



North Eastern Fungus Study Group

Newsletter No 115 Winter 2024

Index

Letter from your New Lady Chairman	Page 1
Forthcoming Events	Page 2
Sad News of the Death of Michael Gordon - Mike Cruse	Page 4
Fungi Snippets - Gordon Simpson	Page 4
Byssocorticium efibulatum - Doug McCutcheon	Page 6
Minutes of Committee Meeting 30 th Nov 2024	Page 7
Minutes of the AGM - 15 th Feb 2025.....	Page 9
Lichen Lookout - Jo Scott	Page 11

NEXT ISSUE: The deadline for articles for the Spring newsletter is 25th April 2025
All contributions will be gratefully received!



Letter from your new lady Chairman -Catherine Gillie

Dear Members

It feels very strange and a privilege to be writing to you all as your new lady Chairman.

I would like to thank everyone, especially Alan Simkins who has encouraged and thought me capable of doing a good job in this role. I will try not to let you down!



My first thoughts are that we all owe huge gratitude and thanks to Alan for holding this role and responsibility for the last 15 years. I hope that I will be able to continue and build on his great work. Thankfully, Alan is staying on the committee to help and advise me, as I don't seem to be able to find the job description!

A bit about me - I first became interested in fungi as a child when, while walking to school, I met an earth star! When others were talking about pop stars! I thought it was the most amazing and magical thing I had ever seen, and I knew then that fungi were something special. It was much later though that learning more about fungi became a reality.

When I was working as Manager of Dogs Trust Darlington, Babs Walton, a friend, asked me if I was interested in joining a fungi group (NESFG) that was just starting, and I said yes!

It was a good move, and I am very grateful to the founder of the group Alan Legg, Gordon Simpson and many others, sadly some no longer with us, for their inspiration, friendship, and help in understanding more about fungi.

Although I have been a member of NESFG for many years now, I am no expert mycologist as my career with Dogs Trust (which I loved) took me away from home frequently. For more than 20 years, I led a gypsy-type lifestyle, juggling family life and managing several Dogs Trust centres from Bridgend to Edinburgh. Thankfully, my husband Dave, daughter Elizabeth, and son John not only put up with this, but they were hugely supportive.

I am an enthusiastic Mycologist though and having retired from Dogs Trust in July 2023, I now feel ready and excited to take on this role.

My hope is that the interest in fungi in our region will pardon the pun mushroom! and that the group will help and inspire the mycologists of the future.

Yours Sincerely
Catherine Gillie

PS -I would love to hear from our members about any ideas and suggestions so please just pick up the phone or send me a text or e mail

Tel 07834 658562 e-mail cat.gille@btinternet.co.uk

Forthcoming Events

NEFSG FORAY PROGRAMME 2025

All events meet at **10:30am for an 11.00am** start unless otherwise stated.

Sat Apr 12th Waters Meet, Acomb, nr Hexham - Mike Cruse
Sat Apr 26th Lichen/Fungi meet, Stanhope, Weardale - Jo Scott
Sat Jul 19th Summer Social in a Village Hall, bring your own food, fun events, displays and a foray, tba
Sat Aug 30th Beginner's Foray, Chopwell Woods - Mike Cruse
Sat Sep 6th Black Plantation nr Lanchester - Lesley Hodgson
Sun Sep 7th Bedburn, Bishop Auckland - Cath Gillie
Sat Sep 13th Alnwick Cemetery and Church - Mike Cruse
Sun Sep 14th Hulne Park, Alnwick - Ron Pattison
Sat Sep 20th - Thu Sep 25th Nethy Bridge (5 nights)
Sat Sep 27th Bear Park, nr Durham - Lesley Hodgson
Sun Sep 28th Hepple, nr Rothbury - Richard Thompson
Sat Oct 4th UK Fungus Day, venue tbc
Sun Oct 5th UK Fungus Day +1 tba
Sat Oct 11th Stonehaugh, nr Bellingham - Gordon Beakes
Sun Oct 12th Greta Bridge nr Barnard Castle - Cath Gillie
Sat Oct 18th Rokeby, nr Barnard Castle
Sun Oct 19th Snowhope Moor Farm, Weardale - Doug McCutcheon
Sun Oct 26th Urban Foray, Sunderland - Keith Thomas
Sat Nov 1st Cockfield nr Bishop Auckland - Rachel Richards
Sun Nov 2nd North York Moors NP area, tba - Rhona Sutherland
Sat Nov 8th Holystone, nr Rothbury - Gabi Recknagel
Sun Nov 9th Holy Island - Mike Cruse
Sun Nov 16th Pegswood nr Morpeth - Mike Cruse

Sat April 12th Waters Meet, Acomb, nr Hexham - Leader - Mike Cruse

Park at the pull ins marked in red on the A6079 in Acomb, ½ mile up from the junction with the A69 just west of Hexham. Site of Morels and Anemone Cup etc.

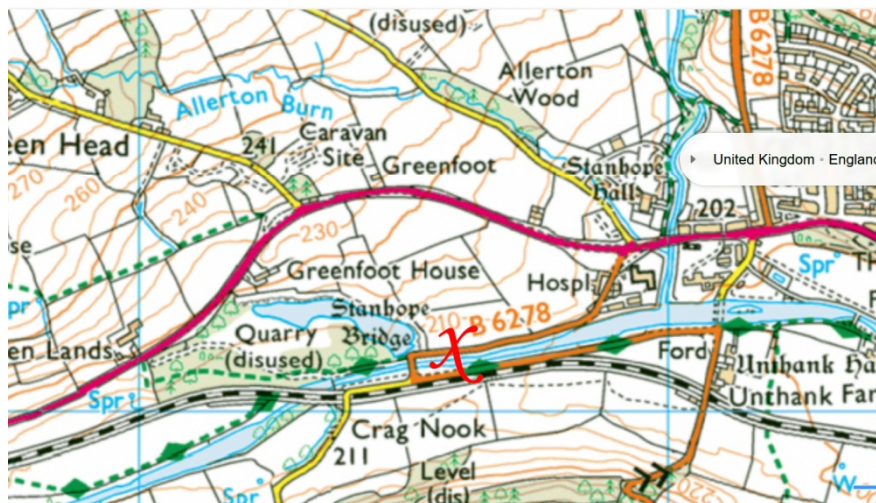
GR: NY 927 662 Postcode: NE 46 4QN WTW: drooling.nicely.unfounded

Tel: 07748276183



Sat April 26th - Lichen/Fungi meet, Stanhope Bridge, Weardale - Leader - Jo Scott

A walk looking at lichens along the riverside at Stanhope Bridge. There is limited parking in the layby at NY986391 on the B6278. If members could car share or fill up cars in Stanhope it might help with the parking.



SAD NEWS OF THE DEATH OF MICHAEL JORDAN

Many of us got to know Michael Jordan through his excellent TV series on Channel Four, 'Mushroom Magic' and his book 'The Encyclopedia of Fungi of Britain and Europe'. In 1996 he was the founder and chairman of the 'Association of British Fungus Groups' (ABFG) - since renamed the 'Fungus Conservation Trust' (FCT). The records of FCT members are collated on its CATE2 database which the NEFSG gratefully utilise for our own group records.

The NEFSG was founded in 1997 and submitted 500 records that 1st year and have continued to record ever since. Our total number of records in the database is 29,000+ out of the current figure of 1,680,690 - a tremendous feat! The database will continue to take records and be a lasting legacy to MJ, (as he is fondly referred to by many of our members) and who will be sadly missed.

From a personal perspective, MJ has promptly answered any query I have had, and for the past 8 years has speedily provided me with spreadsheets from our submitted foray data - a personal service he didn't need to provide but for which I was exceedingly grateful. The database is a great source of information and very easy to use.

When 3 of us went down to Weymouth in July 2019 I looked on the database and found records for that month in the area. One location stood out for its collection of records, Charmouth Forest, coincidentally records from MJ himself. Similarly our forays in the Lake District and Caledonian Pinewoods were determined by extensive scrutiny of the CATE2 database.

After submitting the records of the NEFSG Caledonian Pinewoods visit to *Loch an Eilein*, in 2022, MJ replied,

"This is cruel! You have been foraying all my favourite places. Our dog is also sulking, because she always looks forward to a swim with the ducks."

If you have any reminiscences of Michael, the FCT are requesting written memorials to include in their March newsletter. Please send them to me and I will send them on behalf of the NEFSG .

Mike Cruse.

Fungi Snippets

Introductory Notes.

I can remember items as far back as 1933. I was born at Black Park Lodge SE751907 1.5 miles north of Cropton and 1.5 miles south of Hartoft End where Sir Tom Moore was born. NEFSG has held fungus forays nearby. If I walked to Cropton, including the 0.5 mile 1 in 8 hill, the children had left the village to play Fox Off so I had to return home. My grandfather's Collie dog, Jock, accompanied me on the walks in the countryside around Black Park. I passed the 11 plus exam and attended Lady Lumley's Grammar School starting in 1944 obtaining 9 School certificates by 1948. I was brought up in farming and I wanted to qualify as a farm manager studying at Askham Bryan. After 2 years practical on a farm owned by a farmer with a degree in Agriculture I was called up into the army for two years starting with 8 weeks in REME at Honiton, Devon. It took me 24 hours by train to get to Honiton. I was at Honiton for 8 weeks rather than 6 weeks due to Christmas and the New Year. I was issued with a transport pass to go home to Cropton for Christmas and the New Year. I did not want to return to Honiton but I knew the consequences if I did not return. I then was posted to Gosport, Hampshire for 8 weeks. I wanted to be a mechanic but I was trained to type write and recognise machinery and guns parts. I was top of the final exam but I could not get near

the notice board through the crowd of 90 lads I heard them say it is the lad with the red face that became top. I was put in the office whilst the rest of the lads painted anything that did not move. I had never used a telephone in a kiosk. I learned the hard way. I was then posted to 5 AA Group Workshops, Newark. There were 6 technical clerks plus officer's wives in the main office. I was the only army clerk that did work. I went round the workshops to every section to find out the progress of the repairs etc. A very interesting job. I could get my watch repaired at the instrument section. The Old Contemptible mentioned later had a stepson who was a farm manager and I visited him. He said do not take up this career as it will soon be lost as all farms will be managed by the farmer and his sons. 6 days before I was due to be demobbed I tried to open the half ton door of the receipts and issue section managed by the Old Contemptible who fought in World War 1. He had loosened the bolts of the top runners so the door was difficult to open. The door when it was being opened went between two brick walls. A second heave opened the door and my left arm elbow hit the brick wall bending my arm. I was rushed to Newark hospital but had to wait a long time before a plaster cast was fitted. I was told that if my arm became black at the elbow I had to go back. My elbow became black and the sister straightened my fingers which was very painful. I never went back. The army wanted me to stay a further month. I did not. The civvies (civilians) were always helpful to military lads. Every day from Monday to Friday soldiers were transported in troop carriers to the workshops close to the Nottingham to Lincoln road. On my demob day the army lads loaded my kit onto my back and took me to the railway station in a troop carrier. After that the civvies helped me so eventually I arrive at home. I paid the half-crown bus fare to Scarborough to get the plaster removed rather than get a pass from the army near Pickering Castle. My next job was to get a ration book at Pickering. I went to the Labour Office to see if they had a one-handed job. They suggested the clerk's job at Cropton Forest which had been vacant for years. I took up the job and commenced my forestry career.

The next article will show how I started mycology

Gordon Simpson



1937 - Great uncle Arthur



1937 - Singer Dicky Car with Jock the dog

Byssocorticium efibulatum

Byssocorticium efibulatum is one of a small genus of fungi of cobweb like appearance called byssoid which means of cottony thread like appearance consisting of simply a pile of Hyphae. That is my simple interpretation of much more complex scientific jargon for which I hope that I will not be chastised.

This turned up in December in Normans Riding Wood on a windblown birch tree which had the rootstock still attached and had been lying there in seasonally moist soil for about 2 years. Having noticed seeing this or similar looking species before and always deciding to walk away I thought it was time to try and fathom it out. The first port of call was FOTE Volume 2 where I eventually tried fragile corticioids Page 986. Looking round the wheel Byssocorticium looked the best bet with 5 species and so to page 990 and 1 species is illustrated another mentioned but with no clamps and smaller spores both could be ruled out, however it also mentions the occurrence of other species. Amaurodon is ruled out on account of several factors leaving 3 species for which I had to resort to Fungi Europaei Corticiaceae s.l.

The key here led straight to Byssocorticium efibulatum with distribution from UK, Sweden and Switzerland. Hooray!

There are 22 records on Cate2 with the nearest English record in Leicestershire and 2 in Wales so this is a big Northerly shift.

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I am sure I have seen it before on our forays so keep an eye open for small patches of white hyphae about 1cm wide coalescing to 3-4 cm. and becoming blue/grey or greener with age. The white margin is a good character but based on only one fallen tree although it had and still has dozens of small patches I cannot say that this is always the case.

Doug. McCutcheon

North East Fungus Study Group
Minutes of Committee Meeting - Saturday 30th November 2024, Newsham

1. Apologies: Joyce Scott, John Robinson.
Present: Alan Simkins, Mike Cruse, Ron Pattinson, Cath Gillie, Jill Cunningham.
2. Minutes of meeting 15/05/2024 + AGM 17/02/2024.
3. Matters Arising; -
Insurance – NEFSG insurance does not cover for 3rd party injury.
Action – Ron to ask John to add it to the Health and Safety section on the website and to do a Newsletter article so members are clearly informed.
Ownership of resources – Ron has finalised on the website.
Photo size on emails – Mike has resolved.
Purchasing of M. Sheldrake film – not done as it's been on TV + is on iPlayer.
Risk Assessment – oral +/- written discussed. Action – Print/hand out at each meet; individual leader to keep a copy for 3months. Ron – to do Newsletter article and to look at the 'Leader Information' regarding addition of this note + Leader duties clarification.
4. Visit of Germans in sept. 2025
Dates booked Sat 20th-25th Sept booked. Action – Cath to do Newsletter article + to send article to German group in order to gain booking numbers by March; to then open it to NEFSG members aiming at deposits by the end of March; before opening it to Scottish groups according to room availability. All deposits to be in by the start of June.
Hotel menu – Cath to discuss with the hotel when numbers known.
5. Fungi DNA analysis + procedure – review of 1yr use.
Discussed - Sally had secured a BMS grant of £350 for the Cortinarius Workshop; the 10 x £22 sets of DNA tests were paid for; a further 3 + 1 tests would be paid out of the funds.
Action – Ron to contact K. Thomas re additional test payments. Ron to ask Sally + Lesley to write a report for the Newsletter.
Of the 13 tests G. Kibby could only identify 4/5 Cortinarius species. DNA was not conclusive on others. Mike to forward Keiths emails to Ron. Action – Ron to ask Keith how to send better samples.
To continue next year, agreed. Ron to approve individual DNA testing.
6. Membership + Finance.
131 members, membership flourishing aided by Facebook + Events.
Approx. £2500 in account. Subs to remain at same level.
Discussed – to sub. Germans for minibus or Castle entry? Action – to address at a later date.
7. AGM at Rainton Meadows, 15th Feb 2025.
Cath to investigate doing a quiz.
Jill to do a short talk on Plant Galls.
A more social + interesting AGM – discussed, e.g. food, different locations needed? Action – Alan to address the issue at the AGM.
More committee members, discussed. Action – Alanto email Mike before the AGM re inviting more members to join the committee.
8. Draft Foray Programme for 2025.
Suggestion of splitting the group into 2, a north and a south group, discussed.
The need for more members to suggest possible foray sites, discussed. Action – Alan to contact Rhona + Rachel.
Mike to print it for the AGM.
NEFSG 'Jolly' Social discussed. Tables small at pubs? Village Hall hire? Near a wood, for a mini-foray/walk? Or members 'bring a buffet'? Somewhere central? Action – Alan to contact Val re Durham area July 19th? social.
Cath looking into village halls.
9. A.O.B.
Sally organised many NEFSG events + attended BMS meetings – Alan to express NEFSG thanks.

Modernisation of group site locations. Action – to include ‘What3Words’ + Postcode in future foray meet emails.

Beginners Foray had good feedback. Suggestions such as having guides allotted to new members at the start of meets.

Possible urban sites discussed, e.g. Sunderland, for accessibility by public transport.

10. Next committee meeting – Alan to contact Jo as to which Sat. date.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting - Saturday 15th February 2025, Rainton Meadows.

Attended by 22 members.

1. Presentation - 'Plant Galls of the NE' by Jill Cunningham.

2. Apologies; Paul Forster, Lesley Hodgson, Peter Holmes, Christine Meek, Henry Morritt, John Robinson.

3. Matters arising from 2024 AGM Minutes. Risk Assessment - discussion on length of criteria/making it more user friendly for foray leaders. To leave it as it is and to review if needed in committee meetings. Ron had looked into the Bank Account name change - 'Eastern' to 'East' is too complicated to change.

4. Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes - Proposed John Sutherland. Seconded Catherine Gillie.

5. Report of the Chair - Alan, in his 15th year as Chair, thanked Sally for all her input on the successful Earth Stare and Cortinarius workshops, BMS meeting attendance, time on Facebook page and information provider. He thanked Gabby and Cath for their organisation of the 2025 Scotland/German meet, and Paul Forster for producing the NEFSG Calendar. Several forays and events involved the public or other naturalist groups and were well attended - Jesmond Dene; UK Fungus Day near Morpeth; Ryton + Durham Wildlife; Durham High Wood + Durham University; Cropton Forest + Cleveland Naturalists. An approach to continue. Alan expected Keith's/NEFSG fungal DNA exploration will continue and gave thanks to all who give their time and effort to ensuring the continued success of the NEFSG.

6. Report of the Treasurer. Ron Pattinson - Membership 133, Funds £2451. Doing well. Thanks were given to the Borders Group for donating resources. New bank account monthly charges discussed - Ron will monitor the costs over the year and review at committee meetings.

7. Chairmanship - Alan in his 15th year is happy to relinquish his post as Chair. Catherine Gillie has volunteered to take over the Chair. Agreed by all. Everyone thanked Alan for aiding the success of the group over his many years as Chair and Cath presented Alan with gifts, (and chocolate cake for all).

8. Election of Officers - Catherine Gillie as new Chair, Ron Pattison as Treasurer, Jill Cunningham as Secretary. All agreed. Proposed Gordon Beakes. Seconded Doug McCutcheon. New Committee members - Rachel Richards, Sally Patterson. Proposed Cath Gillie. Seconded Ron Pattinson.

9. Proposed Foray Programme for 2025 - Mike mapped 2025 Foray sites showing even North/South spread + commented on 2024 Foray attendance. Summer Social - (Val and?) Cath looking into Lanchester village hall and a trial of 'bring your own food/drink', + talk, (Andrew Thurm), displays, foray - to trial something more interactive + social than the usual sit-down pub meal. Mike gave information on individual forays and Keith explained the urban foray + public involvement in the Sunderland Foray. Noted that some minor changes to the foray programme will happen. Several issues with forays were brought up - too many, too few, extra pop-ups, to have more in the early months of the year, as well as suggesting the need for foray leaders to obtain landowners permission relating to our insurance and Kew records. Beginners may benefit with being paired up with knowledgeable members. Durham/University visits could be on a 2 year basis for new students. All to discuss at future committee meetings.

10. A discussion about whether the NEFSG covers too large an area to provide balanced and variable foray programmes each year. Points, discussion+ some pros and cons included: -large area, 4 VCs = long travel, too far = weekends without available meets for some members; try 2 per weekend; or add Pop-ups; proposal for 2 foray focus groups - what would be the boundaries for each group?

Actions: -To continue with the 2025 Foray Programme as it is. Plus, possible additional Pop-ups in earlier months. Ron to do a breakdown of members addresses to enable more local forays.

The committee to consider the implications and opportunities looking at trialling proposals to develop north + south programmes for 2026. The committee to consider the merit of doing a questionnaire to all members. To ask foray attendees where they would like forays.

11. A.O.B.

AGMs to continue at Rainton Meadows? Agreed as close to A1, central, cost-free, presentation provisions, café + walks.

A fungus photographic competition in 2025 was agreed and the committee will decide the arrangements - noted that Paul Forster had offered his involvement in judging entries. Also the suggestion to consider an “art” competition.

Gordon Beakes offered to display his pop-up fungi cards to an event, e.g. Summer Social.

12. Lunch was followed by fun quizzes - ‘Sensory Fungi’ aromas + images devised by Cath, and a ‘Find Your Fungus Personality’ multiple choice by Sally. Alan displayed his collection of fungal stamps of the world and brought the NEFSG library of books for loan. And finally a walk outside.

Date of next Committee Meeting - TBA

Date of 2026 AGM - TBA

Lichen Lookout

A few *Xanthoria* sp. to look out for. Two of which have been renamed to *Polycauliona*. Common on walls, wood, trees and metal. Often bright yellow but can be greyish green in shade.



Xanthoria parietina
Bright yellow big lobes



Polycauliona polycarpa
small lobes often on twigs



Polycauliona candelaria
Often on rocks, fence posts and gravestone

