities. They may have regularly led field events or workshops, have written extensively or lectured widely about fungi, or have substantially advanced the identification and conservation of fungi.” The award was instigated in 2015, and previous recipients have been Geoffrey Kibby in 2015 and Roy Watling in 2018.

In 2019, The ‘Welsh Rust Group’ was thrilled to learn that they had been chosen to receive the award for their work on the plant pathogenic fungi of Wales. The group nicknamed the ‘Famous Five’, comprising Ray Woods, Arthur Chater, Debbie Evans, Paul Smith & Nigel Stringer, received a £500 cheque towards future publication costs and each received a bespoke certificate designed by Carol

Hobart using appropriate illustrations by M.C. Cooke. The award was presented to 4 of the 5 members in S. Wales at the Autumn Field meeting by Geoffrey Kibby.

The first member, Ray Woods, based in Radnorshire, is a well-known Welsh naturalist and conservationist and is a specialist in lichens, bryophytes, botany and fungi. He worked for many years for CCW (Countryside Commission for Wales) and more recently for Plantlife specialising in the lower plants. Having already published a RDL for Lichens in Wales he realised that there was nothing similar for fungi (in Wales or Britain) and rust fungi would be a good place to start.

Ray got together a group of 4 other likeminded mycologists spread over Wales, all with the same passion for rusts and other plant pathogenic fungi and the 'Welsh Rust Group' was formed. Nigel Stringer, based in Carmarthenshire, is a renowned expert on rust fungi; Arthur Chater, based in Cardiganshire, is a renowned botanist and author of the 'Flora of Cardiganshire', who has now come over to the 'dark side' recording the plant pathogens, he is a particular expert in smut fungi; Paul Smith, originally based in S. E. Wales, lectures in Southampton University and has a special interest in smut fungi, plus other plant pathogens; and Debbie Evans, based near Caernarfon, is a passionate and obsessive recorder of all the plant pathogens especially the rust fungi. The authors are all very competent botanists. They are/have been Vice County recorders in the past/present or have contributed greatly to their County Floras. This is very important when it comes to the identification of the fungal parasites, most of which are host specific. Their work has highlighted the presence of new fungal species to Britain and hundreds of new host/pathogen associations.

The group's primary aims are to highlight the importance of the plant pathogenic fungi, increase their profile and aid identification and recording by providing well-illustrated and free or affordable books and free downloads.

In recent years the Group has published three important works, significantly contributing to the conservation of the rusts, smuts (and Exobasidiiums), and powdery mildews in Wales. All the publications contain information applicable to the rest of Britain as well.

Rust Fungus Red Data List and Census Catalogue for Wales (2015) presents the results of a comprehensive analysis of the current conservation status of the 225 taxa of rust fungi so far recorded in Wales, using the updated IUCN criteria and provides a census catalogue of all species recorded in Wales and their hosts.

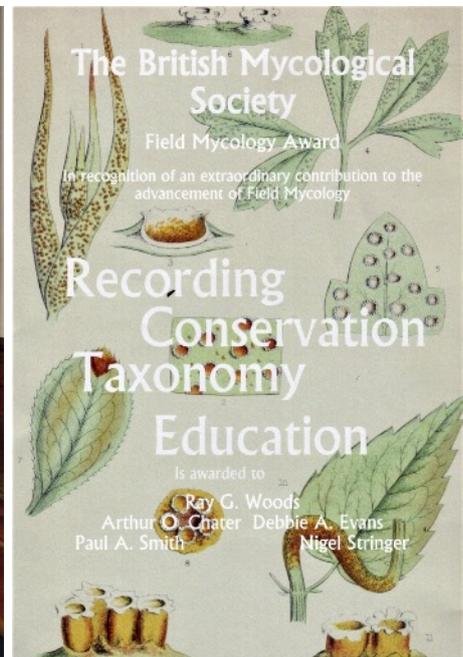
Smut and Allied Fungi of Wales: A Guide, Red Data List and Census Catalogue for Wales (2018) provides an introduction to the smut fungi and Exobasidiiums and a basic identification guide. It catalogues them and presents an analysis of their conservation status.

The Powdery Mildews (Erysiphales) of Wales: An identification Guide and Census Catalogue (Woods and Chater 2019) provides an introduction to the powdery mildews and an identification guide and census catalogue.

The three publications are available in hard copy from booksellers, and are also freely downloadable from the Aberystwyth Waxcap website: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/waxcap/links/index.shtml>.

Debbie is a key contributor to the work of the Group, having amassed many records from North Wales, especially in the vice-counties of Caernarfonshire and Anglesey as well as further afield. These records have provided an excellent picture of rust and smut fungi distribution in what was a relatively poorly surveyed area. The publications also contain many of Debbie's amazing rust and smut photographs.

The Group is currently busy working on the final stages of a book on the 'Downy Mildews and White Blister Rusts (Albugos) of Wales' which will be published shortly. With over 150 pages and an A4 format this important work is designed as an identification guide and also provides a census catalogue for Wales. It will be well illustrated, including more of Debbie's photos. Most species encountered in Britain should be readily identified using the book and it will hopefully provide a much needed resource at an affordable price.



Future projects of the Group will include an update of the Rust RDL to include more recent records, Ramularias and a checklist bringing together all the rusts, smuts, mildews etc. and their hosts recorded in Wales in to a single book which could used in the field.

Jeanette Maddy

Alan Bamforth



With qualifications in electrical engineering, Alan worked with the railways on signalling maintenance and installation until taking early retirement in 1995. Along with an interest in railways, in 1968, when their mother got a copy of a book on wild flowers from the library, Alan and Norman found an interest in natural history.

Their mother also introduced them in 1978 to the group that became the Manchester Field Club, still active today. Through this they joined North Western Naturalists' Union whose Mycology Section became North West Fungus Group in 1994

Alan became a Warden at Werneth Low from 1988 and continued in that post. Alan and Norman ran Flora Walks

for the public in Tameside from 1979, and there have been more than 300 walks over the years. Alan and Norman recorded their finds and have been involved in Lichen recording for the Vice-County 59 Flora Project (South Lancashire). Records were submitted to the Greater Manchester Biological Records Centre.

Alan was closely involved with NWNLU and then NWFG over the years from 1978 to 2014. He was part of a small group trying to produce keys, meeting at a visitor centre. Alan was very easy to get on with, and happy to share his knowledge. An asset to our group.

Alan passed away in Tameside Hospital on 29 October 2019. His funeral was well attended by friends from the organisations mentioned above.

Thanks are due to Norman for details included here.

John L. Taylor

CALDERSTONES PARK

Tony Carter

Calderstones is my nearest park and one of the largest in Liverpool. Named after some Neolithic standing stones. In 1875 it became the family estate of Charles McIver, one of the founders of The Cunard Line, before he sold to Liverpool Council.

The Allerton Oak, 2019 tree of the year, is a major attraction, but not for fungi. The only species I have seen is *Laccaria laccata*. One would think that there should be more variety after 1000 years. Interestingly, my Liverpool Botanists friends tell me that the Oak is a hybrid.



The park has numerous trees imported by McIver from destinations served by his ships. The majority are American conifers but there are broadleaf species from Asia and a number of strange grafts such as a beech on oak. I have a list of all the trees but no plan showing where they all are.

One of my favourites is a *Polylepis australis* (below) from the high Andes, known as ‘The Filo Pastry Tree’ because of its bark. It is not in very good condition and has started to attract fungi such as *Bjerkandera adusta* (Smoky Bracket) and *Hypholma fasciculare* (Sulphur Tuft) as well as a worrying patch of *Coniophora puteana* (Wet Rot). The most recent coloniser is *Mycena corynephora* (Bark Bonnet)

Away from the botanical specimens, there are extensive grassed areas, which are very popular with the public but not with fungi. There are large stands of *Fagus* and *Pinus sylvestris*, of which quite a few have fallen and are left in situ. Finds include *Cortinarius vibratilis*, *Echino-derma asperum* (Freckled Dapperling), *Geastrum striatum* (Striate Earthstar), *Lepiota echinella*, *Trechispora stevensonii* and *Phaeolepiota aurea* (Golden Bootleg).



Polylepis australis

There are numerous ornamental plants and trees in a series of shrubberies that are regularly mulched with woodchip. Interesting finds here include *Chlorophyllum brunneum* (Brown Parasol), *Lepiota subincarnata*, *Lyophyllum loricatum* (Gristly Domecap) and *Melanoleuca verrucipes* (Warty Cavalier).

Lots of areas are low maintenance where herbaceous plants have been allowed to flourish so with dead stems and fallen wood from the trees I have a good source for material all year round.

FUNGI WALK

Risley Moss, Warrington, 6 October 2019

Tom Ferguson

The fungi walk at Risley Moss, Warrington has become a regular annual occurrence under the auspices of the Risley Moss Rangers and supported by the Risley Moss Action Group. This year around 35 attended including many younger enthusiasts who made sure that even the smallest fungi were not overlooked.

We needed to look carefully because despite the favourable weather conditions there was a complete absence of *Amanita*, *Lactarius*, *Cortinarius* and only one *Russula*.

Nevertheless, there was lots to see and talk about and raise awareness of the characteristics of fungi, their importance in the local ecosystem and the subterranean relationship they have with trees and other green plants.

Risley usually provides plenty of Earthstars (*Geastrum triplex*) and Saddles (*Helvella crispa*) and this year was no exception demonstrating the amazing diversity of fungal form. The youngsters were delighted to help the earthstars release their clouds of spores.

Despite the absence of conifers, the Conifer Mazegill (*Gloeophyllum sepiarium*) turned up, growing on a park bench constructed from timber imported to the site.

The highlights were probably great rings of Clouded Agarics (*Clitocybe nebularis*), cascades of Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) and Scarlet Caterpillar Club (*Cordyceps militaris*) which with careful excavation revealed its parasitic attachment to the buried moth larva.

2021 A.G.M.

Saturday 27 February 2021 at 10.30 a.m. (10.00 a.m. Coffee)

Risley Moss Centre.