



North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter No 110 Autumn 2023

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NEXT ISSUE: The deadline for articles for the Winter newsletter is 25th February 2024
All contributions will be gratefully received!

Seasons Greetings



Forthcoming Events

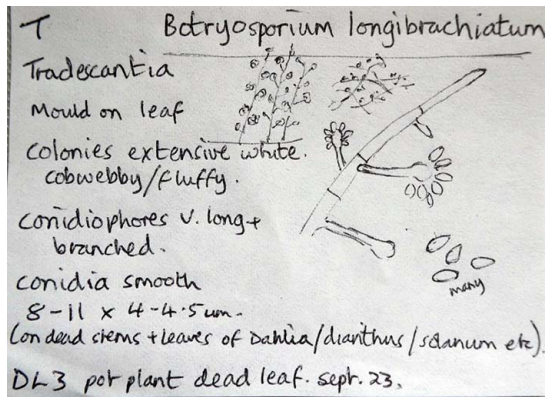
AGM - Rainton Meadows nature reserve Visitor Centre on Saturday 17th February 2024
at 11a.m.



Mould on Tradescantia leaf.

As I was watering my house plants in mid-October, I spotted a 'curiously different' and quite pretty, white, tall mould growing on a couple of dead leaves touching the soil on a Tradescantia. In a rush to head off to mums I photographed them, popped one in a pot and in the fridge. Oops, 2+ weeks later I remembered it and amazingly it was still in good condition.

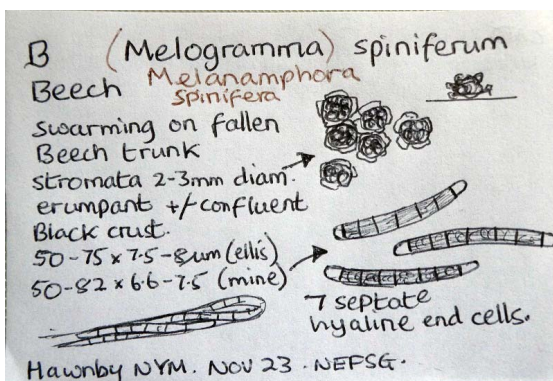
A quick slide, a search in Ellis + Ellis and a check on the net gave a clear ID of *Botryosporium longibrachiatum* - usually found on dead stems and leaves of Dahlia, Dianthus, Solanum etc. So, keep an eye out for it - it's distinctive in look!



Jill Cunningham

Woodwart, Barkspot or Tarcrust?

Well, resembling bits of all 3 - erumpent through the bark and confluent; the size of Barkspot; a bit rough, lumpy like a Woodward; but with bark margins peeling back like Tarcrust; seen swarming all over a fallen Beech trunk on the Hawnby meet. I took a sample; left it until the last, had forgotten to damp-box it, wasn't hopeful + expecting difficulty; time short.....so I just 'pinged' a bit off and chopped it on the slide + water. I got such a surprise - under the microscope the slide was full of spores - long, 7-septate, end cells hyaline. Such distinctive spores were a clear match for *Melanamphora spiniferum* in Ellis + Ellis. Many thanks to Rhona for finding the up-dated name - *Melanamphora spinifera*, and to Mike for looking it up on CATE2 - 12 records, all southern. Interestingly NBN Atlas has 35 records - all northern Scotland and southern England - but there is 1 1970's record in Ryedale, NYM.....so there must be more of this species between - memo - check fallen Beech....and no 'gouging out' required!



Jill Cunningham

Our Germany Trip



Our 6 day trip to Germany started on **Tuesday 10th October** catching a Lufthansa flight from Newcastle to Frankfurt arriving at 2.10 local time . The original number leaving was to be 11 but because of circumstances only 7 left . We had a pleasant minibus journey through the Odenwald to our hotel the Kuhler Grund in Grasellenbach , arriving at 4.30 . After unpacking we were welcomed by MAK (Mannheim Fungus Group) members Bernhard , Elke , Regina , Bernd and Petra with drinks on the verandah . A 4 course meal followed .

Wednesday 11th October my atomic alarm clock refused to adjust to German time and as a consequence I almost missed breakfast only being summoned with 10' to spare , a great rush. Our morning foray was just out of nearby Wald-Michelbach and we were amazed to find an abundance of fungi , something that continued for the rest of our trip . Suse joined us as we headed back , stopping at 2 supermarkets in town , Aldi and Edeka for lunch supplies which we shared at the picnic tables in the hotel grounds . In the afternoon , after consulting the map , I thought I would try and get some postcards in one of the small hamlets nearby . A round trip of 4 miles along pleasant forest tracks led me to the tourist information at Gras-Ellenbach . I just had time to write them before they were whisked away by the post lady , arriving in England on the Saturday .



Thursday 12th October we drove to Cafe Bauer a few miles away and were joined by Dagmar and others from the MAK group . A woodland walk followed , I quickly got separated and spent the morning by myself finding plenty of fungi to photograph . Arriving back at the café we had a stunning selection of cakes etc to choose from , delicious . A threat of rain kept many indoors to ID the finds but Alan and I ventured out to see a Deathcap he had spotted yesterday . Unfortunately it had deteriorated overnight



and was being devoured by slugs . We had a walk around the Vogelherd hill , heavy rain meant sheltering under trees and I spotted 2 Fire Salamanders who quickly split up as I tried to photograph them . The rain had encouraged them out and I spotted 6 on the walk but not the lucky Seventh Salamander ! We did find a nice red slug though . For our evening meal we queued to be served Swiss Raclette a specially served melted cheese dish , delicious.





3.

Friday 13th October our free day . Regina , Paul , Alan and Gabi mirrored off to a famous fossil site . Doug went birdwatching around the local hamlets and Dave had a fungus foray with Bernd and Petra . Cath and I joined Bernhard , Elke and Dagmar for the one hour journey to Schwetzingen Palace and its famous Gardens . Bernhard led us on a tour of the various gardens , French , English etc. with statues , temples , forts , bathhouses , waterways and many beautiful vistas . Afterwards lunch outdoors in a café opposite the Palace . Bernhard located a tea shop for me to purchase samples to bring back to England .

Saturday 14th October a group of us forayed the Vogelherd again , a couple more salamanders were observed . We left at lunchtime for the teahouse at Buddhas Weg just beyond Wald-Michelbach , again delicious cakes . We arranged an hours walk in the woods below the monastery . Returning to the hotel Alan and I had a further hours walk in woods nearby . Our bills were paid .



Sunday 15th October people took short walks before our minibus left at 12.00 thanking profusely our German hosts from MAK for their excellent hospitality and looking forward to seeing everyone again in the Scottish Highlands in 2025 .

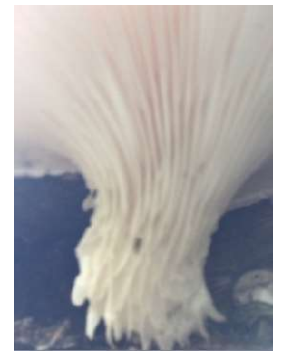
At Frankfurt airport we thought we had got away with it , no one had mentioned the war , but Cath had a slip of the tongue and tried to direct us to Luftwaffe Airlines ! We did however make a safe journey back to Newcastle arriving 5.00 local time .

Mike Cruse

4.

Fungi on Hawnby Hill November 5th 2023

10 of us met up in the village of Hawnby, north west of Helmsley on the River Rye. We walked along the flanks of Hawnby Hill, firstly through pastures, hoping for waxcaps, and then circled back through some nice older mixed woodland slightly higher up. We didn't find the waxcaps, but we had some splendid views up the valley to the moors and were lucky with glorious weather.



As we left the village behind we found two slightly bedraggled but

interesting specimens emerging from the base of a rather sickly Ash tree. There was *Pleurotus cornucopiae* with its very white gills extending down the stipe and The Golden Scaly cap - *Pholiota aurivella* (maybe the dark form). A week before,

this had been shiny golden brown with startling creamy scales on the cap and down the stipe below the ring but again rain had robbed it of some of its glory. On the opposite side of the road there was a single Collared Earthstar *Geastrum triplex*, perhaps dislodged during recent hedge cutting. As we continued over the fields towards the woodland we found *Stropharia caerulea* and *Marasmius oreades* as well as several *Mycenas*, *Psathyrellas*, Jelly fungi and a *Postia* on fallen branches and sawn timber structures. Jill also pointed out a distinctive pink patch on a lichen on a bit of Hawthorn twig in the hedge identified as *Illiosporopsis christiansenii*.

There was one amazing ash tree on a field margin as we approached the woodland. There was a damp mossy cleft at eye height the other side of the barbed wire fence, and it was crammed with a variety of fungi. There were a couple of specimens of *Gymnopilus junonius*, some *Mycena galericulata*, a *Cordyceps militaris*, *Trametes versicolor*, *Xylaria hypoxylon* and then even *Ganoderma applanatum* at the base of the tree.



As soon as we entered the wood we saw a lovely troop of



Leratiomyces squamosus var *thraustus*, something I had never seen before. There were plenty of fungi in the woodland, with Mike pointing out lots of *Typhula fistulosa*, Jill and Jo finding loads of microfungi and lots of sniffing and tasting of *Lactarius* species. There was a lovely patch of Beech woodland with lots of *Russula fellea*, *Gymnopus confluens* and *Laccaria amethystina* too.

As we emerged from the woodland onto the last field Jill somehow managed to see a fungus infested insect on the tip off a piece of grass. It was an *Entomophthora muscae* on a *Scathopgaga* sp.!!



Rhona Sutherland

Rust Fungi on Grasses

Rust fungi on grasses are common, and produce long orange or black pustules on host plant. However different species of *Puccinia* can be involved, and the pustules can look similar. In October I looked at orange pustules on leaves of False Oat Grass. Under the microscope, urediniospores were easy to see (Fig 1) - but 4 different species of *Puccinia* are known to colonise False Oat Grass. I keyed my spores out, and suspected *Puccinia coronata*. This Rust has very distinctive teliospores - the contents of the black pustules, the following stage. I revisited the plants 3 weeks later, and Bingo, black pustules had developed (Fig 2). The teliospores had trademark little crowns on top (Fig 3), confirming *Puccinia coronata*.

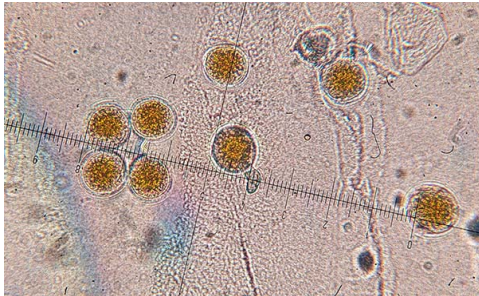


Fig 1



Fig 2

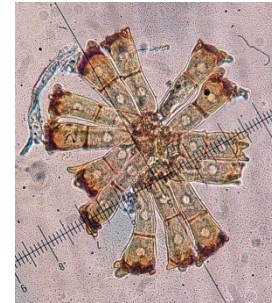


Fig 3

Lydia Koelmans

UK Fungus Day Event presented by the North Eastern Fungus Study Group

UK Fungus day was celebrated and publicised in style by The North Eastern Fungus Study Group (NEFSG) by giving the good people of Barnard Castle and surrounds a free fungal event to mark the occasion.

Once the application to the BMS for help with funding had been given, in early April, a committee of volunteers led by our two event leaders Cath Gillie and Sally Pattison was formed to plan the event which was to be held in six months time on UK Fungus Day, October 7th.

The committee met monthly via video conferencing. It was tasked with proposing which activities would take place, who would be responsible for each activity and where and when they would occur. After much early brainstorming a final list of activities was drawn up.

The main event would be held in a local community hall in the Main Street with lots of footfall expected. The activities would be:

- o. Information/welcome table
- o. Two free guided forays in local woodlands
- o. Display of fresh fungal specimens with guides at hand
- o. Childrens crafts and activities
- o. Two free bookable workshops teaching how to make fermented food, e.g. Kimchi
- o. Growing fungi at home stall
- o. A tombola stall featuring fungal prizes
- o. Fungi themed pottery stall
- o. Bring in a fungi for identification stall
- o. Microscope fun - viewing samples through the stereoscope.

All activities planned and now to advertise the event. Some one thousand flyers were designed, ordered and printed, then inserted into the local newspaper for distribution. Social media

platforms were alerted. Posters were designed and placed around town and in front of the community hall.

The day arrived - it was raining. Nonetheless, an enthusiastic crowd of people turned out for the first 10am foray, increasing increasing in numbers for the afternoon foray, this time in the sun.

The hall began filling up just after ten. People of all ages came. Families arrived with their children, having brought their finds to show us and for identification. They loved the kids crafts and activities and also showed great interest in all of the sizes, shapes, smells and colours of the fungal display. After all, they will be the mycologists of tomorrow.

Many people simply wanted to know which fungi were edible, but on seeing the displays people became fascinated by the diversity of fungi and asked for information about joining the group. 'Were these collected locally?' was the amazed question as they ate their free mushroom cupcakes.

One gentleman looking at *lycoperdon perlatum* species said he couldn't see the spines very clearly. I advised him that there were some very good opticians around these parts.

Viewing through the stereoscope was popular. One young man, aged about nine, spotted what could well have been a parasitic fungus whilst looking at *nectaria cinnabarina*, the coral spot fungus. He was thrilled.

And yes - we hit the local news! A reporter from the local newspaper attended and subsequently published an excellent review spreading the fungal word further.



F FUNGI are going to save the world." That was the claim of one member of the North East study group of the British Mycological Society when members descended on Barney earlier this month.

The bold statement may seem outlandish at first. After all, how could a cap mushroom conquer all the world's ills?

But delve a little deeper into the mysterious world of mycology (the study of fungi), as I did at the recent Explore Mycology event held at The Witham and you will find this view is shared by many scientific minds around the world.

"Without mushrooms we wouldn't be where we are now," said Cath Gillie, from the North East Study Group, who organised the free event to encourage more people to learn about fungi.

"We would be buried under fallen trees, the remains of animals and have infertile soil.

"Mushrooms are one the earliest forms of life on earth. Knowing about them is crucial.



BENEFITS: Lions Mane mushrooms have been linked to a breakthrough in the treatment of dementia

"They are mass decomposers; mushrooms have been able to live and adapt to changing conditions on our planet and are the foundation to life as we know it."

The event, which coincided with UK Fungi Day, was organised to encourage more people to get involved in mycology.

As well as a huge display of fungi – in all shapes, sizes, edible and poisonous – members of the study group were on hand to answer questions.

Forays into nearby Flatts Wood had been organised to see what mushrooms could be discovered close at hand and crafty folk were encouraged to create mushroom related artwork.

Ms Gillie added: "Fungi is really important and more and more research shows the wonders of fungi.

"Scientists are just now starting to discover some of the amazing benefits of fungi."

Fungi, of which there are about 12,000 varieties in Britain alone, can sense light and flame, form relationships with other organisms and they can even hunt.

Despite being on earth for about a billion years, and with an estimated 3.8 million species, scientists have just scratched the surface of fungi's amazing abilities.

New research from the University of Sheffield shows that the vast underground network of fungi is working as a massive carbon sink, storing 13 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to more than a third of the world's annual fossil fuel emissions.

Scientists globally are also confident mushrooms will help "eat" away plastic



HEALTHY DEBATE: North East Fungi Study Group member Cath Gillie extolled the virtues of mushrooms

TM pics

pollution following recent bioremediation studies that included the edible Oyster mushroom.

Ms Gillie added: "Fungi are great, but people are sometimes put off from foraging because there are dangerous ones that are poisonous, however, there are more that have great health benefits."

Indeed, studies have found that Lion's Mane mushrooms contain two special compounds – hericenones and erinacines – that can stimulate the growth of brain cells and animal studies have also found this mushroom may help protect against Alzheimer's disease.

And as well as being tasty,

Shiitake mushrooms help reduce inflammation and are a great support to immune health.

The study group, which has about 35 members, was set up 26 years ago and as well as identifying and recording finds on a national database, they organise workshops and public information days to share knowledge.

Ms Gillie said: "We would like to do this open day as an annual thing. We are looking to come back again next year for UK Fungi Day and hopefully we will be in the main hall."

For more information on the North East Fungi Study Group visit www.nefsg.co.uk.

All in all 'a good day out' was had by all! Thanks are due to our event leaders and volunteers. The people of Barnard Castle and surrounds now know more about the fascinating world of fungi.

[illegible]

A man wearing a hat and a dark jacket is sitting in a folding chair under a dark blue canopy. The canopy has a logo that says 'WOODSTOCKED' and 'Garden Ornaments'. The stall is set up on a grassy area with a stone wall in the background. Various wooden garden ornaments, including mushroom-shaped ones and a small wooden house, are displayed on the stall. A small table with a sign that says 'Garden Ornaments' is also visible.

A group of people are seated at long tables in a room with red carpeting. A man stands at the front of the room, near a large projection screen, appearing to be giving a presentation or lecture. The room has a whiteboard and various items on a counter in the background.

10.



Trying out the stereoscope



What's that fungus, Mummy

Ron Pattinson

Common Earthball

It seems to have been a good year for the Common Earthball (*Scleroderma citrinum*) (I think!). These were photographed in the woods at Littlebeck, a nature reserve on the North Yorkshire Moors (near Sleights).



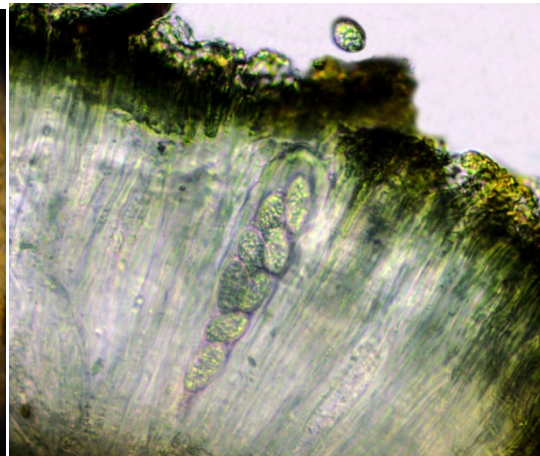
Jo Scott

Lichen Lookout

A closer look at *Porpidia maculatum*. Found on acid rocks usually in upland regions. Thallus white but sometimes oxidises orange/red. Large black apothecia that have a thick rim.



Thick rimmed apothecia



Cross section through the apothecia
showing the ascus and spores