

North Eastern Fungus Study Group



Newsletter 18

September 2000



Contents

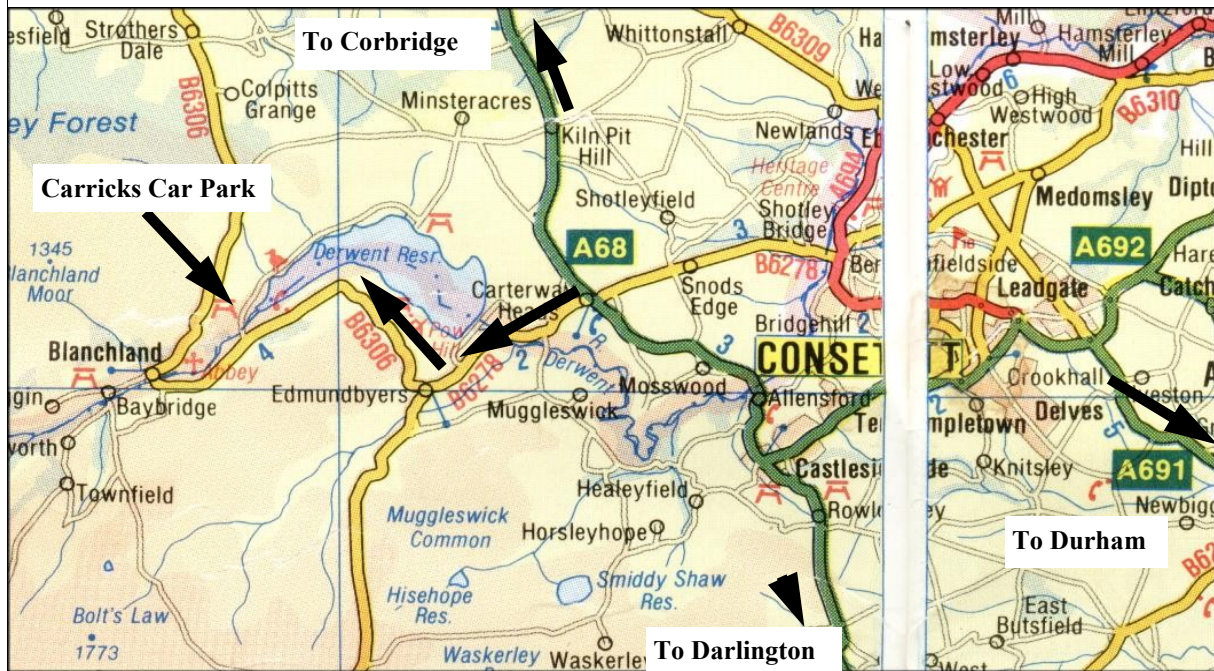
Derwent Reservoir Nature Reserve, September Foray.....	2
Kepier Woods, October Foray	3
Moorhouse Woods, November Foray.....	3
Microscopy workshop.....	3
Report from Littledean.....	3
Request for articles and photographs.....	9

For further information or if you would like to submit an article or questions for the next newsletter, please contact the Chairman of the NEFSG, Alan Legg at 36, Carleton Drive, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 9QP.

Tel : 01325 - 350834. Treasurer / Membership Sec, Babs Walton, Stodhoe Farm, Middleton-St-George, Darlington, Co Durham, DL2 1DS. Tel: 01325 332789. The Secretaries, Keith Cunningham / Helen Cheetham can be contacted at Durham Wildlife Trust, Rainton Meadows, Chilton Moor, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH4 6PU. Tel: 0191 - 5843112.

E-Mail durhamwt@cix.co.uk Fao NEFSG or keith@kcunningham.freemove.co.uk

Our next foray
Saturday 16th September is at
Derwent Reservoir Nature Reserve at 11 am meet in
Carricks Picnic site car park at Grid NY 983512



Directions: From A68 turn west towards Stanhope on the B6278, after two miles turn right at Edmundbyers on the B6306 to Blanchland for 2.5 miles then turn right Carricks picnic site is 100yds on the left.

Derwent Nature Reserve

Northumbria Water through David Long the reserve warden have kindly given permission for the NEFSG to visit their reserve, which is normally closed to all to protect the wildlife. As we will be very close to the river and reservoir, it is important that we try as much as possible not to disturb the bird life.

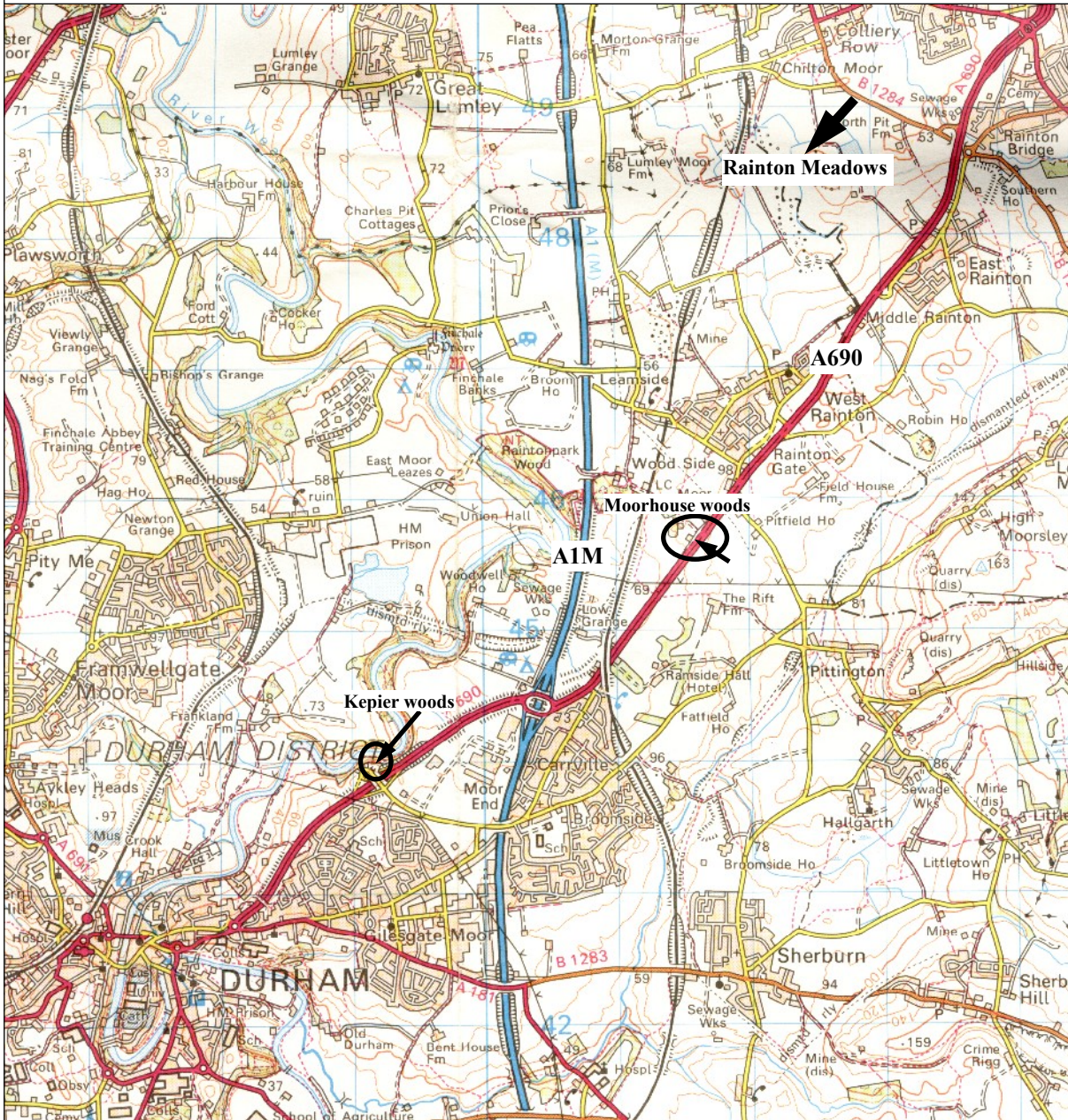
It should be noted that there are no footpaths except those made by deer, and the going can be difficult in a few places. Boots or wellies are recommended.

Cover Picture: **The Prince *Agaricus augustus*** This mushroom was found in an avenue of conifers and was a beautiful specimen, living up to both its names. Measuring in at 7 inches across and 7 inches tall. Apparently it is very good to eat, although tempted I was so impressed with it I decided to leave it. On returning a few days later it was still in superb condition but the cap had flattened out and grown to 10 inches! The picture was taken on September 1st at the Derwent Nature Reserve using a Panasonic Digital video camera on still mode. The image was then transferred to computer and hence to this newsletter. Hopefully there will be lots still to be seen on the foray on the 16th.

Keith Cunningham

October Foray

The October foray on the 14th is at Kepier woods near Durham city at grid ref NZ 292439. The car park (indicated with an arrow) is just off the first slip road between Durham and the A1M.



11th November foray and Microscopy workshop

The foray is at Moorhouse woods at the earlier time of 10.30, it is just two miles from Kepier woods (see map). From the A1M heading towards Sunderland on the A690 turn into the first lay-by and park there.

As it is remembrance Sunday two minutes silence will be observed at 11am. We will then go on to Rainton Meadows for lunch followed by a microscopy workshop. If you have a microscope or two please bring them along.

FUNGUS 2000 FORAY AT HARDWICK HALL **COUNTRY PARK**

To arrange our Group's high-profile Foray of the year on July 22nd was always going to be doubly risky. Summer is traditionally close season for fungi, few of which flourish in hot, dry weather. It is also the time when many members are likely to be away on holiday and unable to attend. Our two previous July forays generated lists of 73 and 53 species respectively - the latter only achieved by the incubation of 14 on rabbit pellets. I am therefore delighted to report that careful choice of site and the presence of specialists, as well as a gratifying number of regulars, helped us record one of the most successful outings of our short existence.

We were honoured by the presence of Derek Schafer, the BMS Foray Secretary-elect, who is in the process of taking over this very important job from Ern Emmett. Derek and his wife, Jenny, had decided to spend a weekend in Rothbury, meeting Gordon Beakes at a preliminary get-together to suss out the suitability of the area for next year's BMS Upland Foray, a week-long residential affair. So, not only had they travelled up from the home counties to Northumberland, but made the long trip down from mid-Northumberland just to attend our Foray. Derek is a *Coprinus* specialist but was also a great help with identification of other fungi.

In addition, one of our "postal" members, Fred Remblance, together with his wife, Mary, had travelled from Wakefield for the weekend. Fred specialises in microfungi and has had the enviable experience of learning first-hand from Martin and Pam Ellis, celebrated authors of the two ground-breaking books on microfungi first published in the 1980s. He was able to exercise his skills at leisure, examining the dead vegetation in the damp areas especially.

The day was disappointingly dull after a

good forecast but the turnout was heartening despite the absence of a few stalwarts torn between this meeting and others which had unfortunately clashed with it. The picnic tables proved very useful as did the easy-access pathways - particularly for the Rimmington family who brought along Holly - attending her first foray at about two months old. This must be some sort of record!

By late Saturday evening it was becoming clear that the Maybeck total of 1998 was going to be easily surpassed. Lists from Pat Wood and Derek Schafer later pushed the tally into three figures. Finally, Fred's impressive list of microfungi took the total to over 130, easily overtaking even our best autumn effort so far! The exact figure will be known only when a few final problems have been sorted out.

I have often looked in envy at the autumn foray totals from southern areas where it is not unusual to exceed 200 species. I've had to console myself with the thought that they have more kinds of fungi down there and there are usually more real experts at work, recording finds along the way and collating lists afterwards. Summer forays seem so unusual that I don't have any figures with which to compare this July total. What is clear is that it far exceeds my most optimistic hope and may even set a standard by which other Groups may judge their efforts in future!

Alan Legg

LITTLEDEAN 16-18 JUNE 2000

Every year Fungus Group Leaders from all over the country meet at Littledean House Hotel at the edge of the Royal Forest of Dean. This is not exactly a convenient venue for the NEFSG but to keep in touch with developments at a national level, it was agreed at the last A.G.M. that I should go as our delegate and report back to the Group in a subsequent Newsletter. Those of you who are BMS Members or Associates will be able to read Richard Iliffe's account of the meeting eventually in the BMS Newsletter. Richard is leader of the Leicestershire Group and has been keeping minutes over a number of years. This report attempts to give a more personal view of events at Littledean and assess their significance for our own Group.

On Friday evening we had two talks concerned with up-to-date methods of illustrating fungi. First, the chief editor of *Field Mycology*, Geoff Kibby, gave a demonstration of "electronic imaging" using a lap-top computer to illustrate what can be done with a digital camera. I had spent the previous weekend with a friend who had recently acquired one of these so I began with more understanding than I might have done. The technology is developing very rapidly and Geoff warned us off buying scanning equipment which employs "interpolation" of digitised "bits". Apparently this involves a lot of electronic "filling in" of detail with results that are inferior. Geoff demonstrated the versatility of such devices, especially in moving patches of colour around and introducing artificial "shadows". An on-the-spot "snap" of audience members present was "improved" before our eyes by instant restoration of hair to Derek Schafer's thinning pate. Subscribers to *Field Mycology* will be interested to turn to page 39 of the April 2000 edition. What appears to be a Roger Phillips-style photograph of three different fruit-bodies of *Amanita opinata* is in fact a computer generated version of three separate views of the single rather grotty specimen also shown in the field.

Secondly, Malcolm Storey introduced us to his own web-site www.bioimages.org.uk. If you visit this site you will find lots of pictures of fungi taken in various ways. Malcolm talked about how he took and processed these and showed examples of a *Leucocoprinus* and several small discomycetes.

Should you be feeling that your old SLR slide-taking camera is hopelessly outdated, you can derive some comfort from the fact that neither of the above technologies is appropriate for showing slides to large audiences.

The Saturday morning session began with Shelley Evans reading messages from the BMS President, Stefan Buczacki, and the President-elect, Steve Moss, neither of whom was able to attend this year.

Paul Kirk then reported on progress in developing the BMS records database. In particular, a new field has been added regarding permission to use records. He also told us that, to date, over 1200 species had already been notified for the BMS Fungus 2000 initiative. There now seems little doubt that the target of 2000 will easily be surpassed.

Shelley then dealt with conservation, reporting that all the major agencies (except the Forestry Commission) are now interested and involved in conservation of fungi. As most of you know, Plantlife is co-ordinating funding for fungi conservation projects. All delegates were invited to fill in forms relating to important sites for fungi, especially

(Continued on page 6)

threatened ones. I have now completed and sent back the forms, together with a copy of the consultation document I submitted to DWC in 1997. Next, Shelley mentioned the new Checklist of Basidiomycetes project at Kew. This will deal with all the major groups - toadstools, brackets, corticioids, gasteromycetes and jelly fungi. It is hoped that rusts and smuts will also figure but these are being dealt with last. A preliminary list is supposed to be appearing within 18 months.

The new Red Data List of threatened fungi is said to be in the final stages of preparation. It will use the categories of rarity compatible with RDLs of other organisms. When it becomes available, it will be down-loadable from the BMS web-site. I suggest that we try to make the list available to all our members.

The Foray Secretary-elect, Derek Schafer, then gave a brief resume of planned BMS Forays for the remainder of this year. He also gave a preview of projected events in 2001. There will be a Polypore workshop in April. The Spring Foray will be held in the Chilterns and a Russula workshop in Sussex in August. The Autumn Foray will be at Tan-y-Bwlch in North Wales and Roy Watling will lead a workshop on "little brown jobs" in October, probably at the Blencathra centre in Cumbria. Dave Shorten is organising an Overseas Foray in Normandy. There are also preliminary plans to hold an Upland Foray at Rothbury in Northumberland, probably in early September. Gordon Beakes and I will have to put our heads together on this fairly soon. If it does come off, I hope that NEFSG members will become involved in providing background information on good foray sites in the area. A week-long foray in Northumberland is just what is needed to boost county records of autumn fungi. As many of you as possible should try to attend, even if you can manage only a day or a weekend. There is no better way of expanding your knowledge than to foray in the company of experts in different fungal groups. The two Gordons and Hewett Ellis have recently given us an inkling of the exciting things awaiting discovery in the area - so, keep the early part of September 2001 free if you possibly can! Geoff Kibby reported on progress in marketing of the new magazine *Field Mycology*. There were already 262 paying subscribers with overseas interest being shown. The crunch will come in 2001 when BMS Members and Associates will have to start paying for their copies too. Geoff had proofs of the July issue with him giving opportunity for a sneak preview. If you don't already subscribe to *Field Mycology*, please ask how to go about doing this. It is easily the best initiative for people like ourselves that this country has ever seen. At £16.00 per annum it isn't cheap but certainly well worth the cost of supporting to ensure its survival in the early days.

Liz Holden (Grampian Group) then gave a report from the Education sub-committee. There is now Society involvement in providing suitable materials for school-children, including those at primary level. Liz stressed the importance of an ecological perspective, especially for those of us who lead public forays. Less stress is needed on labelling and naming and more on what the fungi are actually doing.

Shelley Evans then reported on mycology at Kew. It seems that the new Director is shaking things up in a positive way. There is a new Chair of Mycology linked with Birkbeck College. Perhaps Helen, who is studying there, can make enquiries about how this arrangement is working. The BMS now has an office actually at Kew. Elsewhere things are not so positive. It seems that, since Roy Watling's retirement, there is no active mycology going on at RBG, Edinburgh. The old International

(Continued on page 7)

Mycological Institute has been absorbed into CABI and is now more concerned with "economically important" fungi. (In other words, they have to make money.) Paul Kirk, who works there, indicated that staff are still willing to do some identifying as long as material is sent to them unofficially as individuals.

Valerie Barkham, the Society Librarian, reported that new additions to the Foray Box (taken to all residential Forays) were now mainly being acquired by begging "complimentary" copies of newly-published books from authors. This obviously saves money.

Finally, Derek Schafer and Dave Shorten reported on some of the problems of intellectual property rights. There are implications for Fungus Groups in that the legal position of ownership of records is very complicated. Landowners can be very fussy about the publication of records from their property, especially when rare species are found there because such discoveries can easily affect consultation procedures for land development.

On Saturday afternoon delegates split into four discussion groups looking at: Conservation, *Field Mycology*, Recording, and Policy on Records. I was unfortunately assigned to the latter group which became involved in a high-powered discussion of the development of a BMS policy on intellectual property rights. After tea there were two options: a computer recording workshop largely concerned with adapting databases for compatibility, and the examination of a new CD from Kew advising on treatment for poisoning by toxic fungi. I felt duty bound to attend the former but soon found it completely beyond me and, with one or two others, drifted over to look at the CD. It attempted an identification key for toxic fungi and a diagnostic section based on symptoms, for medical use. We found that the first of these, though simple to use, could often lead to the wrong fungus and was sometimes cumbersome. For example, it took 27 steps to arrive at *Panaeolus foenisecii* and the white form of *Amanita phalloides* was not taken into account. The toxicological part was felt to be much more reliable.

The light-hearted evening session in the hotel garden gave us all the opportunity to be involved in some of Liz Holden's educational routines for small children. This proved to be great fun with much double role-play in which people of all ages pretended to be children pretending to be parts of a tree supporting mycorrhizal fungi. It culminated in Dave Shorten squatting on the ground and slowly unfurling a spotted umbrella over his head! Liz also successfully demonstrated "how the toadstool got his spots". Remind me to attempt a demonstration myself some time.

The final session on Sunday morning involved reporting back from the previous afternoon's discussion groups.

A. For the "Conservation" group, Liz Holden reported that local Groups needed to know how to respond to overtures from English Nature and other such national agencies. It was felt that such responses ought to be standardised at the national level of the BMS Conservation Group. At this point I intervened to say that we had had no such overtures from these agencies and that any approaches our Group had made had met only with negative response. I would welcome any help on offer from the Conservation Committee. There was a need for monitoring of areas known to be rich in fungi and help was needed in deciding how this should be done so that data could be presented in acceptable statistical format. Long-term surveying was not really practicable but indicator species should be identified and regional frequencies established so that advice could be offered for different

(Continued on page 8)

habitats. Other suggestions concerned education of such people as rangers through workshops, exhibitions, posters etc. I'm afraid this part had an academic flavour which I felt smacked too much of what university-employed mycologists like to do amongst themselves much more difficult for spare—time amateurs who don't have free access to the necessary information and resources.

B. Reporting for those discussing progress of the new magazine. *Field Mycology*, Malcolm Storey reviewed suggestions for ensuring its success. Mailing-lists including possible European subscribers had already been tried, with a 6% take-up which, we were assured, was high. Circulation of universities is needed as is Internet advertising and flyers provided for the big horticultural shows. In order to retain the current subscriber base, it was felt that more content should be aimed at beginners, more dealing with common species and more on habitats. Shelley will take conclusions to Council and Geoff will advise C.U.P.

C. Richard Iliffe reported back for the "Recording" group. The original 1990 "yellow" guide for recorders had been replaced by the current "pink" version and a draft of a third version had been prepared by Alan Braddock. The group came up with improvements very similar to the ones incorporated here so Edition Three will probably be closely based on Alan's prototype. Specific recommendations were as follows:

- a. The number code for fungal Orders should be abandoned as current database programmes take account of taxonomic groupings automatically;
- b. Recorders shouldn't have to worry about "correct" current names. E.Emmett's programme adjusts for these too;
- c. Guidance is needed on property rights;
- d. New recorders need guidance on computer basics, including updated information on the different programmes and whether these link;
- e. There need to be safeguards against loss of data, virus protection etc.;
- f. The document must be user-friendly for new recorders;
- g. It should be clear which recording data are essential;
- h. Collector and Identifier should be named if possible. If not, the foray leader must be named;
- i. Recorders' E-mail addresses should be available;
- j. The document should contain codes for all major Herbaria;
- k. For fungi there is no need to give author citations and if the species of associated organism is unknown, the generic name alone - without the redundant "sp.".

A working party of discussion group members will polish Edition Three.

D. Dave Shorten reported for the group discussing intellectual property rights. It is established that a recorder is automatically the copyright holder for written or electronic records and should be referred to as the licence - holder. "Licensing" records for BMS use does not preclude giving the information to other bodies such as Trusts, landowners etc. "Assigning" records would preclude this so Group Recorders should always use the word "license" and never "assign".

The Group Recorder is considered to be one person. If the recorder changes, relicensing would be necessary in written form. It was not clear to me how this would work.

A policy document is going to be put together by a working party for all Fungus Group members to argue about.

(Continued on page 9)

After a belated coffee-break, Geoff Kibby encouraged contributions from all sources for *Field Mycology*. In particular, short items were needed, together with drawings and paintings. The editorial team is happy to edit and reword material sent by people not sure of their English/expression skills.

Needless to say, in addition to all this, there was a great deal of informal interaction between delegates at meal-times, in the bar and elsewhere. New contacts were made and old acquaintance renewed. I felt that the time spent at Littledean was well worth while and enjoyable - even if it did involve a lot of hard work in the middle of my holiday!

It is, however, up to you, the Group membership, to decide whether you consider it worth sending delegates to future such meetings. A delegate does not have to be the Group Leader. There were times when I felt that the Recorder would have gained more benefit from some of the work done. Perhaps we can discuss this topic at the next AGM.

Alan Legg

Newsletter Articles, Photographs and Illustrations

You may have noticed a few of my fungi photos in the last newsletter. As newsletter secretary and a member with a preference for photography I would like to include more photos or drawings in the newsletter. I have lots of my own but it would be nice if other members could contribute also. These could come in any format: slide, negative, print, painting or in any computer format. An article about the subject would also be helpful, it may be detailed or short it doesn't matter

It maybe you want to write a article but do not have an image to illustrate it, this need not be a problem if someone can provide it for you.

Keith Cunningham



This mushroom was found at the Derwent Nature reserve on 2nd August, it is pure white with veil remnants on the cap It may be *Amanita verna* or *A. virosa* but this has yet to be confirmed. Within yards of this fungus several other *Amanitas* were found- *A. excelsa*, *A. rubescens*, *A. phalloides*, *A. citrina* and *A. fulva*.

Photo Keith Cunningham