

North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter 37 July 2005



Disciotis venosa

See Fungi of Spring Page5

Photo: Keith Cunningham

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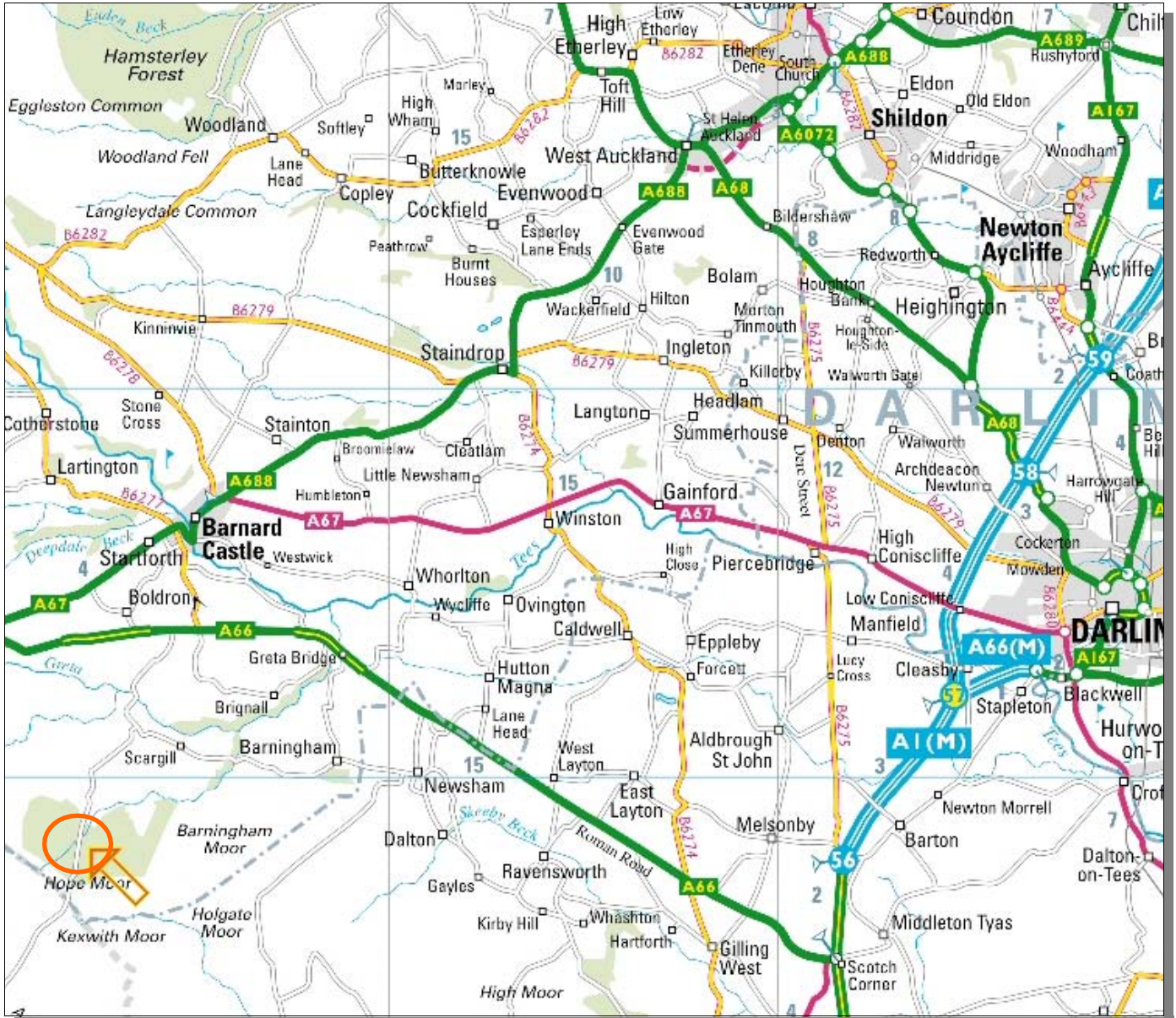
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Summer Foray at The Stang NZ024083 July 23rd 11am

Directions From the A 1 Scotch Corner take A 66 west towards Penrith for 14 miles, turn left at the sign for Scargill/ Reeth (just after the right turn for Barnard Castle and after the left turn for Brignall). Follow the road over Rutherford Bridge and bear right at the fork for Scargill the road twists and you will see the Moor and the Forest rising above.

Park & Meet in the Public Car park on the right half way up the Hill. Members should wear long sleeved shirts and Fly repellent!



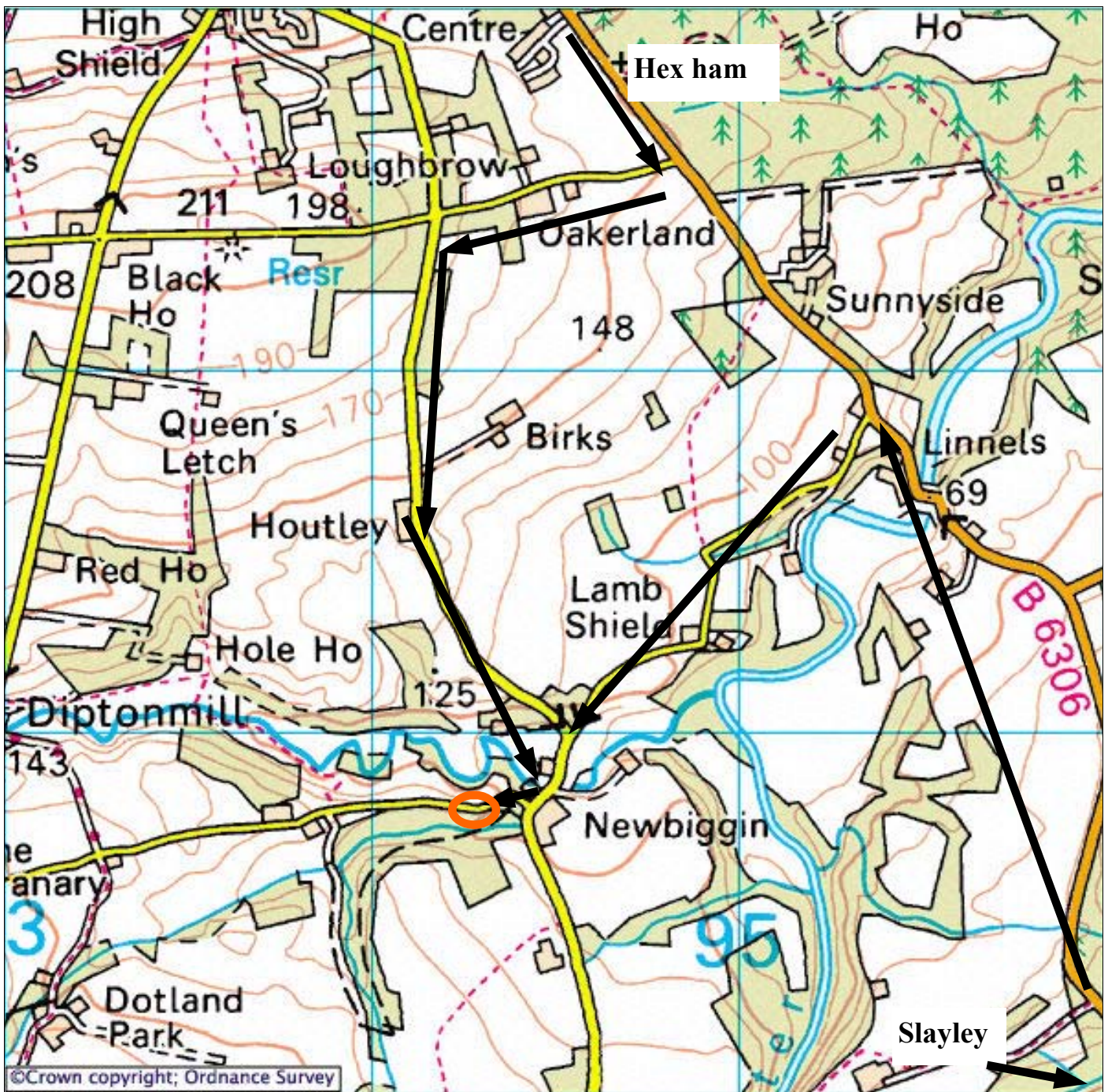
Foray at Letah Woods September 10th 11am

The map ref. for Letah Wood is NY942608. Parking is limited near the entrance off the minor road to the west of Newbiggin. We might be able to park some cars along the south verge just round the corner in the minor road. Car share if you can

The east end of the wood is along a narrow path through shrubs and on fairly level ground. After the path crosses the stream the banks become steep under Beech trees where there is lots of dead wood. The north edge of the wood has reasonable access from the minor road for about 10m to the steep bank edge.

From the North use A69 to Hexham and then B6306 to Blanchland then follow map.

From the south use A68 turn off at Kiln pit Hill to Slaley, through slaley and right to Hexham and follow map.



N.E.F.S.G. Committee Meeting
Held at Stillington Crossings, 11am Saturday 30th April 2005

Present: Gordon Simpson, Alan Legg, Tom Kirby, Andy McLay and Babs Walton

1. Apologies for absence – Keith Cunningham

2. Welcoming Andy McLay to the Committee- Gordon Simpson and the rest of the committee were delighted that Andy had agreed to join the committee and serve as Foray organiser for the group.

3. Minutes of last meeting - Approved

4. Matters arising:-

[a] **Book purchases:** Tom to contact Keith about the purchase a volume of 'Agaricina Neerlandica for the library.

[b] **Database update** It was hoped that the NEFSG database could be put onto discs for any member who wished to own it. This for a small fee to cover costs.

[c] **Website update:** Tom is to liaise with Malcolm Birtle to see if it is possible for Paul Hamlyn to be able to link the Vasculum Fungi site with the ABFG site.

[d] **Constitution:** The revised constitution was approved at the AGM and signed by the committee. [Alan has since found a flaw which needs to be rectified]

5. Newsletter Review: It was agreed that the newsletter should go to Alan to for checking before printing to ensure it complied with BMS policy.

6. Preliminary site suggestions: It was discussed that a site of permanent rough grassland would be interesting to visit in August, somewhere like Killhope. An autumn visit to West Cemetery in Darlington for conifer identification was another idea. Two other suggestions were the Bishop's Park at Bishop Auckland and Derwent Walk Country Park.

7. A.O.B

(i) The meeting at Mount Grace Priory in October will include members of the NNU and Darlington Field Club.

(ii) Gordon Beakes' records and discs are now with Gordon Simpson who will try to find a way to record them. Alan to send a letter of thanks.

(iii) Gordon to thank Keith Thomas for his records of Thorpe Perrow Arboretum.

(iv) Andy asked about the possibility of a list of fungi found on forays being available. He also requested a list of his finds over the years. Babs Walton will extract his records when his latest finds have been inputted.

(v) There was a discussion about the accuracy of NEFSG records and the duplication of records. Alan checks the accuracy but some duplication is inevitable as two separate member might visit a the same site and record the same species.

8. Date of next meeting – 11am Saturday 19th November 2005.

Fungi of Spring 2005

Alan Legg

Among the usual Spring species recorded this year have been large numbers of *Calocybe gambosa* and *Conocybe aporos*. Babs found both St. George's Mushrooms and *Disciotis venosa* in Deepdale, Barnard Castle in mid-April. Unbelievably, it's five years since our group forayed there! Tom turned up at our house on the May Day holiday with a nice specimen of *Agrocybe praecox*. One of the best records was made in Dipton Woods on April 22nd, *Gyromitra esculenta*, found by Chris and Hewett Ellis.

An odd phenomenon this year has been the appearance of fungi usually found later (often *much* later) in the year. Gordon Simpson found Wood Blewets, *Lepista nuda*, on 31st March at Thorp Perrow and he and Babs found it again at Stodhoe Farm on



Gyromitra esculenta

Photo: Keith Cunningham

May 3rd. I had *Pluteus cervinus* on April 2nd on wood chips in the front garden of Durham Prison! Tipped off by a local fungus eater, I also found fresh specimens of *Clitocybe inversa (flaccida)* under pine in Darlington on St George's Day. Hewett Ellis found *Lycoperdon perlatum* on April 29th in the Rising Sun Country Park and I found *Inocybe abjecta* at Low Barns on May Day. I also had *Entoloma conferendum* on a grass verge opposite my house on May 3rd.

I'm sure we aren't the only people in the group who have been going around with our eyes open this Spring. Do write and tell us of your own finds!!!

Our Spring Foray to Saltburn Gill - 07/05/05

Three steep-sided valleys converge near the beach at Saltburn between the cliff-top town and the soft clay rampart of Cat Nab. The shortest and least significant of these is that of Little Dale Beck while the major stream of Skelton Beck to the west skirts Guisborough to join Tocketts Beck before winding its way through Crow Wood and Rifts Wood to the shore. Between these two is the iron-stained Millhome Beck formed where a number of minor streams join between Brotton and the Skeltons finally to flow north through Saltburn Gill.

It was along the lower reaches of this narrow valley that NEFSG members set off from the shore car park for our first foray of 2005. Rain attacked us as we gathered but cleared to allow a pleasant morning's progress southwards along the Gill. We successfully negotiated some muddy patches just before settling down for lunch in a small natural amphitheatre where footpaths converge, carefully chosen by our leader, Alan Simkins.

Unfortunately, it was at this point that rain returned with renewed vigour to prevent maximum enjoyment of our meal and force us into a premature undignified retreat shortly afterwards. This was a pity but was at a point where Alan had to depart early any way. The rain cleared as we retraced our steps to the shore and we did find a few fungi on the way back - including the most interesting one.

Initially, the steep-sided valley barely allows room for a path but in places its sides are festooned with Hartstongue ferns, themselves often liberally dusted below with the strange white uredospores of the rust *Milesina scolopendrii*. Other rusts flourishing in the humid atmosphere were *Puccinia violae* on violet leaves, *Uromyces ficarii* on celandine leaves and *Puccinia sessilis* on those of wild garlic. Other plant parasites included the odd white smut, *Entyloma ficariae*, very common on celandine leaves, and another, more typically dark smut, *Urocystis anemones*, on a leaf of wood anemone. Downy mildews were represented by *Plasmopara pygmaea* also on anemone leaves, and wild garlic leaves were elsewhere under attack from the disfiguring *Botryotinia globosa* which often eventually denudes whole areas of forest floor.



Gallerina Sp at Saltburn Gill

Photo: Babs Walton

arge fungi included *Calocybe gambosa*, *Laetiporus sulphureus* and *Daldinia concentrica*, with a few dried-up brackets which had persisted through the winter. There was a sprinkling of small ascomycetes colonising dead stems and slime moulds were represented by the two common species, *Lycogala terrestris* and *Enteridium lycoperdon*.

As far as I was concerned, by far the most interesting find was the one fungus new to me - which I initially mistook for a rust of smut. This was found on faded leaves of woodruff, decorated below with a pattern of conspicuous black dots, the tiny cups of the discomycete, *Leptotrochila verrucosa*, an uncommon colonist of *Galium*.

Our total of 38 species was low for a Spring Foray but not bad considering the uncertain footing and the restriction to a morning's work.

We are very grateful to Alan Simkins for checking the Gill in advance, knowing where to find some larger fungi and guiding us to a convenient luncheon site.



Laetiporus sulphureus

Photo: Keith Cunningham



Before the Rain

Photo: Babs Walton

King Alfred's Cakes on Burnt Gorse

Hewett A. Ellis and Christine C. Ellis

There are very few records of *Daldinia vernicosa* in North-east England. Gordon Simpson made the first collection of the species in Co. Durham VC66 (Legg, A. NEFSG Newsletter No 15 1999).

We encountered our first examples of these small (up to 25mm across) cramp balls on burnt gorse stems on 30th January 2005 in the Havannah Reserve Hazlerigg (NZ216717}. We saw further specimens on burnt gorse the following day in Holywell Dene near Old Hartley (NZ337759) and later near the Hadrian Park Estate, Wallsend (NZ306685) on 13th March 2005 (Ellis, H.A. & Ellis, C.C. The Vasculum 2005, 90(1):3-8).

In the short time since we submitted our notes and records to the Vasculum, we have found *D. vernicosa* on burnt gorse stems at a further three locations. These are: Wansbeck Riverside Park near Stakeford Bridge (NZ 267 862) on 3rd April; Tyne Riverside Park near Wylam (NZ 093640) on 24th April 2005 and at Silverlink, North Shields (NZ317701) on 2nd May 2005. All of the locations are within South Northumberland VC 67.

We have been surprised to find *D. vernicosa* at so many locations this spring, having sought it previously without success. Possibly the normally widespread spores have been able to take advantage of recent suitable weather conditions and a ready supply of the necessary substrate provided by the activities of an increased number of gorse-bush-arsonists!

All of the *D. vernicosa* we have seen have been on gorse burnt a year or so earlier. Recently burnt gorse, indicated by a persistent smell of burning and flecks of white ash covering the gorse stems and ground, have been unaffected.

A la Recherche ... Part Two

Alan Legg

My reminiscences of fungi in the last number took me up to the acquisition of my first fungus book in the summer of 1970. I have since become accustomed to the constant stream of similar elementary volumes which seem to succeed each other with unstoppable regularity on the shelves of bookshops, quickly becoming remaindered, only to be followed by others. What still surprises me is the fact that all these books, good, bad or largely indifferent, must be being bought by someone. And yet there are so few even moderately competent mycologists emerging from all these sales. Probably the vast majority of these books gain no more than a cursory examination before being consigned to innumerable bookshelves until their owners finally shuffle off the Shakespearean coil. Increasingly too, we have the phenomenon of more and more people leaving the school system without ever having learned to learn anything properly!

Here I must confess that the majority of books on my shelves have met a comparable fate, one that might so easily have befallen my first fungus book had I not, at that time, had sufficient opportunity, inclination and presumably, predisposition to take the next step necessary for a real interest to develop. Opportunity was there in the form of available time and handy places to look. Inclination was there in the sense that my previous formless curiosity now had a focus in the pages of my little book. Predisposition is harder to pin down but presumably was there in my already-formed habits of collecting information of various (usually totally useless) kinds. It ranged from copying out tables of British town populations (1931 census!) from an old gazetteer belonging to my grandparents, to marking off the numbers of steam locomotives I had seen usually on day-trips from Loftus to Darlington. During this time I made lists of Top Twenty hit parade songs, week by week, from Radio Luxemburg and,

later, with developing musical taste, lists of all the classical music I had heard by "surfing" the wave-bands for concerts broadcast by continental stations as well as on the Third Programme. From such activity it was but a short step to marking off the name of every fungus I thought I had seen, together with a date and place-name. As I still have my first well-thumbed field guide, I have been able to look back over the "records" made during the first few months of exploration, trying to assess the accuracy or otherwise of those early attempts at identification. Memories of that vintage are, of course, notoriously unreliable but I have been surprised by surviving mental images from some of those early walks, sometimes of exact (already well-known) spots where a few successfully-identified fungi were first discovered. Of course there were some pretty wild misidentifications too usually based on poor illustrations and inadequate descriptions not to mention my own vast ignorance of all the thousands of possibilities not catered for in short elementary books.

I was certainly lucky that I began with a short and simple enough text. Although it accounted for some of my worst mistakes it undoubtedly also ensured a limited range of common fungi which provided me with sufficient "hits" to reward effort and lead to a gradual accumulation of internalised knowledge.

Sadly I have no record of the date of my first sortie in search of fungi. I assume that the weather was too dry to find much. What I do have is one of those clear mental images, of a five-barred gate with a single toadstool growing just beyond it. I recall that the fungus had tubes rather than gills and was probably a common *Xerocomus*. My little book classified them all under *Boletus* and could not convince me that I had a good identification.

I had more luck on July 31st, setting off through the "stinkhorn wood" I had written about in my primary school "composition" 21 years before. Sure enough, specimens of *Phallus impudicus* still grew there and I was encouraged to press on

further along the same valley towards Handale. There, in a fragment of venerable deciduous wood, sandwiched between two areas of conifer plantation, I found a few summer fungi growing under beech trees.

The ones I felt sure of were *Hydnum repandum*, *Hypholoma fasciculare* and *Amanita rubescens*. Also marked off in my little book is *Tricholomopsis (Megacol lybia) platyphylla*, with an adequate description and good illustration showing the tell-tale mycelial cords, very like the ones I already knew from stink-horn eggs. The following month this same bit of woodland provided records of *Russula delica* on 13th and *Cantharellus cibarius*, *Collybia fusipes* and *Laccaria laccata* on 24th, with *Marasmius oreades* in the approach field.

Meanwhile I had been on a short camping holiday in Teesdale with friends from the south. This happened to take in my first ever visit, to Hamsterley Forest and a long walk with Mary and Andrew which yielded many forgotten puzzles along with a few more fungi shown in my little field guide. Marked off as found there on August 19th are *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*, *Russula foetens*, *Scleroderma verrucosum* and *Pseudohydnum grelatinosum*. I didn't know it at the time but it was to be another 16 years before I was to see this latter fungus again at another site, Whinfell Forest between Appleby and Penrith. Also recorded for Hamsterley on 19.8.70 is *Chroogomphus* (as *Gomphidius*) *rutilans*, not in my experience especially common, though I have seen it. at the same site since then.

Also recorded that month are were *Scleroderma citrinum* as *aurantium*) and *Amanita* (as *Amanitopsis*) *fulva* in Arncliffe Wood between Glaisdale and Egton Bridge in the Esk Valley. This wood had been a favourite of my parents since long before the 1939-45 war and one of mine ever since then. I didn't know it in 1970 but the wood had also been visited fairly regularly by YNU mycologists since 1894. BMS forays had also taken place there in 1904 and 1946. My only record for September 1970 was from a

short holiday I spent in the Dales with an old college friend. On 2nd we were in Hawes, Wensleydale and, returning from the ascent of Great Shunner Fell, visited Hardraw Force. At the foot of this beautiful waterfall, I proudly recorded my first ever *Boletus edulis*. I am now willing to admit that it might actually have been *Baestivalis (reticulatus)* but that cannot spoil the pleasure I then felt.

Shortly afterwards, I was preoccupied by settling into my new job at Darlington College of Technology and made no more records until early October. On 10th I caught a bus to Staindrop and innocently trespassed in Ladyclose Wood, part of Raby Park. No-one apprehended me and I still recall the excitement of seeing my first specimens of *Laccaria amethystea*. I can also remember being puzzled by a group of large toadstools with wrinkled dark brown caps growing on a sawdust pile. It was only with the benefit of extensive hindsight that I eventually realised that these must have been *Pluteus cervinus*, seen since on countless occasions in similar circumstances. My first actual record of this toadstool had to wait until nearly a year later.

A few other almost certainly correctly-identified species noted that October were *Aleuria aurantia* seen on 19th whilst staying with friends in Leicester, *Pholiota squarrosa* seen on a stump at Rievaulx Terrace whilst on a visit to my parents on 24th and *Hygrocybe virginea* (as *Hygrophorus niveus*) found on a College walk near Cow Green on 31st.

November found me on a weekend trip to see old Ghana friends in Doncaster. Whilst there I bought John Ramsbottom's seminal New Naturalist Series *Mushrooms and Toadstools*. I also found my first few specimens of *Coprinus comatus* which Sheila, rather too trustingly, casseroled for us in a little butter. I have vivid memories of waking in a panic that night having read Ramsbottom's graphic description of poisoning by *Amanita phalloides*. Thankfully my fledgling identification skills were not that far adrift.

Emboldened by this experience I next tried *Pleurotus ostreatus* from a beech stump in Cemetery Lane, Darlington. This same site provided my first collection of *Lepista nuda* on December 2nd. A later collection of this was taken in triumph to Loftus for the Christmas holidays, actually sampled by my father with the breakfast bacon and accorded his highest accolade of "quite nice" !

By then I had acquired the classic *Collins Guide to Mushrooms and Toadstools*, still known affectionately to older mycologists as "Lange & Hora" which was to remain my bible until the appearance of "Phillips" in 1981. With it near Loftus, before the end of December, I identified a few other fungi including the conidial forms of *Xylaria hypoxylon* and *Ascocoryne sarcoides*, *Hypoxylon fragiforme*, *Daldinia concentrica* and *Tremella mesenterica*.

Of course you will have gathered that I was by then well and truly hooked. Neither marriage nor house purchase nor fatherhood nor anything else was thenceforward to tempt me away from this fully-fledged passion for fungi.

Twig Study Pays Off

Alan Legg

As you know, our March Meeting at Rainton Meadows was devoted to microscopical study of fungi of dead twigs and stems. This session was a continuation of the previous year's twig foray in Mallygill Wood near Rainton. Having a long period of indoor study meant that there was no sense of rush and those members who attended were able to concentrate on the process of identification more systematically. It was hoped that people would leave the meeting feeling more competent to work on material themselves at home.

On March 24th, Babs Walton was working in her garden at Stodhoe Farm when she noticed black dots on a dead stem of Tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.). Although her microscope was out of action, Babs collected the twig, examined the fungus with her field lens and looked up the plant in her copy of Ellis & Ellis I. From the three fungal specialists listed for Tamarisk, she decided from her examination that the most likely was the coelomycete, *Cytospora tamaricis*, with very few records on the National Database. Of course, the fungus could possibly have been a more common plurivorous species from one of many groups so had to be checked. When Alan examined the material microscopically, the fungus was easily assigned to *Cytospora* on the basis of spore size and shape. Moreover, the spore measurements were found to match those given by Ellis & Ellis for *Cytospora tamaricis*.

Congratulations to Babs for finding a new County Durham record in her own garden! Go you and do likewise.

MICROSCOPY?.....I JUST CAN'T SEE IT!

Tom Kirby

On Saturday 12th March the NEFSG partook of a whole day of Microscopy at Rainton Meadows. For those who attended it was a great success. Progress was made. For those unable to attend, here is a light hearted resume of the day.

Coffee cups, muffins and sandwiches, assorted wooden boxes, cardboard wine cases and plastic Tupperware containers were scattered possessively over the formica-topped tables, claiming the work areas for the assembled enthusiasts. Some went further, marking out the limits of their forensic boundaries with electrical flex attached to extension reels, thence to table lamps of the art nouveau period, some with the original light bulbs. You know who you are. Little by little, through the babble of conditional surrenders, conciliation began to emerge as one by one the microscopes emerged from their protective plywood boxes and the lights came on. Of course, it would be too much to expect that the business of the day was to be embarked upon with any degree of uniformity amongst the members of the NEFSG, even on a day pre-dedicated to Microscopy. Oh no. There were *issues* to attend to. Babs and the membership fees, collection of, the justified eulogies on Dorothy's fabulous illustrations, letters of apology for non-attendance, good wishes and expressed concern for Phil who has suffered a heart attack, the state of Ireland and the Irish from a thoroughly bemused Gordon, minor border disputes and flare ups over the right to light. Like an orchestral tune-up, eye-pieces were set, back-lights adjusted, slides and cover slips made ready, reference books unpacked and all this to the steady gabble of an excited anticipatory assembly. The outer blinds were ceremoniously raised and light was upon us all. The HUND was lifted from its case and the chatter reached new heights. It was a merry buzz which was unpunctuated in structure.....until, that is the Gruppenfurer rose to his feet....

"COULD I HAVE.....er, could I have your attention? Please...PLEASE?"

With the respect attendant upon his bestowed position, Alan galvanised the group. As one we turned in silence to catch his every word, only from the rear of the cavernous amphitheatre in which we were gathered did his words fail to elicit the required response. From the depths of the warehouse in which we were incarcerated it became apparent that the Secretary was embroiled in a matter of high finance which required immediate resolution. It appeared that a member HAD NOT WRITTEN HIS CHEQUE CLEARLY ENOUGH and there was a distinct risk that THE CHEQUE MAY BE MISREAD TO THE TUNE OF 50p, or worse yet, it may be REJECTED ENTIRELY. The constitution may need to be changed to accommodate such slap-dashery, and now was the time to do it...or perhaps not. You know who you are.

So silence almost fell. The Group Leader continued.

"Could I draw your attention.....COULD I DRAW YOUR ATTENTION...?"

But his voice did not carry to the distant disturbance at the far-end of the Aircraft Hanger in which we were ensconced....

Word was passed back by voluble Chinese Whispers and by this means the Secretary was informed of the rise of the Leader. There were but a few seconds to make a final verbal report on the Great Cheque Scandal before the proceedings continued.

"I have taken the trouble to produce a set of instructions, I have copies here, which you WILL follow." (Ooos and aaaahs from the students)

"I have also brought along a box of twigs..... (More voluble oooooos, but somewhat diminished aaaahs.)

"which although old will still be found to suitable for investigation. There will be all sorts of spores to identify. Just follow the instructions, pass the sheets round please, and call me if you need help."

This was the signal we had waited for. Sticks were attacked with scalpels, syringes, Stanley knives, razor blades, chain saws, thermic lances, and it was but a matter of seconds before the cries went up.

"Alan! Could you/Would you/ Should I/ Is it/Was it/ Which/What/Where?"

As Alan divided himself into several pieces, local cameos were acted out.

Such as....

“ *Have you a spare cover slip?* ”

“ Oh, I thought I gave you one.”

“ Well I haven’t got it”

“Are you sure, they’re hard to see?”

“Oh yes, here it is.....now where’s the slide gone. Have you got my slide?

“ Ah. Is this yours? I thought it was my Hornbeam scraping. What was on yours?”

“ *I don’t know, I haven’t seen it yet. I lost the cover slip.* ”

Or.....

With excitement: “ There’s something on this slide.....THERE’S SOMETHING ON THIS SLIDE....

LOOK...LOOK.... It’s a BUG...A BUG”

With consideration: “ *Yes. It is.* ”

Or...

“ Has anyone got any water?”

“ Water? Yes. There, in that litre jug. Its not to drink, though. It’s for...”

“ No, no. I want it to syringe some water under a cover slip...on my slide..”

“ *OK. Yep. That’s what it’s for....* ”

“ Have you got a slide..?”

Or..

“ I can’t find a bloody thing.....what am I looking for?”

“ Well, what was the wood you got your sample off?”

“ Er, birch.....no, hornbeam.....no, birch...yes...birch”

“ And have you used the dissecting microscope to poke about any likely looking bump or lump?”

“ Er, no....er, yes. Well, actually I got this slide from somebody...but there’s nothing on it.”

“ Start off at low magnification....then home in on a likely looking cluster”

“I did that but there’s nothing there. I’ll put some more water on. “There...Hang on, that’s better.

Now I can see something. Oh wow. Yes. Little triangular things...great.”

“ Good, can I have squirt from your syringe...thanks. Oh wow, great. Little triangular things. Hang on.

Have a look at mine. I’ll have a look at yours.”

“ Here. These are the same as mine. What are yours off?”

“ Er, I haven’t actually got anything on my slide except water. It must be in the syringe. I’ll get a refill.”

“ OK, me too. Can you pass the jug of water down when you’ve finished washing your slides in it, please?”

Forensically speaking, we were having a great time. Mycologically, we were on a steep learning curve! After twenty minutes of feverish activity discoveries *were* made. It would have been a statistical miracle equivalent to the million monkeys with a million typewriters anecdote if we had *not* discovered the odd spore or two, though it is a sobering thought that this amount of work is often necessary to procure a result which has authority....Alan does it all the time, which explains a good deal!

Ellis and Ellis volumes were passed around and an academic silence slowly predominated. Muted peaks of excitement were indicated by satisfied cries of “YES!!!”, “ Got it!!!” and “Wow!” as the sticks gave up their secrets..... all in all we were beginning to enjoy ourselves.

So if, like me , you were sceptical about Microscopy, come and see for yourself. We have plenty of microscopes, so you have no excuse for missing out!

R.I.P. Peter Darbishire Orton, Mycologist Extraordinary 1916-2005

Peter Orton was easily the most distinguished amateur authority on British mushrooms and toadstools of the late twentieth century. He inherited the mantle of A.A. Pearson (1874-1954) whom he knew and with whom he shared professional competence as a musician. To the celebrated series of keys published by Pearson in *The Naturalist* between 1950 and 1955, Orton added his own keys to *Cortinarius* in 1955 and 1958. He is best-known for his 300-page "Notes on genera and species", part of the *New Checklist of British Agarics and Boletes* published in 1960 and not yet replaced, though work is said to be progressing.

Orton continued working on the difficult subgenus of *Cortinarius* - *Telamonia* - almost until the end and it is hoped that this work will eventually be completed and published. With his friend, Roy Watling, he contributed to the early volumes of the *British Fungus Flora* and Volume 4 (1986), on *Pluteus* and *Volvariella*, is entirely his own work. His contributions to *Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh* form a fascinating series. From 1960 till his retirement in 1981, he taught Biology, English and Music at Rannoch School (recently closed) at the edge of the Black Wood of Rannoch in Perthshire. After retirement, he moved to Nethybridge near Grantown-on-Spey and continued his study of the fungi of native pinewoods, adding much to our knowledge of the ecology of these ancient forest fragments. Although he moved finally to Crewkerne, Somerset, in 1986, his work on Scottish agarics continued and his last mycological paper, *New and interesting Agarics from Abernethy Forest, Scotland*, was published in 1999 in the Kew Bulletin.

Left with poor eyesight and hearing by a bout of measles as a teenager, Orton was shy and retiring but his formidable memory ensured that he carried around macroscopic and microscopic details of about 2000 British toadstools in his head! He was made an honorary associate of the BMS but rarely attended its meetings and forays as he disliked large gatherings.

When he did attend forays, he had a fund of anecdotes and liked to repeat the story of how, as a young man, he arrived late and flustered for an examination at the Royal College of Music only to trip at the top of a flight of stairs and topple into the arms of the Examiner - the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams!

I met Peter Orton only once, without then knowing who he was, at my first YNU Autumn Foray at Whitby in 1981. I have a copy of a photograph, taken on that occasion at Littlebeck, showing Orton, Will is Bramley, Roy Watling, Mike Richardson and other well-known British mycologists. Col in Stephenson and I first met on that occasion and we are both proud to appear in the photograph too.

Peter Orton was kind and considerate to people with a serious interest in agarics but he was justly impatient with dabblers and no sufferer of fools. On the few occasions when I plucked up courage to write to him with specimens, he always replied, sometimes brusquely, but always with consideration, sometimes going out of his way to make valuable observations. Another of my prized possessions is a reprint of his 1984 *Notes from RBG, Edinburgh* which he dispatched, signed with compliments, when I sent him, from Gainford Spa Wood, correctly identified material of *Cortinarius bulliardii*, and *Tephroclype impexa*, found on a firesite and confirming his suspicions about its ecological preferences.

Alan Legg