

North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter 59 November 2010



Geastrum fimbriatum, Garden in Great Ayton, November 2008

Nikon D200 with Tamron 90mm macro lens, aperture priority, 1/3 sec at f45

David Smith

Onygena equina-portrait by Derek Risbey

Page 2

TAK-DR

Volvariella bombycina-pictures by Laurie Sole

Page 3

TAK-LS

The Great Winter Competition 2010

Page 4

TAK

The Polish Trip

Page 6

Val Standen

Season to Taste

Page 9

TAK

Indoor Meeting at Hamsterley-Nov. 20th.

Page 10

Alan Bunn

In Bison Breath

Page 11

TAK

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THE OTHER HORN OF PLENTY

Some time back I bumped in to Derek Risbey, at the wedding of a mutual friend's daughter. Derek was having a day off from his usual calling as a professional photographer. Being at a wedding our conversation turned quite naturally to mycology. Derek told me that some time ago he had photographed a species of fungus on a sheep's horn and had sought identification of the specimen from Gordon. He said he would look out the photograph and send it to me. This he did and I checked with Gordon that the identification was correct.

It is not something that you will come across with any regularity and so this is a very interesting picture.. Derek tells me that this is not a subject he regularly deals with either! Here it is....*Onygena equina*.



There is an interesting description of this fungus from H. Marshall Ward, D.Sc., F.R.S., Prof. Of Botany University of Cambridge. April 6th. 1895.

“.....The remarkable genus *Onygena* comprises some half dozen species of fungi of peculiar habitat, since they all grow on animal bodies, such as hoofs, horns, feathers, hairs and skins, and thus present characteristics shared by very few other true fungi, e.g., the *Laboulbeniaceae*, and the genus *Cordyceps* among the *Hypocreaceae*, both of which grow on insects.. BERKELEY found one species of *Onygena* on a piece of old flannel in Sherwood Forest, and remarks, “which had probably formed part of the dress of some gypsy””

It is not known how long Derek had been in possession of the picture.

TAK

Foray Update

Having a small success in the implementation of the “new” foraying procedure is no guarantee of continuing improvement! After the excellent day at Stanhope Burn (54) , followed by Plessey Woods (89) confidence was high that the procedure, though still not perfect, was workable.

Rachel Richards gave us all a fine foray on Cockfield Fell, with waxcaps galore and much to look at. The weather was good and Rachel's post-foray hospitality, including the turning over of her house to a multiplicity of specimens (fungal) is to be applauded. The forayers, unfortunately (writer included), were a nomadic lot, and much time was taken up trying to rally the troops into one place at one time! It would seem that procedures need better defining.....all thoughts appreciated!

Another Rare Appearance!

Volvariella bombycina is by any definition a spectacular fungus. Not only is it easily identifiable, with its shag-pile cap and its very large and floppy volva, but it is also capable of reaching quite a size (cap up to 20cms diameter).

Sightings of this species are patchy in VC66, there being only six finds since 1996 recorded on the CATE database. (<http://www.abfg.org/db/abfg/species/search>), and only 66 finds nationally. The earliest record in CATE is 1919. Of the 287 records in the FRDBI



(<http://www.fieldmycology.net/FRDBI/FRDBIrecord.asp?intGBNum=2070>)

the earliest is 1875!

Interestingly, of the six recorded finds for VC66 four of the records are in the last ten years. We should be looking out for this species, particularly in its favourite location, on or in the trunk of damaged and/or decaying broad-leaf tree stumps..

Of course, we like to think that the countryside is the place to be for making interesting finds, but fungi are notoriously

ubiquitous and can crop up almost anywhere, as these colourful photographs illustrate. They were taken in Stockton-on-Tees between July 1st. and July 9th. 2010 by Laurie Sole. We would like to thank Laurie for his



patience in recording the maturation of the *V. bombycina* in his ornate tree-stump flower pot. The temptation to eat the thing was probably tempered by uncertainty.....and so may this always be!

TAK

The GREAT WINTER COMPETITION 2010

This year the Competition is dual-purpose. Not only will it enliven those dreary dark evenings but also it will help Alan Bunn in his efforts to establish exactly which species of fungi are in the TOP 100 according to the Collin's Complete Guide To British Mushrooms and toadstools.

For those of you without the book, worry not, you can still win the £25 prize. Here is the challenge.

The Guide refers enigmatically to the "Top100" species but does not publish the complete list. Alan Bunn has painstakingly extracted ninety-two of those indicated and recorded the page numbers. The list is published below.

Amanita citrina	Entoloma conferendum	Mollisia cinerea
Amanita fulva	Flammulina velutipes	Mycena galericulata
Amanita muscaria	Ganoderma australe	Mycena galopus
Amanita rubescens	Gymnopilus penetrans	Mycena inclinata
Armillaria mellea	Hebeloma crustuliniforme	Mycena pura
Ascocoryne sarcoides	Hygrocybe chlorophana	Nectria cinnabarina
Auricularia auricula-judae	Hygrocybe coccinea	Paxillus involutus
Bjerkandera adusta	Hygrocybe conica	Phallus impudicus
Bolbitius titubans (vitellinus)	Hygrocybe pratensis	Phragmidium violaceum
Boletus badius	Hygrocybe psittacina	Piptoporus betulinus
Boletus edulis	Hygrocybe virginea	Pluteus cervinus
Calocera cornea	Hygrophoropsis aurantica	Polyporus squamosus
Calocera viscosa	Hypholoma fasciculare	Psathyrella candolleana
Cantharellus cibarius	Hypoxylon fragiforme	Psathyrella piluliformis
Chlorociboria aeruginescens	Hypoxylon multifforme	Rhytisma acerinum
Clitocybe nebularis	Kuehneromyces mutabilis	Rickenella fibula
Collybia butyracea	Laccaria amethystina	Russula atropurpurea
Collybia confluens	Laccaria laccata	Russula cyanoxantha
Collybia dryophila	Lachnum virgineum	Russula nigricans
Collybia maculata	Lacrymaria lacrymabunda	Russula ochroleuca
Collybia peronata	Lactarius blennius	Schizopora paradoxa
Coprinellus micaceus	Lactarius quietus	Scleroderma citrinum
Coprinopsis atramentaria	Lactarius subdulcis	Stropharia semiglobata
Coprinus comatus	Lepiota cristata	Trametes versicolor
Coprinus plicatilis	Lepista flaccida	Tremella mesenterica
Crepidotus variabilis	Lepista nuda	Tricholomopsis rutilans
Dacrymyces stillatus	Lycoperdon nigrescens	Tubaria furfuracea
Daedaleopsis confragosa	Lycoperdon perlatum	Xerula radicata
Daldinia concentrica	Lycoperdon pyriforme	Xylaria hypoxylon
Diatrype disciformis	Marasmiellus ramealis	Xylaria polymorpha
Diatrype stigma	Marasmius oreades	

All you have to do is suggest as many of the remaining EIGHT missing species which you believe will be in the Collin's Guide Top 100!

You can do this by reasoned guesswork or you can try to determine which of the species Alan failed to find. In any event, your entries will be checked to determine if ANY are in the Top 100. An outright winner would need to submit the eight remaining and the proof by page number. Ties as always will be decided by a blind draw. We are hoping that Barbara Windsor will make the draw but in the event of her getting another job the man who delivers our gas bottles has volunteered his services.

Closing date for entry by phone (01740630179) or by e-mail (tectak@aol.com) or by snail mail, is January 15th 2011.

Good luck!

TAK

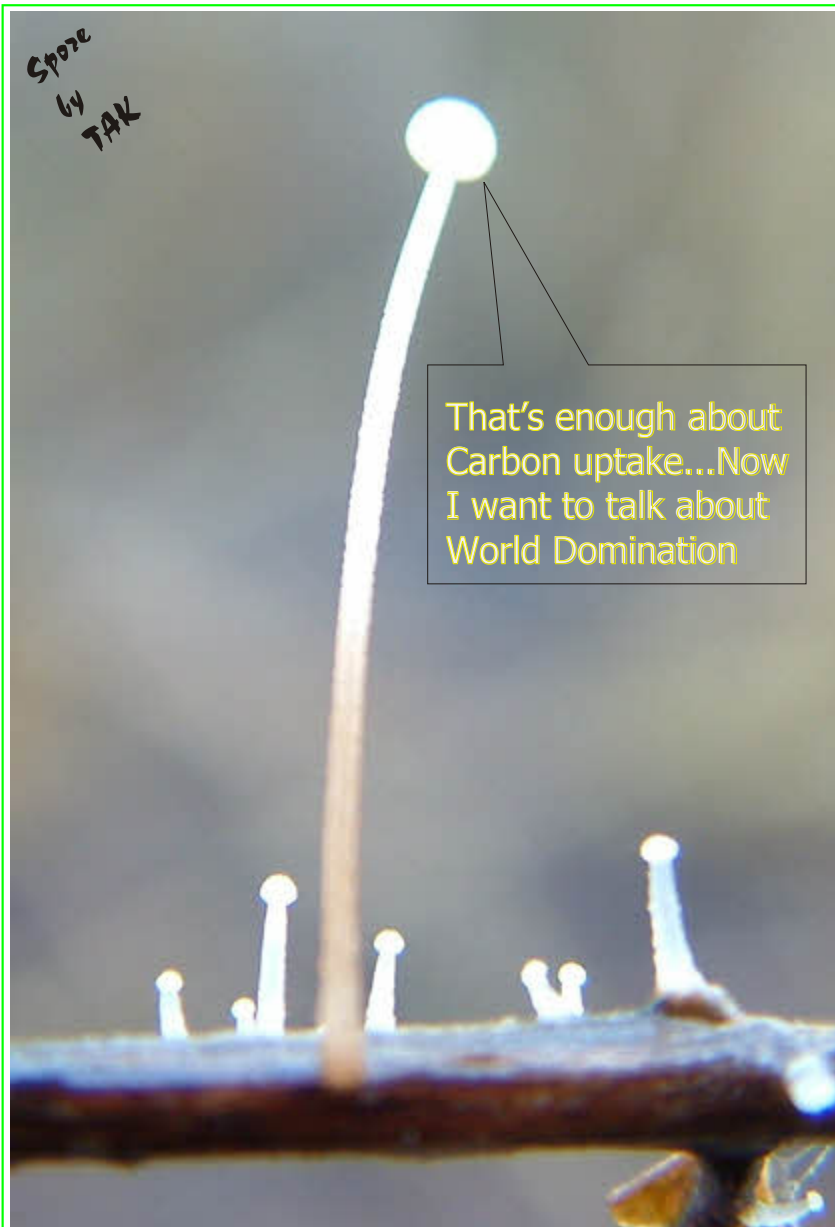
The NEFSG Library

There have been some extremely useful new additions to the library based on suggestions by Alan Legg. The books have all been purchased from Pendleside Books which is very sadly to cease trading shortly.

The recent additions are listed below and are available to members on loan at no cost. Please contact Tom Kirby if you wish to take advantage of the Library. You will be asked to collect or to arrange a time and place when the book (s) may be handed over. All that is necessary is for you to sign on receipt. Please note that for the benefit of all members any books should be returned within a reasonable time or contact made to arrange an extension of the loan.

British Fungus Flora, Boletes and their Allies
Keys to Agarics and Boleti
The Genus Lactarius
British Puffballs, Earthstars and Stinkhorns
Keys to the British Genera of Agarics and Boletes

R.Watling and A. E. Hills
Meinhard Moser
Heilman-Clausen, Verbeken, Vesterholt
Pegler, Laessoe, Spooner
Archie McAdam



Geastrum striatum

When Earth-stars come out so do photographers!

There is something about these fungi that is “other-worldly”, yet it is surprising how often they are actually found. Nonetheless, each find is received with considerable interest. The records show that *Geastrum striatum* has only been recorded once in the NEFSG database. AWL records its presence in 1997 though he points out that it is a regular visitor to the West cemetery in Darlington....as is he! This goes to show that you only catch fish where your rod is!

Bialowieska Forest – September 2010 – Val Standen

Only 4 intrepid fungus seekers set off from Warsaw for the Bialowieska forest last month as the fifth – Gordon – was unable to make it to Poland in time. He was much missed. My entomologist friend and erstwhile colleague, Dr Tusi Butterfield, and myself had spent a couple of days in historic Warsaw before we were collected by our guide Bozena Summers and driver Bogdan who had already picked up Tom and Bernard from the airport.. I had been told the food in Poland was pretty grim but after a couple of hours we stopped – in a rain storm – at a road side cafe for excellent soup and paroge (referred to as dumplings but more like filled pasta). The countryside is flat and at this time of year there were a few white storks lingering on their cartwheel nests and people at the roadside selling either wild mushrooms or – unfortunately – themselves! Our accommodation was a small comfortable hotel next to the forest where the food was again excellent and preceded always by toasts to absent friends with different sorts of vodka.



Next day we set off on foot with Bozena and a local guide, Aric, for the most protected part of the forest. The forest exists because it was preserved for hunting in medieval times



and we first passed through the grounds of the old royal palace/hunting lodge. This in itself was interesting with fine trees and lots of “chicken of the woods”, but our first view of the forest itself was absolutely lovely – carpets of fungi beneath hornbeam, small-leaved lime and oak. Aric explained that we should only stray a few metres from the path and not remove anything (how to see gill

attachment without removal!. Above, *Russula heterophylla*) – so cameras to the fore to try to record the wealth of species there (Above right *Mycena zephyrus* colonised by *Spinellus fusiger*) I had been 'nominated' as recorder and was thus in the middle of any dispute

between Tom and Bernard (e.g. “You are absolutely wrong Tom/Bernard”) which may account for the difficulty I had interpreting my field notes to produce a species list later in the day. That day we heard rutting red deer in the distance and saw two species of woodpecker. These birds, Bozena explained, play a significant role in forest ecology as they damage the trees in their search for insects and so let in a variety of other species including fungi. We had lunch at the hotel, but altogether we had 8 hours in the field sustained by the occasional chocolate covered plum provided by Bernard and Bozena.

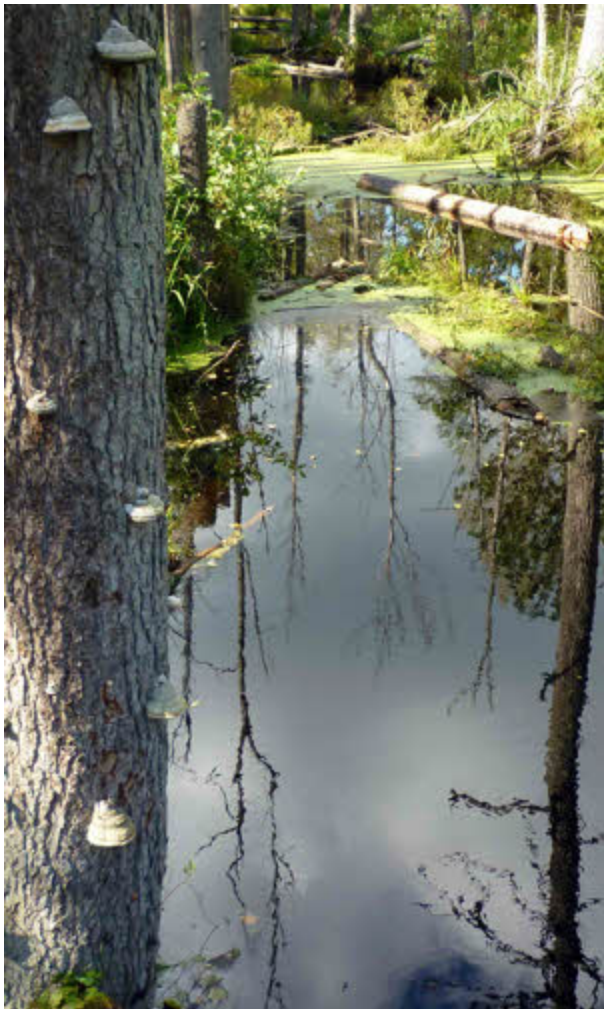


We were up at 5am (Dawn, right)

the next day to pick up another guide who took us to a forest clearing where we saw a group of male bison in the mist. We walked to find another group of females with young but they had been disturbed (we saw tyre marks on the path). However, as compensation we did hear wolves howling in the distance. Back for a rest then off again with another guide, Karel, to an area of forest which is partly managed and where we were allowed to wander off the track and pick up specimens for identification. Although managed there was a great deal of fallen and standing dead trees and consequently, again, great abundance and species richness. Picnic lunch (plus great doughnuts from Bozena) then through a wetter area of forest traversed by a sometimes treacherous boardwalk. There were different species here and Karel was able to collect some for identification later. That

evening Bozena had organised a campfire in the forest (right) with soup, sausages toasted in the fire – and vodka. There were stars too!





The next day we set off with Aric, for a region of forest to the north east. A longish drive but well worth the effort as here we saw the effects of the re-introduction of beavers to the forest - the gnawed bases of the trees felled by the beavers, the dams created by fallen trees and the lakes (left) which form behind the dams flooding and killing pockets of standing trees. Altogether a more varied forest-scape and with a different range of fungi - and as a bonus we had a good view of a white tailed eagle which flew over our heads. After we returned to the hotel we hired bikes and set off for a last look at the protected forest and especially at a vast specimen of *Hericium coralloides* almost covering a fallen tree (below right). The Bialowieska forest is a magical place to be in (Tom's poem, captures this best.

Back page. Val) and we were very fortunate in our guide Bozena who is a very good naturalist and now well on the way to becoming a fungi enthusiast – the sort of organiser who arranges transport, guides and chocolate covered plums at exactly the right moment but never seems hassled. Abiding memories are – first sight of the forest floor, howling wolves, bison and cycling through ancient woodland with old and new friends.

About the same effort was made in the protected and the managed forest in the first 2 days. The total species count was 130 with 82 in the protected and 75 in the managed parts. There were approximately a quarter of species in common between the two. Wouldn't it be interesting to do more work on the ways management influences fungus diversity and abundance?

Val Standen



Season to Taste...

Chicken and Wild Mushroom Risotto

You will need , for two people:

150 gms, cubed raw chicken (leg or breast to preference)
150gms mixed wild mushrooms (small and firm)
50-75 gms. Coprinus comatus (this recipe but optional)
2-cloves garlic
½ tsp. Red peppercorns
1tsp.Turmeric
Sprig of Bay
Sprig of Tyme or Marjoram
½ large sweet onion, chopped very fine
1 -cup of Risotto rice (Arborio)
1-pint unsalted chicken stock reduced to 2 cups (cups as used in rice measure)
10-20 gms. Flakes of Parmesan Cheese to garnish
Handful parsley chopped to garnish (optional)
½ cup medium white wine

Method:

Fry the onion in a little olive oil but do not brown. When almost transparent add the turmeric and red peppercorns. Stir on a low heat for a few minutes whilst thinly slicing the garlic. Now add the garlic and the rice, stirring to coat the rice. Do not allow to burn. Add a little more olive oil if necessary. Put to one side off the heat after about 5 minutes.

In a shallow pan bring the reduced chicken stock to the boil and toss in the mushrooms (but NOT the Coprinus at this stage), the Bay and the Thyme. Cook the mushrooms for about one minute then strain off the stock into a jug and preserve the mushrooms. Remove the Bay and Thyme and leave in the reduced stock

10 minutes before serving: Put the rice pan back on to the heat and add the chicken pieces. Stir over a medium heat until all the chicken pieces have whitened. DO NOT COLOUR. Now add a little of the stock and stir over a lowered heat until all has been absorbed by the rice. Add a little more stock, allow the rice to soak it up, and continue

until all the stock is absorbed. Now add the cooked mushrooms and any liquor plus the white wine, stir, check seasoning, and then raise the heat to drive off the alcohol, add the coprinus then cover tightly with a lid on a very low heat for no longer than two minutes. Take off the lid and check the rice for texture. It should be creamy with only a little bite. Stir once before serving .

To serve:

Put risotto on a warmed plate and garnish with parmesan flakes and a little chopped parsley. Serve with

french beans.

TAK



**INDOOR MEETING OF SATURDAY 20TH NOVEMBER AT HAMSTERLEY FOREST
COMMENCING AT 11-00a.m.**

Do not have a microscope but would like to learn more about what type to buy and how to use it? – this meeting is for you.

Alternately if you have microscopes would you please bring them along and assist others to marvel at what can be seen through microscopes.

We aim to examine spores from fungi seen around our patch at this time, examine some rusts on vascular plant leaves and stems and hopefully find time to examine the 'black fungi' found on wintering twigs.

One advantage of studying the latter is that your fungus foraging season can be extended into the winter and early spring. Additionally, as this type of foraging is not as popular as the autumn foraging there is more potential for recording more unusual species/ rarities or adding foray records which, although not comparable in size to those of autumn fungi, will be very useful to indicate the type of species around in our territory in this period of the year.

A day or so prior to the meeting enjoy a walk in your local area and find some fungi / rusts / woodland fungi species etc. which can then be examined microscopically. An alternative approach would be to bring some spore prints which could be used to prepare suitable samples for microscopic examination.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS INDOOR MEETING ON ISSUES RELATING TO MICROSCOPE USE AND SEE FOR YOURSELF THE FASCINATING VARIATIONS IN SPORES THAT ARE PRODUCED BY THE MANY FUNGI SPECIES WE FIND AROUND US.

AB

PS Do not forget your packed lunches.

Just when you thought it was all over.....

'Magic' mushrooms floor goats

FORMER actress Alexandra Bastedo has told how she found her three pygmy goats staggering around wildly after they ate psychoactive 'magic' mushrooms growing at her animal sanctuary. A vet told her that the trio, named Homer, Marge and Lisa after The Simpsons characters, were 'tripping out' from the Psilocybin mushrooms. The goats suffered hallucinations, vomiting and lethargy, taking two days to recover from the mushrooms which were growing in the paddock. Alexandra, 64, who starred in the cult Sixties TV series The Champions, said: 'I knew something was up straight away. Marge started swaying first. She looked weird, as if she had been drinking. Lisa was vomiting and they were all lethargic. It was strange that they were all acting so out of character. They are normally the friendliest animals we have. We even take them to schools and old

people's homes. They were definitely acting and were unwell.'

Alexandra, who also added: 'They can get hold of portions. I tasted an... We pad the... ar... y

Have you ever come across a dense crowd of *Psilocybe semilanceata* in a field grazed by...say..sheep? A couple of years ago I did. I

took a picture or two of the specimens in close up and went on my way.

When I came back by the same route the flock had crossed my path and pretty well all the mushrooms had been devoured. I mused over this but decided sheep were probably so short of brain cells the effect, if any, would result in behavioural

changes indistinguishable from that considered normal for sheep. I was wrong. The same day I was back for a short dog-walk. The flock

were a long way off...except for two individuals who were at the bottom of a gentle slope and apparently incapable of walking up the gradient.

One of the old ewes was constantly "trotting" on the spot and the other was rushing up the bank then stumbling back down with what can only be described as joy! I thought then what I am thinking now.

TAK

OBITUARY

It is sad news that one of our well-known members, Doug McCutcheon lost his wife Irene after a long illness in hospital. She passed away peacefully in a private ward in the presence of her family. The last time that I telephoned Doug he was in good spirits as it was quite possible Irene would be discharged from hospital but a sudden change in her well being thwarted her home coming. Irene would have been married to Doug for 49 years had she survived until 2 December. She leaves 4 children and 6 grandchildren. Every time I called at Doug's house Irene made me welcome with a cup of tea and a biscuit before Doug and I went into the wilds of Northumberland in search of mosses, liverworts and lichens. I am very pleased for Doug in that his family lives close by. Most members will look forward to seeing Doug at future NEFSG forays where he will be made welcome. GS

It is with sadness that we report the death of Irene, wife of 49 years to Doug McCutcheon, one of our long term members whom we have seen very little of this last year. Doug and his family will hopefully have adjusted to their sad loss with the ending of this year and look forward to 2011 with hope and joy and all the wonderful memories Irene will have left them with. We look forward to seeing you before too long Doug. All your friends in the group. BW

In pursuit of self-aggrandisement I submit the effort below as my attempt to capture the day that Val refers to in her article on The Polish Trip.

I did not intend publishing my piece here but, encouraged by lack of criticism, I decided to go ahead and open myself to abuse and ridicule.....and so should you all every now and then! TAK

In Bison Breath

In Bison breath the bursting bronze of early sun
Shafts glowing fingers through the boughs of beech.
This is the double dawn; of time itself, a course begun,
And of each day. A billion dawns proclaimed by eagle's screech.

In Bison breath here lay the beast, upon the beaded grass, and there
He stalked to cover lest the stirring mists dispersed, and clear
Would be. The dark shade hides, so into shaftless forest with the bear,
Wolf, beaver, boar, the lynx and timid, trembling deer.

In Bison breath a silence falls and shifts the air, re-balancing the day.
And all the scents of night are layered, still; and telling signs appear
To those who hunt and those who would be hunted. Prey
To nature's sweet and cunning curse of need and fear.

In Bison breath hear, through the warming air, far triumph tamed,
An echoed roar. Another darkness lost to dawn's pale light;
Another day, another sun, another battle and a victory claimed
O'er wild and wooded Bialowieza's cold primeval night.

In Bison breath the white hoar frost quick melts, and green the grass
Once more. And where he lay and where he slept will soon spring true
To wave in winds that carry off the scents of night. So as we pass
We, too, become one transient spirit in this land; they are many, we are but a few.

Tom Kirby.

After Bialowieza. September 2010