

North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter 63 November 2011



Hygrocybe splendidissima- Grassland at Housesteads, Northumberland. NZ788686.
Taken on mini-tripod using macro setting, ASA 100, 12.5 Mp. Lumix DMC-FS30. 15/09/11

TAK

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The NEFSG actively encourages contributions from the membership for publication in this Newsletter. The content of submitted articles is the responsibility of the author. The views, comments, opinions or statements contained in published articles are not necessarily those of the NEFSG or of the editorial personnel. The NEFSG reserves the right to refuse publication of any material considered offensive or dangerously inaccurate. For further information or if you would like to submit an article or question for the next Newsletter, please contact the Group Consultant: Alan Legg at 36, Carleton Drive, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 9QP. Tel: 01325 350834.

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A New Dawn?

By the closing date for publication of this Newsletter the committee of the NEFSG will, hopefully, have held the November 2011 meeting and chewed over the various issues which have come to light during the year. Alan Bunn will have prepared an agenda and circulated it to committee members for comment and content suggestions; some will contribute questions, some will propose foray venues for the coming year.

At the meeting the committee will, after much discussion, finalise in an enigmatically provisional way, a year's worth of forays, events, workshops and jollies. The minutes will appear for all to see and we will look forward to another year in which the NEFSG continues to grow and prosper.

We began 2011 with some 56 members and though this figure varies somewhat on a year to year basis, the general trend is upward. We had 43 members in 2003 and 47 in 2009. This pleasing statistic bodes well for Field Mycology and will hopefully help to arrest the decline in numbers of professional mycologists, if we can interest members at an early age. (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldse>)

Of course, it would be folly indeed to rest upon our laurels and so it becomes increasingly important that the group continually looks outward for inspiration and improvement.

New members are particularly, and unsurprisingly, useful in this endeavour. We have seen some real advances in the quality of photography over the last few years and have had enjoyed some very informative and enviable slide shows from talented and dedicated members like David Smith and Paul Forster. We have travelled to some interesting locations for official NEFSG forays into territory which, were it not for the local knowledge of members, we would, perhaps, have never visited.

Not to be overlooked are the contributions which members are beginning to make to the Newsletter content. From the sterling efforts of Jon Bemrose, intent on widening our culinary chasms by innovative fungal combinations, to the useful keys and informative articles from Archie McAdam and Doug McCutcheon. We have had featured articles from Alan Legg, who has moved into the hitherto exotic area of "with pictures" submissions and we have enjoyed immensely the microscopy of Aubrey Colling, along with the detailed descriptions of his finds.

Even our Chairman, the much respected and erudite Alan Simkins has allowed a shaft of light to escape from beneath his substantial bushel with his probing and thought-provoking article on the colouration of fungi.

Of particular note is the work of Alan Bunn whose NEFSG ET group is submitting excellent records from various locations which would either not normally be considered at all or would only feel the presence of inquisitive mycologists during the autumnal rush hour.

Thanks, too, is due to the enthusiastic presence of the more able members who have taken it upon themselves to aid in the identification of foray finds and in ensuring the veracity of the provisional lists... a task which fell with some regularity upon Alan Legg and for which he should receive the long service award. Gordon Simpson and Dom Colback, amongst others, have been indispensable in lifting some of the primary burden of field identification from the much molested AWL and it is hoped that in the coming year this trend will increase. Note: If you intend to suggest a wax-cap foray location, book Andy McLay NOW. There are others who have contributed to varying degrees and for all their efforts we thank you. Long may this level of support continue... it is the life blood of the group and it is what makes the NEFSG attractive to all of those who wish to learn and improve their knowledge base.

In all of this, it is prudent to reiterate our primary purpose, and I think you can see where this is heading, we are first and foremost, by intent and by constitution, a group of field mycologists whose *raison d'être* is the recording of the mycological diversity in our allocated patch.

In this endeavour we are seeing a New Dawn. Christine Meek's original proposal led to a streamlining of the procedure which permits for an early provisional release of Foray Records. By allowing time for corrections, the records are cleaner and ultimately more accurate but there is still the time consuming task of submission to the BMS FRDBI, an absolutely ESSENTIAL part of our remit. So dare I ask? You bet. If you can help with record inputting please get in touch.

Finally, and relevantly, members who have the dubious benefit of a webernetty connection, should have received a recording sheet with "validation" drop down boxes for Species, Association, Habitat, Vice-county, Finder, Confirmer and Determiner. Use of this sheet will make record inputting, and transmission to others in general, very much easier for all involved....including you, the user.

Please try it out and get those records flowing in. (See Page 8 for more information.)

Tom Kirby

Sunnyside Farm (at Sunnyside) Foray

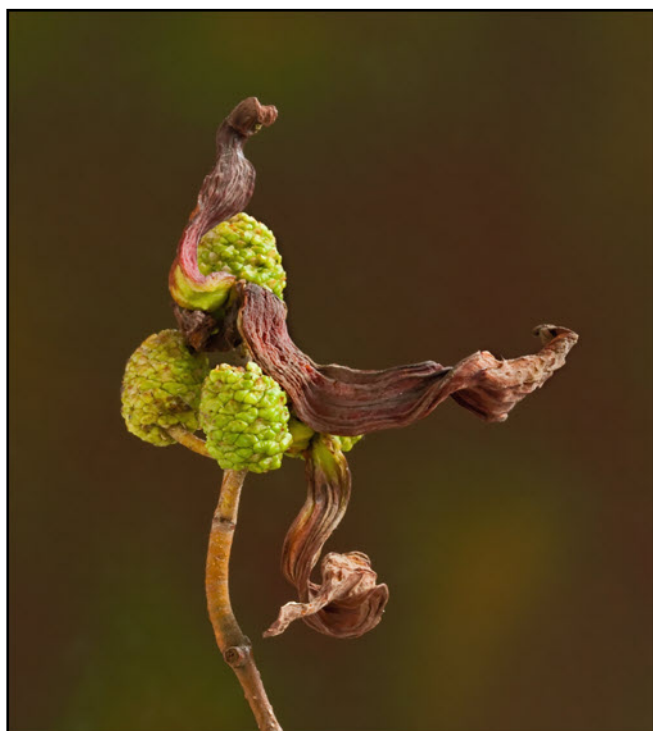
The much publicised foray held in the high grasslands above Weardale did not disappoint. We were a little apprehensive of the steep climb up to Sunnyside Farm but the generosity of our hosts, Robert and Anne Sentance, knew no bounds and a significant portion of attendees were whisked up to camp in the waiting Land-rover. The late comers and stragglers were left to their fate but it would seem that all who intended being there got there in the end. You know who you are.

The weather, though threatening, was never of any great concern as we were confident of a visible passage back to port and shelter. The lie of the land meant that we were almost always in sight of each other....this in spite of Aubrey's predicted attempt to escape from view by hiding behind a tree for an extended period.

The provisional list of finds reflects the efforts of all who attended. It was miraculous that such a coherent list could be the outcome of the chaotic deposition of baskets, boxes and bags into the display trays, but with care, concern and Chardonnay we managed to clock up some 85 species, on a provisional count.

Sunnyside is a mixed and diverse environment with unimproved grassland, semi-natural and natural woodland and copse, all enclosed by the natural boundaries of moorland and marshy fell. Opportunist species were winkled out by the sharp-eyed forayers, including the early discovery of Alder Tongue (*Taphrina alni* left. Picture by Paul Forster).

As expected the *Hygrocybes* won the day, with Andy McClay in great demand throughout the whole proceedings, barely having time to gulp down soup and



buns, beautifully prepared fried *Camarophyllus pratensis* and chilled wine between breathless identifications. (I cannot confirm that Andy drank the wine but I can confirm that none was left at the end of the day. I know. I was there). Aubrey *did* return eventually and proved as always to be the consummate forayer. The *Pholiota alnicola* picture (Right. By Aubrey Colling) arrived but a day or two after the foray and is indicative of the technical exactitude we have come to expect from the man. All in all the day was a great success and brought together all the elements which combine to make a foray a thoroughly enjoyable event.

If there are any more photographs out there they would be well received as the local rag, the Weardale Gazette, has expressed an interest in the doings of the NEFSG. As always, please send in any format but preferably by e-mail JPEG attachment to tectak@aol.com with details of sender and confirmed identity.

TAK



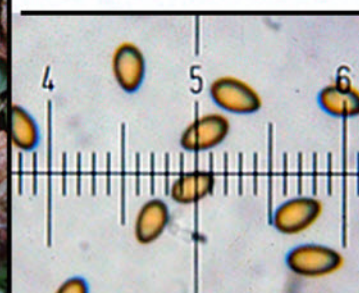
Pholiota alnicola

Alder Scalycap



spores

7.5-9 X 4.5-5.3 microns



Myxomycetes or Slime Moulds

Either term probably switches off the average excitement seeking Mycologist!(See page 5) Here I offer a closer look at one of our commoner and most easily recognisable species which may or may not inspire you to look more closely at this (which I find) fascinating group. They show a remarkably swift metamorphosis changing daily or even less from one stage to the next. This species starts off with a basal slimy structure similar to a slug trail or jettisoned phlegm (See bottom of page) which is unrecognisable at that stage. On this platform grows a densely clustered mass of tubes which house the spores and vital structures which allow them to develop. This then matures rapidly and takes on the colour of the ripening spore mass within. This is then covered by a "roof" which may be likened to chocolate icing on a cake and which can last for several weeks until such time as spore dispersal is accomplished.

Specimen growing on mossy fallen spruce bole.



*Tubifera
ferruginosa*
Day 1
(left)30/08/
2009 2cm



24 hours later 31/08/2009 (above)
24 hours later 01/09/2009 (left)



(With apologies for the picture quality.
This is no reflection on the author but
there were unexpected difficulties in
converting to a suitable format.)

Doug McCutcheon



This wallpaper-paste lookalike was found and photographed by Andrew Fox back in February. He wrote:

"I thought this was snow / frost at first glance; found 13.2.10 at edge of woodland, Tunstall Hill;(It) appeared to be 'growing' from woodland floor, amongst leaf debris. Substance / species was translucent, gelatinous and did not leave any residue when handled. I have re-visited site today and found more areas; not sure whether I missed this first time but I think I would have seen. "

The BBC have recently run an article which served only to deepen the mystery.....any thoughts?
TAK

A new VC66 record-*Badhamia foliicola*

It is always risky claiming a "new" record, even when the species is humble and the possibility of it being serially overlooked and under-recorded is high. So it was with some trepidation that I contacted Gordon Simpson with my photographic evidence for a find of *Badhamia foliicola*, discovered on my regular Castle Eden Dene foray for Natural England. The enthusiastic attendees on this yearly foray are a very good at rooting out even the most insignificant of finds and I am put to shame by their efforts; so it is sweet recompense to find something each year which I can hold forth on or proudly proclaim as rare or unique. This year I was struggling, as the weather had done nothing to stir the mycological population into observable activity. Accordingly, I had determined to concentrate on the smaller and more or less shy species, which by nature

would be found in the protected damp and dark nooks untroubled by the effects of desiccating winds and sunshine.

Success is its own reward. After a relatively sterile hour or so we began a descent into the lower dene and into a micro-climate of still and damp air with a good deal of decaying wood in evidence. There in the gloom it glowed. Bright yellow shiny beads, each only 0.5-1.0mm across. A sample taken at this stage would have been useless (See end). I took a tripod picture to confirm my intention to pursue the matter.



Though I was glad of the photographic opportunity, I was quite unable to suggest a name for the find, and this is quite a useful admission on forays. There is an implication in such a confession that something rare has been found! I left it like that, but not before I had confirmed absolutely to all gathered round that I could, with a high degree of certainty, determine that what we were looking at was a complete and utter mystery to me. This was exciting information. Much feverish photography ensued and I can imagine the buzz in the local bars and post office queues as the picture was passed around of something completely unidentifiable, found in Castle Eden Dene and you really ought to have been there.

I ploughed through my books on my return and with a little dedication and the stigma of failure always on my mind....I waited for Gordon's response.

Now I am not entirely without modesty as I have a good deal to be modest about, but I should say right now that I had managed to pin the find down and was delighted when Gordon confirmed my identification....moreover, he had found *Badhamia foliicola* himself only a day or so previously (5/10/2011). So whilst this find is a new VC66 record I cannot lay claim in print to the first find, but that won't stop me in the bars and post office queues!

My record is as follows:

Badhamia foliicola 04/10/2011 Beech sp.(Fagus), Log, Woodland, mixed, Castle Eden Dene, VC66: Durham, NZ427391

Of the 91 records in the FRDBI the nearest find in topographical terms is recorded below:

Badhamia foliicola, --/--/1905, England, North-east Yorkshire (VC: 62), Oliver's Mount area, Scarborough, [TA08](#), coll.: A. Hibbert-Ware, id: anon, **FRDBI Record No.:** 770625, **Origin of Record:** Chris Yeates (Yorkshire Records)

(Referencing Doug's article on page 4 in this issue, I went back some three days later to see what gestation could do and was duly rewarded with some excellent spore samples but little else. Spores free, yellow-brown, minutely warted, 10-12 µm diam. The plasmodium stage was well gone and the tiny sporocarps were almost all in the final stages of disintegration.)

TAK

Member's moments.....

This from Gordon Simpson...a nice find.

Hello Tom

The gall on leaves of *Sonchus* is *Cystiphora sonchi*. Description:- Circular pustule in leaf, 4 to 5mm across, raised 1mm high on upperside, slightly concave below: pale-coloured, surrounded by a dark purple zone, often several on a leaf: each contains a pale yellow larva or pupa, locally common.

I receive a lot of photographs for help in identification. I am attaching one which I have asked for permission to publish in the NEFSG newsletter. As yet I have not received permission. I have never seen this fungus *Gyromitra infula*. It has been found by a lady at Acomb, Hexham. It is a Vulnerable Red Data Book species recorded mainly in Scotland with a few records in Wales, Yorkshire and Kent. It is new to the North of England. Hold it until permission is granted.

Gordon

Then:

Hello Tom

The spores of *Leccinum scabrum* can be 15 - 20 x 4.5 - 6 which fits your spore sample. It depends on which book you use and I use Mushrooms of Britain and Europe by Regis Courticuisse, a Wildlife Trusts book.

You can publish the photograph of *Gyromitra infula* with a copyright by the person. I am trying to meet her and visit the site as she is unfamiliar with map references, and I can then take a piece and verify it microscopically.

Gordon



Gyromitra infula (Copyright: A lady of Acomb, Hexham)



...and from Paul Forster.

Following the information release to internet-enabled members on the quite remarkable outcropping of *Hydnum repandum* and *Thelephora penicillata* in the Newton Hanzard plantation near Wynyard Village, Paul and others visited the site.

Once past the barrage of rubbish the plantation opened out and there before you was a most unusual sight. Dotted amongst the conifers, as far as the gloom in the plantation would permit you to see, was a carpet of Hedgehog fungus and earth fans (pictured left, *Thelephora penicillata*.)

NZ415277

TAK

Fungi of Hudswell Woods – July 30 2011

The brief token excursions usually held as adjuncts to our summer meetings hardly merit the name “foray” in the special sense current since the early 19th century among fungus enthusiasts. However, this year’s wander along the top edge of Hudswell Woods produced a list of common species here given in summary form.

Of the twenty one that I listed only five were toadstool species: *Lactarius pyrogalus* restricted as always to hazel, *Panaeolus foenisecii* amongst grasses, the less common *Pluteus umbrosus* collected from this site once before, *Rickenella swartzii* with mosses and *Xerocomus chrysenteron* mycorrhizal with a variety of deciduous trees. Other large basidiomycetes included *Auricularia auricula-judae*, *Hetero-basidion anosum*, *Polyporus squamosus* and *Schizopora paradoxa*. *Daldinia concentrica* was the only large ascomycete found but there were five powdery mildews. The only rust listed was *Puccinia arenariae*, a common parasite of Red Campion leaves.

Small black ascomata on a nameless eroded dead branch collected by Keith Tulip turned out to be the common *Rosellinia aquila* which I have chosen for special mention only because, when I checked my earliest ever noted collection of this species, made on June 8 1985, I found it was from “Hudswell Woods, Richmond” This fungus was known to late eighteenth century mycologists, including Edward Robson of Darlington, as *Sphaeria mammosa*, “the breast-shaped Sphaeria”. In the late 1990s I studied a collection he made and sent to the celebrated James Bolton of Halifax. This now forms part of Robson’s fungal herbarium kept in Sunderland museum.

The “other” Red Campion Rust

For those members with their eyes attuned, the common Red Campion rust, *Puccinia arenariae*, is often seen on NEFSG forays forming large groups of pustules in pulvinate oval lesions in leaves of Red Campion, *Silene dioica*. The upper leaf surface betrays the presence of the fungus in discoloured areas. Only on the lower surfaces of leaves can be seen the groups of dark pustules formed by ripening teliospores.

According to Ellis & Ellis I (revised 1997 edition), Another *Puccinia* species, *P. behenis*, forms both ure-dinia and telia on Red Campion leaves but is relatively uncommon.

This conclusion is currently being examined by my old friend, Dr. Gillian Brand of Stratford-on-Avon, who with her husband, Bert, is a veteran of the Warwickshire Fungus Survey. Gill is also a recent president of The Yorkshire Naturalists’ Union. In the early summer of this year, Gill contacted me to check the status of the two rusts in County Durham. She had found plenty of VC66 records of *Puccinia arenariae* on FRDBI but none of *P. behenis*.

Accordingly on July 7 Ros and I took a little walk in Gainford Spa Wood on the north bank of the Tees a few miles from our home. It was easy to collect obvious specimens of *P. arenariae* but there were a few ambiguous-looking collections with small dark unaggregated pustules covering parts of the lower leaf surfaces. These were sent to Gill along with a specimen of the obvious *P. arenariae* material.

The upshot was that one of the two ambiguous samples I sent turned out to be also of *P. arenariae*, growing atypically in discrete spots. The other specimen was, however, of *P. behenis* thus confirmed as a native of VC66 for the first time. My experience should sound a note of caution to people attempting to distinguish the two species in the field. It is less easy than it might seem even with a copy of E&EI and a microscopic identification.

The latest report I have from Gill is of national records current at August 31 2011. There were then 129 of *P. arenariae* and 81 of *P. behenis* indicating that the latter is much less uncommon than previously thought. The survey continues and updates may appear in this Newsletter. Records of both species now exist from all NEFSG vice-counties except North Northumberland, VC68. Specimens from this most north-easterly of English Vice-counties gratefully accepted!

AWL

The Validation Recording Sheet (VRS)

For those members who wish to use the recently supplied (by e-mail) Validation Recording Sheet (VRS), and I hope that is most of you, here are some operating instructions. The instructions assume a reasonable knowledge of Excel but in any event, a minimum amount of familiarisation with the program will soon have you up and running.

First of all, a little preamble.

Currently, we ask that ALL records for submission are sent, by whatever means, to Tom Kirby. If the records are in a suitable format they will be sent directly to Alan Legg for correction and comment then returned to Tom for dissemination to the CATE2 database and to the FRDBI inputters.

If the records from members, as received by Tom, are hand-written or in some format unacceptable to the two national databases Tom will re-hash them before sending to Alan.

When the records are from an official NEFSG foray Tom will immediately re-hash into an acceptable format (using the Validation Recording Sheet) and send out to Members as soon as possible with the understanding that this list is PROVISIONAL. After a suitable period, during which time members can send in corrections and additions, the final list will be sent to Alan and treated to the usual mauling.

Now, things are VERY much easier for ALL concerned if records are submitted by everyone using the Validation Recording Sheet. This is, of course, not possible for everyone....but for those who can do, please do!

What does the Validation Recording Sheet do? Well, first and foremost it brings conformity to our records. There is a built-in "dictionary" for all species you are likely to come across in the British Isles, with correct spelling and for the purists, Italicised names! The dictionary is editable by you, the user, but you are warned that you should CHECK, before any changes or additions are made, against the FRDBI GB Checklist (<http://www.fieldmycology.net/GBCHKLST/gbchklist.asp>).

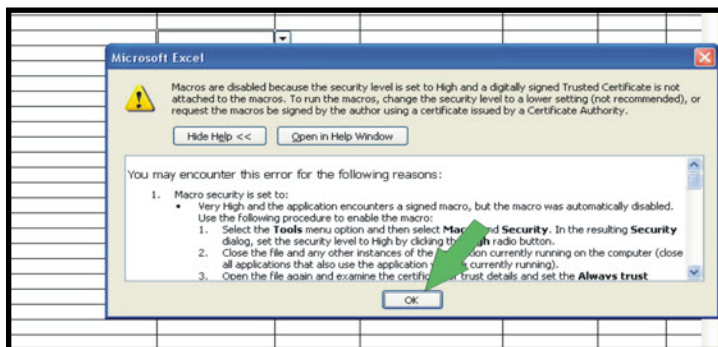
The VRS is also pre-loaded with accepted definitions of Species, Substrates and Habitats, all editable, and also the complete list of Vice-counties.

There has always been a problem when trying to decide how to "formalise" the names of Collectors, Determiners and Confirmers because we tend to be variable in this area. Computers are pernickety but trusting of the human inputter and will happily accept that A.Legg is not the same person as A.(space) Legg. Similarly, AWL and AW Legg, as well as A.W.L are all treated as different beings. Few of us have as many personae! To prevent this problem the VRS has ALL members of the NEFSG under the relevant headings, and the drop-down facility works just as all the other validation boxes. PLEASE NOTE! You may be dismayed to see that the lists, when dropped-down, show blank. This is because you may need to SCROLL to the name, if that is your preferred method of inputting. More on this later.

OK. Here we go.

Open the program in the usual way and immediately NAME it using the "Save as" option in the "File" menu.

This will ensure that you preserve the ORIGINAL blank VRS for next use. You may be confronted with this warning (left). Fear not. Just click the "OK" button and it will vanish.

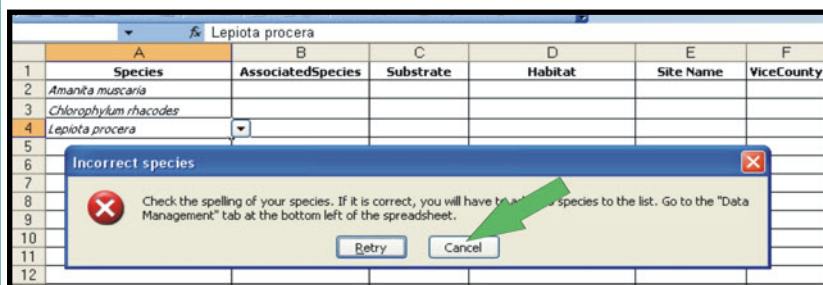


You are now ready to start inputting your finds. It is, of course, wise to have the information at your side and ready. Begin by typing the name of your first SPECIES in top left column (below, green left arrow). You will be able to type the name directly into the Species Box at the position 2A as shown. **Alternatively, you can click the little drop-down arrow beside the Species Input box,** as shown by example in the As-

sociated Species box which works the same way (below right, green right arrow).

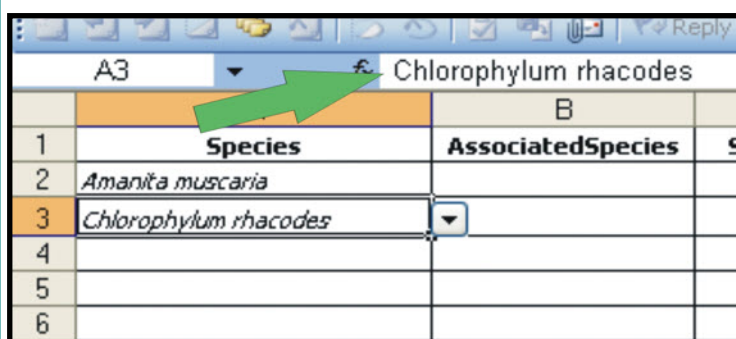
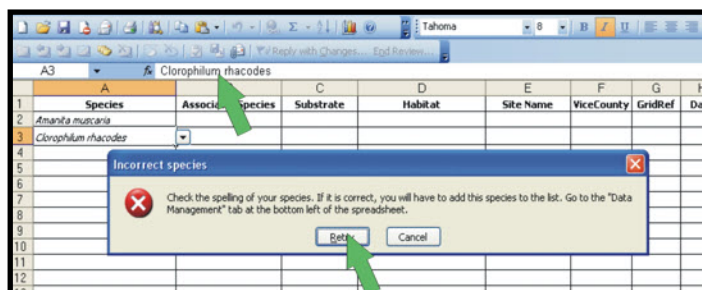
If you choose to use the drop-down facility you must SCROLL down to the selected species and left-click to select. You can fill in all of the boxes this way except for "Site Name" and "Date". The advantage of SELECTING from the Validation Lists is that you will ALWAYS be offered acceptable data. If you choose to type in data which is unacceptable, the program will tell you so. You then have two options both of which will lead you to entering ONLY acceptable data.

	A	B	C
1	Species	AssociatedSpecies	Substrate
2	<i>Amanita muscaria</i>		
3		Malus	
4		Malus domestica	
5		Malva	
6		Malva sylvestris	
7		Medicago sativa	
8		Meles meles	
9		Mentha aquatica	
10		Molinia caerulea	



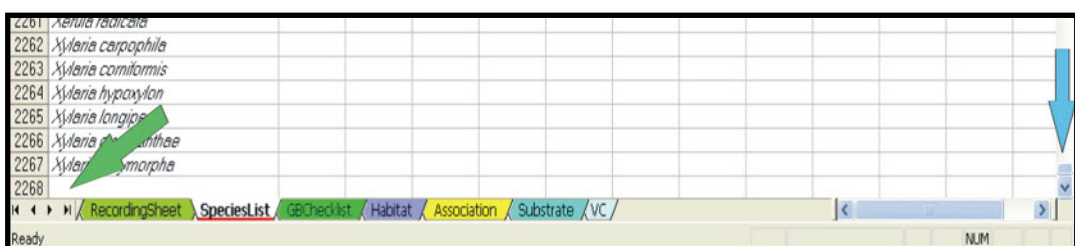
The message (left) will appear if you have typed in an incorrect entry. You may have mis-spelt or made a typo error. Up pops the screen with two options. Always try the "Cancel" option first as the program may be able to automatically correct the data. If this occurs, check that the pro-

gram has chosen data which is acceptable to YOU! If it has picked the wrong data **you can correct the information by typing in the Editing box (below)**. Even if you opt for this method the program will still tell you if the information is unacceptable. If this is the case you may decide to press the "Retry" button (right, bottom green arrow). Again, you can correct an obvious error in the Editing Box as often as you wish but unless you get the data absolutely correct the system will NOT accept the input.



OK. Suppose you believe that you are right and the computer is wrong. It happens. Species names change all the time. FIRST, check that what you are trying to input is ACCEPTABLE to the FRDBI GB Checklist. If it is, then you must correct the Species database. This will NOT happen often but it is a great exercise and will really cement new names into both the computer's memory AND yours. **Here is how to edit the lists of acceptable inputs.**

Go to the red "Species" tab at the bottom of the screen and left-click (right). You are now entering a large database containing some 2700 of the known species of British fungi. There are some errors in the database but by vigilance, you can keep your own database acceptably up-to-date. The database appears as a long list of species. Scroll down (below right, blue arrow) to the species name which needs correcting or to the bottom of the list if you are adding a species. Type your correction in the Editing Box (below, top arrow) of the selected



species or type in an additional species in to the first open cell AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST. Once you have completed the changes you should return to the "Recording Sheet" by clicking on the green tab (left, bottom arrow).

Once you have filled in all the columns, and all the validation drop-down boxes work exactly the same way, you should save the sheet. Provided you carried out the "Save as" instruction at the beginning the sheet will save under the name you gave it.

Please note that the whole sheet is "protected" in that the column widths are FIXED in order to make sure that the printed output will fit on to an A4 sheet. You may need to maximise your printer's page by moving out the margins. Be aware that although some descriptions are seen to be unable to "fit" into the column widths the information is STILL there.

Any additions to validation lists will not be in alphabetical order. To arrange in this way you must "unprotect" the sheet to "sort". If you wish to do this then go to Tools> Protection. The password is "whisky". Contact tectak@aol.com for further information. **TAK**

**Indoor meeting at Rainton Meadows, Durham Wildlife
Trust Reserve,
on 26th November commencing at 11-00 am**

Top 100 Records – no not the Pop Music charts but the British Mycology Society database's 100 most recorded species. The Secretary has prepared a Powerpoint presentation which aims to familiarise members with the species in the Top 100 (these are the same species which are included as Top 100 labels in the Collins Guide derived from the FRDBI). Each individual slide will contain the Scientific name, Common name, position in the Top 100, an illustration photo and a brief list of identification features.

Why do this? Put simply, if all members were familiar with the identification of these 100 species then we would reduce the time taken to produce the list at the end of our forays. Additionally, it would give us more confidence in attempting to identify similar species.

I will be producing support print outs which will help to find the 100 species in the Collins Guide. If required, I will produce a set of reduced sized copies of each of the slides I use for my presentation.

I hope to see you at this meeting which is aimed at improving members' identification skills on at least these 100 species; this will hopefully expand skills in general.

Alan Bunn
(Secretary)

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

We have three new additions to the library, the excellent illustrated "**British Boletes with keys to species**" by Geoffrey Kibby, "**The genus Hygrocybe 2nd. Revision**" by David Bortman and the weighty "**Strophariaceae s.I.**" from Fungi Europaei by M.E.Noordeloos.

These are NEW books in both meanings of the word and have been purchased for the use of members.

Should you wish to borrow ANY books please contact Tom Kirby by the usual means and every effort will be made to get the books to you.

TAK