

SARCOSCYPHA COCCINEA
Scarlet Elf-Cup.

Found in a boggy area
in the Haswell area by
Steve Robbins on 6/2/87.
Just a few days previously
everything had been
frozen. It is when the
thaw sets in that this
beautiful fungi
emerges.



Three views of the same two specimens. The small one is immature — the larger has opened, making the edge wavy. The edge had also been eaten away and while illustrating, this a small blackish slug appeared, which answered the question!

D.E. Wolfe.

North Eastern Fungus Study Group



Newsletter 24

March 2002



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Slide show
by Hewett Ellis
at Rainton Meadows on 9th of March 11am
Refreshments are available in the tea shop

Subscription reminder 2002

Subscriptions are due for payment in January, members who have not paid yet please send their subs £6 individual - £8 per couple to me;

Babs Walton
Stodhoe Farm
Middleton St George
Darlington DL2 1DS

For those subs not submitted I will send a reminder, but unnecessary letters do increase expenditure. If subs have not been submitted by April we must assume membership will not be resumed and no further newsletters are wanted.

Front cover : *Sarcoscypha coccinea* Another wonderful watercolour from Dorothy Wolfe. I was lucky enough to see a group of Elf cups in the Derwent Gorge on Christmas day. I went back the following day with camera only to find that they had shrivelled up due to the frost. Motto always carry a camera! KC

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 Secretary, Keith Cunningham can be contacted at Durham Wildlife Trust, Rainton Meadows, Chilton Moor, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear, DH4 6PU. Tel: 0191 - 5843112. E-Mail kcunningham@durhamwt.co.uk or keith.cunningham@ntlworld.com

NEFSG-Minutes of AGM-12th January '02- Rainton Meadows

In the Chair-Alan Legg

Apologies for Absence from Pat Wood, and Christine and Hewett Ellis.

Minutes of Last meeting-read and agreed.

Points raised below:

- 1) A brief report on Upland Foray by AL.
AL expressed disappointment at poor attendance by membership at this event.
- 2) Group Leaders' Meeting. AL did not attend this meeting for various undisclosed reasons but will attend if at Ripon this year.
- 3) Confirmation that Newsletters are going to Kew and that a "batch" (sic) has been sent to Darlington Library.
- 4) Babs Walton requested a membership vote on the advisability of including members details (address, telephone number, e-mail address in newsletter) in view of above. General agreement without vote not to so do. This wise as not all members were present at this meeting.

Programme for 2002:

Before the details of the 2002 programme were discussed TAK made official apology to PS for pre-emptive assumption that Phil would "do" a slide show after meeting. Phil would do a slide show after meeting and apology graciously accepted.

- 1) HE agreed to provide us all with another slide show on March the 9th at 11am here at Rainton Meadows. The venue was confirmed as acceptable by KC. Gratitude duly expressed by committee on behalf of membership.
- 2) Grinkle Park lunch and Foray for 20th April to be confirmed by TAK. DONE. Sample bar-snack menu on it's way. Table for 20 provisionally booked but confirmation of numbers at later date.
- 3) ELEMENTIS foray at Urray Nook to be Saturday May 11th. To be confirmed by TAK. Note. This site is now available to us but we will require a "group" pass. We will also be supplied with two-way radios as a safety aid. TAK will organise in advance of event.
- 4) MINSTERACRES now confirmed for July 20th but KC to finalise.
- 5) Hopper's Wood now confirmed for October 12th. Confirmed by PS who will forward a map to KC.
- 6) Hamsterley Forest confirmed for November 9th. With morning foray then to Low Barns for possible workshop. A list of finds will be sent to Hamsterley Forest rangers.

Notes. PS suggested leader (s) should have Mobile Phones. General agreement

Treasurer's Report. By issued balance sheet. We are solvent.

Recording: Real progress. BW and KC inputting in tandem. GW to go on-line also. This is much appreciated by all especially by those who have tried it!!!

Any Other Business: BW to append Balance Sheet to next newsletter. (March)

AL expressed forlorn hope to step down from Chair. Membership generally saddened but understanding. The task is onerous and the rewards few. AL confirmed that his course of action was not precipitous and that he would remain as group leader after stepping down. Further, he would remain as Chairperson until next AGM at which time a new candidate would be sacrificed voted into the position.

Any Points: PS proposed horns and whistles for forays with multi-groups.
(Schoolteachers have access to whistles, don't they?-TAK)

The meeting over, the NEFSG enjoyed an EXCELLENT slide show and crippling quiz by the quizzing quizmaster himself, Phil (teach) Sanderson. Much enjoyed and appreciated by all. Thanks proposed by someone, possibly me, and given by all.

Next AGM Jan 11th. 2003.

November Foray and Workshop 2001

Freezing temperatures and snow flurries only two days before this meeting may have been partly responsible for a rather thin turnout. The weather was in fact both fine and mild for our walk in the secluded Raintonpark Wood on the banks of the Wear north east of Durham. Many fleshy fungi had obviously given up fruiting weeks before and others had been finished off by the recent cold weather. As a result, few ground-growing fungi were in evidence and dead wood provided most of our records of 44 species.

No foray is without its surprises and rewards however. A group of beautiful little shell-shaped agarics found - and photographed—on a fallen oak twig, turned out to be the uncommon *Resupinatus trichotis* thought by some to be no more than a form of *R. applicatus*. A beautiful little myxomycete, found fruiting on stems and leaves of ground-growing ivy, was eventually identified as *Diachaea leucopodia* and a specimen sent to Bruce Ing for confirmation. Bruce's reply confirmed the identification and the uncommon status locally, the only other localised County Durham record having been made by himself in 1965 from a hedge-bottom at Witton-le-Wear!

The real prize of the day, though, came in the shape of a greyish patch on decaying deciduous wood found by the river. Under the lens, and later the binocular microscope, this resolved itself into a curious cluster of cup-shaped fruit-bodies joined together on a common soft-fleshed base. After a lot of head-scratching, this finally keyed out as the rarely-collected *Stigmatolemma poriforme*. Material sent to Alick Henrici was confirmed and placed in the Kew herbarium along with "about 15" others, mainly southern. The BMS database has only 21 records, including 18 southern ones, two from North Wales and one unlocalised from 1928. The fungus has nothing remotely resembling gills but is classified nevertheless amongst the agarics in the family Tricholomataceae and, incidentally, seems to be a close relative of the *Resupinatus* mentioned above.



Resupinatus trichotis top and bottom views

Photos: Keith Cunningham

This year we did manage a short session with microscopes at Rainton Meadows in the afternoon. Unfortunately these sessions never seem to be long enough to give members a chance to learn elementary microscope techniques through hands-on experience. At any rate, people seemed quite happy to watch slides being prepared and gain practice in looking at some of the microscopic characters of gilled fungi and rusts.

Record Foray Totals

The numbers of fungi we find/identify on forays are dependent on several factors such as weather conditions, variety of habitats on site, number of forayers attending etc. This is not therefore an area where we should be attempting to improve as the years pass. It is, of course, nevertheless, very satisfying to feel we have done well and I thought it might be interesting to remind members of the highest total species counts for our regular forays so far. The figures are as follows:-

Hudswell Woods, Richmond	69	May. 1999
Hardwick Hall, Sedgefield	132	July. 2000
Derwent Reservoir	135	Sept. 2000
Castle Eden Dene	118	Oct. 1999
Moorhouse Woods, (half-day)	53	Nov. 2000

Interestingly, the foray which produced the highest number of new vice-county records was the May foray of 1998 to Billingham Beck. Although this outing produced records of only 43 species, no fewer than 10 of these were newly-recorded for the old County of Durham, VC66. Concentration on a specialised habitat can produce this kind of result.

BMS Database Access

Members of the NEFSG who have been having difficulty gaining access to the BMS database may now do so via links to the ABFG website (www.abfg.org). If you have neither computer nor Internet access you can still do this (sometimes free!) using one in your local library or similar facility. It's worth finding out. Using the Database list you can check to see how many records of a particular fungus there are nationwide or locally, examine their geographical distribution and look for host preferences and other associations. You will also find the current name accepted in Britain as well as synonyms.

The Database is obviously a very useful research tool. Beware though. There are still lots of areas where no records have been accumulated and others where, for one reason or another, local recorders have kept their information to themselves.

Lactarius associated with Hornbeam

Hewett Ellis and Christine Ellis

The Common Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* L. is not native to the North of England. In County Durham (VC66) it has been introduced in small numbers, mainly as single trees in woods and parks, or sometimes in greater numbers mixed with Oaks. In Northumberland (VC's 67 & 68) it is very local and scarce.

A few years ago, whilst recording butterflies in the Blyth Valley we encountered several Hornbeam trees growing in mixed woodland alongside the River Blyth in Stannington Vale immediately west of the railway viaduct (VC 67, NZ 221787). The tree is readily recognisable by its grey fluted bark and characteristic fruiting catkins.

The location is of mycological interest to us since it is one of the few places we have recorded *Paxillus rubicundulus* Orton growing beneath Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. Until this year we have not found anything special beneath the Hornbeam trees. On 10th August 2001 we discovered a group of fruiting bodies of a *Lactarius* species with the characteristics of *Lactarius circellatus* Fr., which is specifically associated with Hornbeam.

Description of Lactarius

The greyish-brown caps with concentric light and dark bands measured from 40 to 50 mm in diameter and the stipes about 30mm long and 9 to 12 mm in cross section. The barely decurrent gills were ochraceous and the exuded milk droplets were white. The tissues failed to give any colour reaction with ammonia solution (in contrast to the somewhat similar *Lactarius turpis* which gives a purple-violet colour). The spore print was creamy-salmon coloured.

Microscopy revealed spores with very occasional warts and prominent ridges extending across the spores, which were subglobose and measured an average of 7.8 X 6.8µm.

All these features are consistent with *Lactarius circellatus*. This is the only occasion on which we have encountered the species in Northumberland. It must be uncommon or rare in the Northeast. In County Durham there is an old record for the Gibside Estate during a British Mycological Society foray in 1907 and more recently Alan has recorded the species in Flatts Wood Barnard Castle in September 1994 (Legg, A. The Vasculum 1996, 81(3):39-47).

We have preserved the spore print and dried specimens.

Psathyrella ammophila (Dur. & Lev.) Orton P.
and *Peziza ammophila* Bur. & Mont., two fungi of sand dunes

Hewett A. Ellis and Christine C. Ellis

Only a few species of fungi are adapted to life on sand dunes where they have to withstand harsh conditions such as, extremes of temperature, shortage of moisture and the ever present risk of being smothered by wind-blown sand.

The basidiomycete *Psathyrella ammophila* and the ascomycete *Peziza ammophila* are two such species. Each is named after its association with the roots of Marram Grass *Ammophila arenaria* (L.) Link.

We first encountered *Psathyrella ammophila* on the dunes at Druridge Bay on the North-east coast of Northumberland (VC 67) in 1992 and have seen it since on the dunes at Warkworth (VC 68) on 10 October 1994 and on the NEFSG foray to Coatham Dunes in Northeast Yorkshire (VC 62) on 11 September 1998. On each of these occasions we collected and examined specimens microscopically to confirm the field determinations.

More recently, on 27 August 2001, we found several dozen *Psathyrella ammophila* growing in sand at Druridge Bay immediately north of the outflow of Chevington Burn (VC 67; Grid Ref. NZ 273981). Whilst examining these we noticed about a dozen small cup fungi at the same location. These were of a type we had not seen previously. Both species were growing in the sand amongst Marram Grass and Lyme Grass *Elymus arenarius* L.

Most of the cup fungi were small, barely visible just emerging above the sand and measuring 10mm to 15mm across. A few were larger, up to 30mm across and with a lobed free margin resembling petals. At first the cups appeared to be sessile, but when removed from the sand they could be seen to arise on a prominent pseudostipe up to 20mm in length. The smaller cups thus resembled a golf tee in shape. The insides of the cups were dark brown and the outsides greyish brown and covered by adherent sand grains. The cups were noticeably brittle on handling. Microscopy revealed asci with tips staining blue with Melter's Iodine. Each ascus contained 8 spores. Free spores were smooth ellipsoids without droplets (guttules) and on average measured 17.7 X 10.4µm. Using Brian Spooner's "Keys for the larger cup fungi in Britain" recently published (Spooner, Field Mycology, 2000 1(4):137-139; 2001 2(1):17-20; 2001 2(2):51-59), we were able to identify the species as *Peziza ammophila*. This species is not mentioned in several of the standard books Courtecuisse & Duhem; Marcel Bon; Roger Phillips; Stefan Buczacki).

(Continued on page 9)

There are photographs in Kelter's "Encyclopaedia of Fungi" and in Michael Jordan's "Encyclopaedia of Fungi of Britain and Europe". It is noteworthy that Jordan states the spores contain two droplets whereas Brian Spooner states "guttules absent, rarely present". The spores of our specimens did not contain droplets.

The two species, although in two different Classes, Ascomycotina and Basidiomycotina, share a common strategy in order to survive their harsh environment. The Marram Grass shoots and rhizomes, on which they depend, extend deeply into the sand to obtain moisture.

We can only speculate with regard to the distribution and frequency of the two species in the North-east.

If our experience is representative then *Psathyrella ammophila* is very local but not rare. We have now seen it in VCs 62, 67 & 68. We have not sought it in County Durham (VC66). It is not mentioned in John Durkin's "Checklist of Fungi in Vice-County 66 (Durham) 1985/1986" updated by Alan in 1998, and it is not listed in W.G. Bramley's "A Fungus Flora of Yorkshire 1985"

With regard to *Peziza ammophila*, this is the first time we have encountered the species although we have walked frequently through the Northumberland coast sand dunes over the years whilst recording butterflies. It was not recorded during the NEFSG foray to Coatham Dunes (VC 62) and is not mentioned in the Durham and Yorkshire lists referred to above. The only other recent record we know of is from the southernmost part of County Durham (VC 66) by Babs Walton at North Gare in October 2000.

Editorial note:

Peziza ammophila was found in some quantity on a YNU foray to Coatham Dunes on 20.9.1987, post-dating Willis Bramley's Flora by two years. Material collected then was deposited in the Kew herbarium. In contrast to our somewhat abortive NEFSG expedition of 1999 (see Newsletter 14), the YNU outing produced a number of new Yorkshire records including collections of *Hohenbuehelia culmicola*, *Hypholoma laeticolor* and *Melano-leuca cinereifolia*. Conditions on that occasion were obviously just right!

Stop Press !!!

Grinkle Park

Lunch and Foray 20th April 2002

Please let Tom Kirby Know if you are going to attend
He has provisionally booked 20 places
Menu enclosed

**Tom Kirby
4 Bishopton Crossings
Stillington
Stockton on Tees
Cleveland
TS21 1NJ
01740 630 179**

Grinkle Park Hotel

Lunchtime Menu

Homemade Soup Of The Day £2.50

Served With A Crusty Roll And Butter .

Cheese And Fruit £3.25

A Bowl Of Crisp Summer Salad Topped With Cottage Cheese, Kiwi Fruit And Fresh Chives. Served With A Granary Roll.

Duck Paté £4.75

A Coarse Duck Meat Paté With Salad, Homemade Chutney And Melba Toast.

Potato And Bacon Salad £3.95

Sautéed New Potatoes, Crispy Lardons Of Bacon, Served With A Crisp Salad And Lemon Dressing.

Melon And Sorbet £3.75

Honeydew Melon Presented With Mango Sorbet.

Closed Sandwiches

Cheese, Egg, Tuna £2.25

Beef, Ham, Prawn £2.95

Smoked Salmon £3.25

Filled Baguettes

Coronation Chicken £5.25

Beef And Horseradish £5.50

Tuna And Sweetcorn £5.00

Ham And Chutney £5.50

Smoked Salmon, Prawn And Thousand Island Dressing £5.95

Toasted Baguettes

Bacon And Egg Mayonnaise £5.00

Beef And Onion £5.50

Mozzarella Cheese And Tomato £5.00

Cold Salads

A Plate Of Mixed Salad With Either:-

Roast Beef £6.00

Home Cooked Ham £5.95

Mature Cheddar, Stilton Or Brie Cheese £5.00

Norwegian Prawn £6.00

Smoked Salmon And Prawn £6.95

Served With A Granary Roll

Filled Jacket Potatoes

Coleslaw £3.75

Mature Cheddar Cheese £3.75

Tuna And Sweetcorn £4.00

Coronation Chicken £4.50

Cottage Cheese And Chives £3.75

Whitby Cod And Chips £6.25

Deep Fried Battered Whitby Cod With Chips And Salad Garnish..

Scampi And Chips £6.25

Breadcrumbs Whole Tail Scampi Served With A Salad Garnish.

Bacon And Tomato Pasta £6.25

Crispy Strips Of Bacon And Savoury Tomato Concassé Cooked With Pasta Spirals And Herbs,
Glazed With Mozzarella Cheese.

Chicken Kebab £6.95

Served On A Bed Of Turmeric Rice With Tangy Homemade Relish.

Gammon And Eggs £6.95

Grilled Gammon Steak Topped With Fried Eggs And Served With A Selection Of Vegetables.

Seared Salmon £11.50

Pan Seared Escalope Of Salmon Coated With Parsley Butter And Served With A Mixed Salad.

Honey Glazed Duck £11.50

Honey Roast Barbary Duck Breast On A Bed Of Cajun Spiced Vegetables And Soy Sauce.

Rump And Onions £12.50

A 12oz Rump Steak Cooked To Your Liking, Topped With Caramelised Onions And Served With A
Selection Of Vegetables.

Shank Of Lamb £12.75

Tender Braised Shank Of Lamb With Chive Mashed Potato And Red Wine Jus.
Served With A Selection Of Vegetables.

Fillet Steak £13.50

Prime English Fillet Steak Cooked To Your Liking With Sautéed Mushrooms
And A Selection Of Vegetables.

Side Orders

French Fried Potatoes £1.25

Garlic Bread £1.00

Side Salad £1.85

Selection Of Sweets £2.65

Cheese And Biscuits £2.65

Cafetiere Of Coffee And Cream £1.50

If You Have Any Special Dietary Requirements Please Ask The Restaurant Staff For An Alternative.