

North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter 50 September 2008



***Scutellinia subhirtella*, Lartington Hall, July 08**

Picture by David Smith

Nikon D200 with Tamron 90mm macro lens, aperture priority, f36, 5sec.

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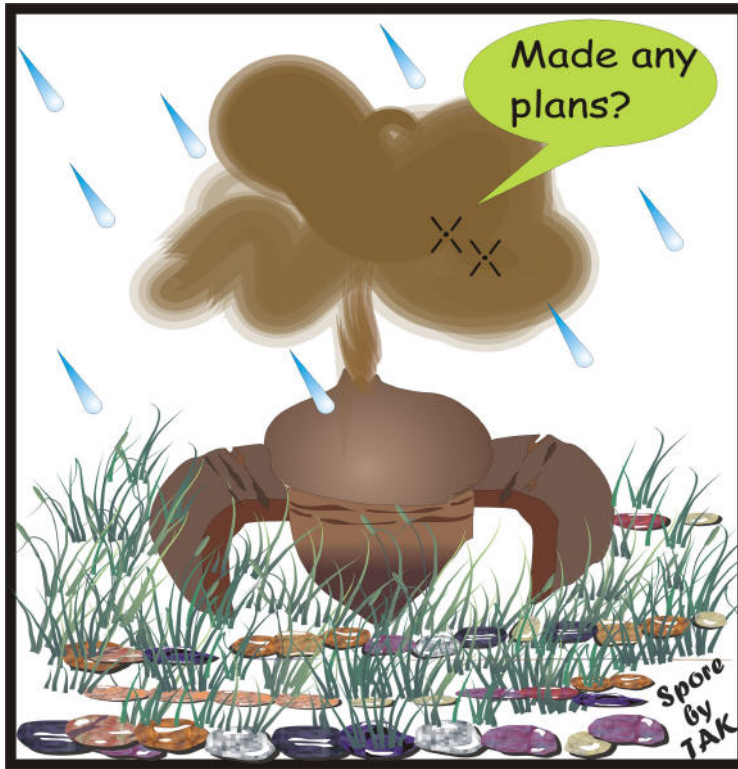
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When I was Fifty-nine (It was a Very Good Year.....)

It is raining. It was raining yesterday. It will rain again tomorrow. The tomatoes are not thriving, the grapes have got mildew and the lettuce is turning to something that only the slugs would eat. Which they are. Hundreds of them. The roses are suffering from rust, black-spot, white spot, whitefly, blackfly, greenfly and damp. The very air is wet, nothing dries on the washing line and the dog is despondent and sleeps a lot. IT IS A VERY GOOD YEAR so far! Already the second bumper flush of *Agaricus campestris* is bursting through the long grass in the pine copse. A little indulgently, I picked more than I normally would before the sheep de-



stroyed them. Made soup. They just kept on coming....the mushrooms, not the sheep. Yesterday, I came across three large and heavily populated "fairy rings". These *Mariasmus oreades* were large and fleshy, quite unlike those occurring over several previous years. I have dried half a kilo and will use them for seasoning over the next fifty years. The fool's rush, lacking since 2006, began early this year... last week in fact. Daring gourmets began turning up at my door clutching all manner of poisonous, noxious and/or pathogenically lethal fungal finds. Something has changed in the British character over the last ten years. Back then, when advised that the enormous bag full of *Pholiota squarrosa* was edible but advisedly not, due to indigestibility, the crestfallen bearer simply turned and trudged away. Now, if I ad-

vises that what they have in their basket could kill, I see a flicker of morbid interest and wonder just what have I done. Thus far this year I have been asked how best to cook a hand full of slimy (but perfect) *Bolbitius vitellinus* (in ten gallons of boiling chicken stock and half a gallon of Domestos), whether *Hypholoma fasciculare* is better boiled or fried (yes, then thrown away) and why can one not eat *Gymnopilus spectabilis*? (you can.....but you would be ill and your teeth would turn to yellow chalk). No deterrent seems too great for the real enthusiast, and I expect a trend to increased incidences of poisonings as long as the media keeps telling us that we will have to live off the land and burn our relatives for fuel in the future.

Still, it does give hope that interest in mycology is on the up, even if a singular increase in the number of visible fungi may be the true cause. Long may the good weather continue.

Tom Kirby

Have you found any changes in the time of appearance, quantity or size of specimens this year? We have had a prolonged period of very wet weather and above average night-time temperatures and this makes for a good season. Of course, a lot can change in a very short time...this is Britain, after all. This newsletter will not be published until September and so the "season" should be well under way. If you have the time, opportunity and the inclination, do send in details of any notable finds, with pictures if possible, for inclusion in future issues.

As I write this short footnote, the phone rings. It is Babs to tell me that Gordon has been in touch. He has several lorry-loads (an exaggeration of mine...I think) of Chanterelles which we may be cooking after the Lartington foray. It is mid-July. It is raining. It rained yesterday. It is to rain again tomorrow. Chanterelles....mmmm.....it is a VERY GOOD YEAR.

Footnote: We DID find HUGE *C.Cibarius* on the Lartington foray, far larger than any I have encountered locally before. This seemed to be the opinion of us all!

Tom Kirby

A Tale of Two Fungi

Ros and I recently received the gift of joint membership of The National Trust for the current year. After some consideration we decided on an initial day's outing to take in Nunnington Hall and Rievaulx Terrace, both near Helmsley. Ros had visited the former with a friend and I remembered having been to the latter many years before with my parents.

There was a good weather forecast for Thursday, May 29th, the weather turned out as predicted and we thoroughly enjoyed our day out.

his story concerns only Rievaulx Terrace, laid out in the Eighteenth Century and associated historically with a similar Terrace at Duncombe Park not far distant, which I happen to know very well. When, at the prompting of a residual memory, I checked my very early fungus records, I discovered that my first visit to Rievaulx Terrace had taken place on October 24th 1970 and that I had, on that occasion, found my first specimens of *Pholiota squarrosa* at the site. Furthermore, Ros realised that this earlier visit must have formed part of my mother's sixtieth birthday celebrations! Strange then that the second visit should take place in the year when I hope myself to celebrate my seventieth!

Some of you may recall the NEFSG social gathering of 2003 when we enjoyed lunch at Pinchinthorpe Hall. On that occasion Gordon Simpson pointed out a plant of *Ruscus aculeatus*, Butcher's Broom, in the



garden. I knew the name from my copy of Ellis & Ellis 1 but had not realised what a strange plant it is. I had however taken on board the fact that it can harbour a number of microfungi so I collected several dead cladodes. From these I made my first record of the tiny blackish dots of the minute *Paraphaeosphaeria glaucopunctata* (*rusci*), a fungus that makes up in syllables for what it lacks in size! Since then I have always looked out for the plant and, on the few occasions when I've seen it, invariably found material of the same fungus. The records are from Duncombe Park, Helmsley (see above), public gardens in Grange over Sands, both also in 2003, Sewerby Park, Bridlington in 2005 and, in 2006, my only County Durham record, from Ceddesfield Hall, Sedgfield. I've no doubt that the plant list for Rievaulx Terrace includes Butcher's Broom but it was a surprise to me to find that one short path close to the Visitors' Centre is lined by several bushes. Dead cladodes bore only one fungus which was, of course, *P. glaucopunctata*.

For me there was something aesthetically very satisfying in forging an historical link between two fungus records made at the same site so many years apart. I hope you will tolerate my indulgence in deciding to share this private satisfaction with you.

Alan Legg

Season to Taste...

Chanterelle Omelet with Tarragon



Of course....what else! After the prodigious find of excellent quality *C. Cibarius* on the Lartington foray, there was really no contest!

Chanterelles are excellent eating but as with most natural food it is quite often the simplest cooking that provides the best result.

There is little doubt that the *omellette*, beloved by the French, is much maligned outside France (and inside, too, believe me!) by the addition of unnecessary ingredients and prolonged cooking! (try a MacDonald's breakfast....or not!)

This is a simple recipe for a creamy, tasty omelet which works beautifully and brings together the principle components in a marriage made in heaven. I hope you try it. As always, credit where it is due. This omelet recipe comes from Julien at the Abbaye Restaurant, Paunat in the Dordogne. It works with ceps but is then better with a LITTLE sage instead of the tarragon.

Ingredients (for two sharing):

5-6 large fresh eggs, at room temperature.

1-dsrt sp. Single cream.

250-350 gms, fresh weight chanterelles, stems trimmed and cleaned, cut into slices 8-10 mm thick (you don't get a chance to do this very often!)

Handful fresh de-stemmed Tarragon (French *Estragon*, not the Russian version)

1-clove garlic, sliced in two.

20gms. salted butter, in two knobs.

Olive oil.

Salt and ground black pepper.

A little chopped tarragon for garnish.

Method:

Put the sliced Chanterelles in a deep bowl and salt them well. Toss to coat. Leave in the fridge for 30 minutes. The salting takes water from the outer surfaces of the mushrooms so that the next stage can colour them without excess released water causing the temperature of the oil to fall or the fungi to shrink too much. Mix the eggs and cream together just sufficient to homogenise. Don't froth the mixture. Keep at room temperature. Do not season.

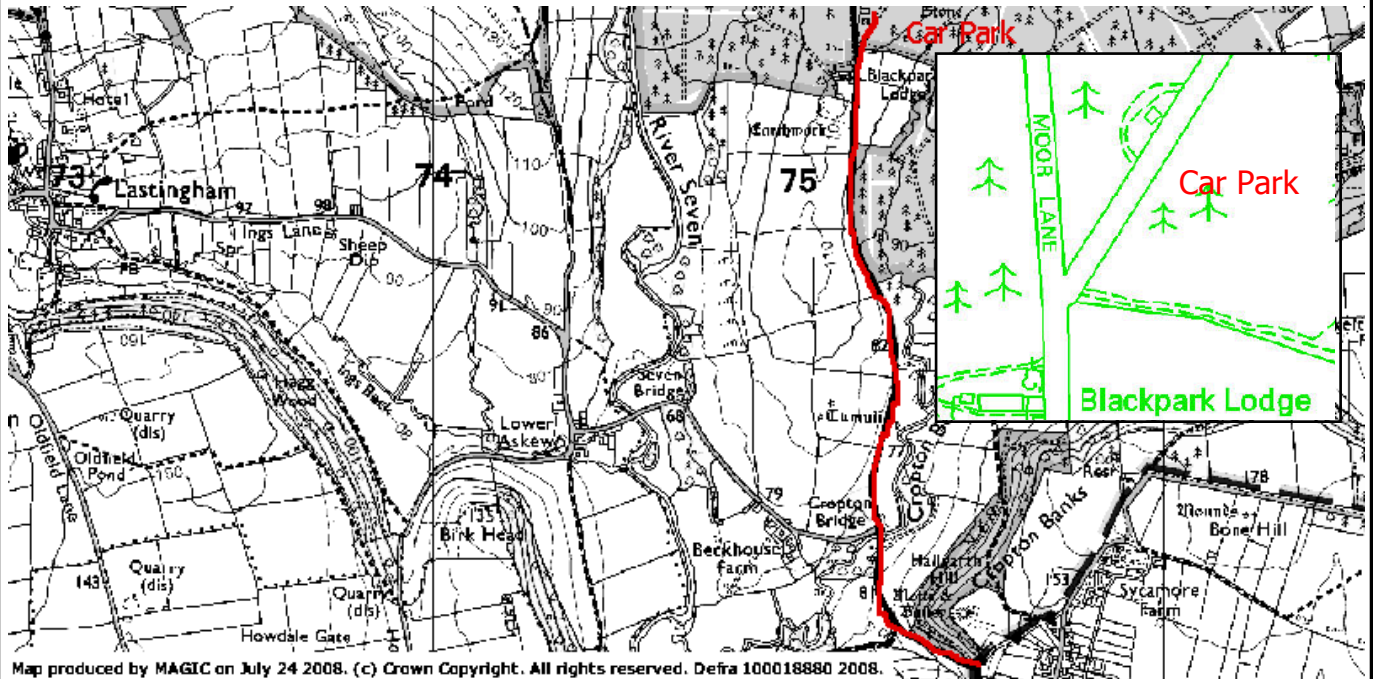
Add a little olive oil to an eight inch non-stick or well used cast-iron pan, sufficient to coat only, and bring up the heat until just smoking. Take off the heat and drop in HALF the butter and sliced garlic clove, swirling quickly so as not to allow the butter/oil mixture or the garlic clove to burn. This should only take a few seconds. Still off the heat, let the garlic sweat for a couple of minutes then remove and discard.

Now rinse the chanterelles to get rid of all of the salt. Toss then pat dry. Put the pan back on to a high heat and immediately add the chanterelles. Keep them moving and allow only a little colouring. After a minute, no more, pour in the egg mixture and stir quickly, then draw in from outside to the middle and back again to evenly distribute the mushrooms. Keep the heat on for only twenty or thirty seconds, add the tarragon, stir lightly, then turn down to medium until the mixture STARTS to set. Run a spatula around the edge of the omelet and let the last of the butter run beneath to loosen the creation. After no more three minutes the omelet should be set on the bottom but still runny on top.

Fold over to serve, it will continue setting, sliding gently out of the pan. Garnish with a little chopped tarragon and serve with buttered TOAST...we are not in France. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Delicious.

CROPTON FOREST FORAY-SEPTEMBER 20th. at 11 a.m.

From Cropton, head due north on the Moor Road, until you see Blackpark Lodge on your left. Immediately after the Lodge there is a right turn into the woodland. Take this turn and you will come to a car park area on your left. For those of you interested in "local" history, you may like to know that our Chairperson, Gordon Simpson, was born in Blackpark Lodge. There is notably no plaque to commemorate this event.



Map produced by MAGIC on July 24 2008. (c) Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Defra 100018880 2008.

OS reference SE 752 909. Full grid reference 475214,4980933.

HUDSWELL WOODS FORAY-SEPTEMBER 27th. at 11a.m

Head out of Richmond in a westerly direction towards Reeth on the A6108. The route line shown is 1 mile. Turn left off the A6108 into a caravan park. The car park is on the right.

The main foray will explore the woodland across the footbridge and upstream during the morning session. We will return to the car park for lunch then cross the bridge again and search the old meadow area to the east and downstream, looking for grassland fungi. OS reference NZ 156 008, Full grid reference 415675,500870.



An Appeal

In a recent edition of The Forayer, the editorial staff, AKA Michael Jordan, made an appeal to members. The *crie de coeur* was tinged with a certain pragmatic bluntness which whilst not implying desperation was nonetheless portentous. He was "appealing" for literary contributions from the large membership of the ABFG. Between the lines was the subliminal message (or am I too sensitive) that if one didn't use it one would lose it! The magazine, that is.

The appeal worked, I am delighted to report. A follow-up filler article confirmed that the response from the membership had been excellent. Several articles within the same issue and yet more in those issues following enlivened the journal.

Of course, drawing the literary teeth of the members of such groups is usually not that easy. The resultant increase in publishable "fodder" was probably a pleasant surprise for MJ. The flood of contributions may or may not continue, time will tell, but the constant prodding and cajoling of time-starved readers will go on for as long as the journal continues in production....it is an accepted norm!

We in the NEFSG do proportionately rather well. Over the past year we have had contributions from around 15% of the members; disproportionately, however, from members of the Committee who contributed over half of the articles.

Whilst this may be a just sustainable situation, there is no doubt that variety is the spice of life, and that **more** contributions from **more** members would make for a **more** interesting Newsletter.

Quite apart from the genuine requirement to provide the membership with informed and interesting articles there is a great deal of scope for you, dear readers, to submit your anecdotal tales of unusual, inexplicable and downright mystifying mycological tales.

That is not to say that learned articles from members are not expected! Please be assured that this is a broad church and that there is room for everyone within the pages of YOUR Newsletter.

You should be advised that we are now on the Web, go to www.nefsg.co.uk, and so submitted articles will probably make an appearance on the web-site in due course. This global exposure is hopefully an encouragement to potential contributors and not a deterrent.

Please take the time to put pen to paper and send in your contributions NOW. Photographs of specimens are always welcome, and if you are especially interested in photography you will be able to help others in this endeavour by giving details of exposure times and lens details.

A short series of excellent photographs by David Smith is in the pipeline, thank you David, and the cover photograph of * *Scutellinia subhirtella* begins the run. From the information supplied by David some insight into the methodology he employs, very small aperture and long exposure time, gives a clue to the excellent resolution and clarity of his work. Perhaps you could do as well?

Most of you are now on the Internet....so no excuses!

Submit articles to: tectak@aol.com

That's it for now.....no more pressure!

* Note on the cover picture as an aid to future identification, by Alan Legg

This species, *S. Subhirtella*, is fairly common, especially in the summer months; all my records date from between May and September, except one from October. Discs are about the same size as those of *S. scutellata* but two different characters show up fairly well in David's photograph: the hairs are both shorter and lighter-coloured than those of *S. Scutellata*. The latter's are almost black and frequently extend almost to the centre of the disc. Micro-characters are also very important so hair length and colour are only a rough guide to species of which there are at least 18 in Britain!!!

Anyone who would like a key to the British species should send me a self-addressed envelope. AL