

# NEWS SHEET N° 2

## OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE FUNGUS SURVEY GROUP, AUGUST 2000

Since News Sheet N°. 1 another successful year of recording has been completed at a variety of sites. The Group's programme has included 10 forays plus an indoor meeting on 15th March which served the dual purpose of the AGM followed by a day workshop of microscopes and books.

Amongst the interestingly wide range of species recorded in the past year, a small but significant number appear from available records to be new to the County. Undoubtedly, some 'new' species are being recorded as a direct result of deliberate searching and the developed expertise of members. The availability of helpful books such as Courtecuisse, the Fungi of Switzerland series, and the Ellis & Ellis identification handbooks taken together with an increasing use of microscopes is discovering records of species not previously known in Herefordshire. Occasionally what might be regarded as almost run-of-the-mill species not particularly rare are recorded where no previous record can be traced, - *Paxillus atrotomentosus* and *Ciboria batschiana* are cases in point - and contribute to the process of 'filling-in-the gaps' leading to a more complete log of the County's mycota.

The occurrence of new records is due to several factors, partly to the genuine rarity of some species, but mainly perhaps to the under-recording of some taxonomic groups, in particular those requiring a microscope for identification. Additionally, by holding forays from April to November we undoubtedly capture species which would escape if foraying was restricted to the conventional autumnal burgeoning. The spread of interest amongst members across the taxonomic groups further enhances this trend and the Group cannot be regarded as having 'taxonomic tunnel vision'. The following are some of the highlights of records from forays; species not previously recorded in Herefordshire are indicated in bold type.

### Haugh Wood 18/8/99.

The Powdery Mildew *Microsphaera baeumleri* on Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica* is described in the literature as occurring only occasionally. It is not in the checklists of Shropshire, Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Suffolk, or the Fungi of South East England. *Thelephora penicillata* (= *T. spiculosa*) has been recorded only once before in 1997 at Bamett Wood, near Wigmore, and there is only a single previous record of *Lepiota oreadiformis*, in 1982 at Croft Ambrey. About 63 species recorded.

### Lugg Meadows & Banyton Wood 15/9/99.

The Lugg Meadows was a disappointing site. Although SSSI grassland with assumed potential for waxcaps and other grassland species, the area had remained ungrazed and the resulting long grass obscured nearly all chance of finding fungi, the day only being saved from complete ignominy by a small collection from nearby Baynton Wood. 41 species recorded.

### Great Doward 6/10/99.

This compensated for the disappointing previous foray, with a large turn-out and an impressive list which included *Hydnellum concrescens*, *Irpex lacteus*, and a *Poculum*-like ascomycete on rotting acorns *Ciboria batschiana*, not uncommon, but new to the County. *Leccinum brunneogriseolum* also new because it is a relatively new name to the literature, being one of several new *Leccinum* species now recognised in Britain. Quite a successful event at an interesting and productive site, about 135 species recorded. *Boletus satanas* had been recorded there about a month earlier, and the recurrence of *Creolophus cirrhatus* first found in 1998 a short distance away was confirmed in 1999.

### Display for Woolhope Club Anniversary Event, 8 to 10/10/99.

The Group had been asked to participate in a Woolhope Club event and it was opportune that many of the fungi collected on the above Great Doward foray were available for display later in the week at the Hereford City Library. This was part of the celebration of the Woolhope Club's 125th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Woolhope Room for the Club's exclusive use. The display of a wide variety of fungi drew the public's interest and was supplemented by exhibits loaned by members including a cartoon caricature of Woolhope Club members of 1876 together with

explanatory material and posters of poisonous and edible fungi. The Woolhope Club reported that it was our display which attracted people into the room and there was much surprise among the public at the wide range of forms and colours and the fact that all these could be gathered in Herefordshire! The Group scored a marked success here, and considerable thanks are due to those who collected fungi, loaned material, helped to put it together and manned the display on the open days.

### **Crow Wood 13/10/99**

A bracket of *Inonotus cuticularis* growing inside a fallen tree-trunk was particularly interesting as it is not common and has only been recorded in Herefordshire three times before, last in 1902, with two prior Woolhope Club records in the 1880s. The cap tomentum contains dark brown setae described in the literature as anchor-like hooks, which identify it without question. It was growing on an old Field Maple which without warning or any signs of decay suddenly crashed down last year — now we know why.

Also recorded was *Hemipholiota albocrenulata*, and *Chaetosphaeria myriocarpa*, the latter like minute black pimples on fallen dead wood, which has only been recorded once before at Moccas Park in 1964, but is not uncommon. About 60 species identified.

A small party in the afternoon went 'out-of-County' looking for grassland fungi at **Begwns Common**, a site north of Hay-on-Wye (Radnorshire, SO 18 44), where the rare *Clavaria zollingeri* had been found in previous years. It was not found on this occasion but a number of waxcaps and grassland fungi were recorded.

### **Mary Knoll Valley & Haye Park Wood 10/11/99**

A total of about 107 species identified, amongst which were *Helvetia elastica* and *Aleuria aurantia* in addition to the typically autumnal *Panellus serotinus*. A sprinkling of 'new' species turned up, namely *Clitocybe graminicola*, *Fusidium aeruginosum*; *Melanoleuca stridula*, *Pseudovalsa lanciformis*; *Trichia munda*; and a *Zignoella* species.

### **Wigmore Rolls 19/4/00**

About 40 species recorded, amongst which *Pluteus plautus* is the first Herefordshire record; it is not necessarily rare, it has just not come up before. *Gloeophyllum sepiarium* also collected here is only the second record, having previously been found in Downton Gorge in 1993, which perhaps indicates it is not often noted. One wonders if *Verpa conica*, recorded on this occasion, is on the increase; Dr. Dennis describes it as uncommon and Fungi of Switzerland as rare, but there are five previous records of it in recent years, one in 1997, four in 1999. *Crucibulum laeve* had been found here before in more or less the same place but it was pleasing to find it again apparently thriving.

### **Queens Wood Dymock 17/5/00.**

About 43 species recorded, the star find of the day was a small brown cup fungus *Plectania melastoma*, notable for the outside of the cup being "dusted with red-lead-coloured granules". There are about half a dozen previous Herefordshire records, the last in Haugh Wood in 1996, but it is absent from the Shropshire and Yorkshire checklists. It is listed in the Provisional Red Data List (Ing. Mycologist 6-3) as 'rare'.

### **Haugh Wood 14/6/00**

We returned to this site due to the scheduled venue at Humber Marsh being suddenly closed by the owners due to building works. A total of about 58 species, which included *Pluteus leoninis* of which there are only two other records on Herefordshire database, and which is another Provisional Red Data List species listed as 'rare'. Also found was the strikingly beautiful white woolly cup-fungus *Leucoscypha erminea* about 0.5mm diam. which is another 'new' but not thought to be rare. Seven species of Myxomycetes were found amongst which was *Collaria arcyriomena* which shone like burnished bronze when first matured.

### **Garnons Hill Wood 15/7/00**

A total of about 60 species identified. Species of particular interest were *Amanita ceciliae*, *Pluteus thomsonii*, and *Didymium minus* on a dead leaf.

## Holm Lacy deer park 16/8/00

This site has a special significance in the annals of mycological history being the venue where the very first (ever) organised fungus foray took place, the archetypal foray site. That occasion was the now renowned "foray amongst the funguses" arranged by the Woolhope Club of Hereford in October 1868, which in due course led to the formation of the BMS. A number of species recorded by the Woolhopeans in 1868 were found again, particularly a number of *Ganoderma* and *Fistulina hepatica* on the very ancient oaks.

In addition *Ampelomyces quisqualis*, *Boletus rubinus*, *Diaporthe pustulata*, *Flagelloscypha minutissima*, and *Cribraria persoonii* are new County records. But the star find was a quite elegant *Volvariella bombycina*. Taken together with the adjacent Green Drive wood, about 60 species were recorded.

---

Independently of Group forays, several rare or interesting 'first record' finds have been reported during the year from around the County.

*Paxillus atrotomeosus* by Cherry Greenway on 11/8/99 at Great Doward.

*Limacella vinosrubescens* by Jo Weightman and Joyce Pitt at Bamett Wood 15/8/99, determined by Peter Roberts at Kew.

*Geastrum berkeleyi* (nine fruitbodies) reported again from Durlow Common by Ray Bray, both in August 1999 and August 2000. Ray has further added to the new County records list with fern rusts *Milesina blechni*, and *M. whitei*.

*Taphrina amentorum* on alder catkins at Brockhampton, reported by Jo Weightman 19/8/99.

*Perenniporia fraxinea* on a moribund ash tree, at Hole-in-the-Wall, 9/9/99, noted by me, the only previous records are pre-1908 at Moccas & Leominster.

*Lepista luscina*, at Fishpool Valley, Croft, by Jo Weightman 9/9/99; the only previous record was in 1902, vaguely given as "Hereford area".

*Geoglossum fallax* at Pipe Aston churchyard by Jo Weightman 16/11/99. The only previous record was by the Herefordshire discomycete specialist and one-time BMS President, Douglas Graddon at Holme Lacy, but without a date.

*Microglossum viride* at Storridge by Cherry Greenway 28/11/99, not recorded for about 75 years.

*Nectria decora* during a foray of the Herefordshire Botanical Society at Fishpool Valley, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. This was sent to Kew and Dr. Spooner reports it is only the second record in Britain and not yet in the literature. It is a parasite of *Massaria inquinans* which itself is found on Sycamore bark. The same site produced a fungus on a Carabid beetle, a species of *Hymenostilbe*, also determined by Dr. Spooner. Finds which have not appeared in the Herefordshire list before included a rather thin white Agaric found by Stephanie Thomson which was *Amanita vaginata var. alba*, in addition to *Typhula sclerotioides*; *Thyridaria rubronotata* and *Acanthonitschkia tristis*, the last two being more microscopic Ascomycetes which grow in the bark of Sycamore. *Cortinarius bolaris* is a new record this year having been found in the valley earlier in August by Jo Weightman, and *Pseudocraterellus sinuosus* occurred here again, this being on the Provisional Red Data list as 'vulnerable'.

*Geopora sumneriana*, characteristically growing under cedar, by Ray Bray and Jo Weightman on 27/3/00, recurring in How Caple churchyard where it has been recorded now for several years, the only site for it known in Herefordshire.

*Cordyceps gracilis* on moth pupa was reported on Hergest Ridge 2/6/00 found by Peter Gay.

A Powdery Mildew on Ivy-leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) was noticed by me both at Orleton and Eardisland, in July 2000. The host is a common enough plant but is not mentioned in the literature as host of Erysiphales in Britain. Specimens were sent to Kew where Dr. Spooner confirmed it as *Erysiphe orontii* saying that Braun, the authority on Erysiphales, did not know of a British record of this fungus on *Cymbalaria* and there was no previous record or material at Kew.

*Boletus fechtneri* was collected by me at the Weir Garden growing under beech on 31/8/00, stated to be rare, and a first record for the County; also at the same site *Coprotus ochraceus* on rabbit pellets.

Group members Shelley and Mike Stroud found a bracket growing on old oak beams which had been removed from an old demolished mill near their home in Wales. After several people had looked quizzically at specimens Peter Roberts at Kew identified it as *Donkioporia expansa*, a bracket which only seems to grow on structural timber in Britain, and is therefore seldom recorded.

+++++

The Herefordshire database continues to grow and at the time of writing contains approximately 29,250 records. Progress towards the compilation of a Checklist although continuing has been slowed by the inputting of lichen records where difficulties over synonymy are consuming a disproportionate amount of time.

+++++ + +

Moves are afoot to set up a Herefordshire Biological Records Centre. The Herefordshire Biodiversity Forum, which has been the motivating force in setting up Action Plans for the protection of biodiversity within the County, and in which to a small degree I have been involved (mycologically), includes as part of its objectives a development plan for a local records centre. This is relevant to the Herefordshire fungus database which I hope in due time may be copied to the records centre.

While it has hardly progressed beyond the proposal stage so far, a trail-blazing workshop was held in April which I attended, in effect a brain-storming session to ferret-out all the relevant factors, details, opinions, facts, etc., which need to be considered in planning for its creation. Following that, some further progress has since been made by the appointment of a consultant to put together a feasibility study and development plan. The proposed centre would act as a repository for biological and earth science (geological) data, as the information resource for the Biodiversity Action Plan process and (if sufficient money becomes available) may also extend to accepting herbarium material. As no facilities exist at present in Herefordshire for mycological material to be lodged and curated (and in default some has been placed in Ludlow Museum, although rarities usually go to Kew), this is something to be very much welcomed. The location of the proposed LRC is expected to be the Land and Environment Centre at Holrne Lacy College. The development plan is due to be completed by March 2001.

+++++

*Poronia punctata* known as the Nail Fungus from its similarity to little nails, is one of the rarities which at least until recently, only seemed to occur in the New Forest. A report in The Times of 25th November last year ran as follows:

*One of Europe's rarest fungi, which grows on horse and pony dung, has been found in two areas of the Purbecks in Dorset. The fungus was discovered by Dr. Jonathan Cox of English nature.*

It should be noted that the Woolhope Club recorded it in Herefordshire over a hundred years ago at Brockhampton and Lyonshall "on horse dung and decaying corduroy breeches", so with all these 'firsts coming in, it might decide to recur, so keep your eyes open! ("Breeches" are not the normal substrate!) - (pictures in Phillips p280, Michael Jordan's Encyclopedia p77. and Keizer's Encyclopaedia p84.)

+++++

Two toadstools were found last year on sand dunes in North West Wales which are new to Britain. *Asaricus koelerionensis* is uncommon throughout northern Europe but can be identified by its lilac tinted cap and a dullish pink stem and is associated with grassy or sandy areas. It was found by Helen Hughes of the Countryside Council for Wales and Maurice Rotheroe, BMS Conservation Officer. It is not considered edible. The other was *Russula torulosa* with a shiny purple cap and short stipe with bluish tints, and can be distinguished by a strong smell of fresh apples. In Europe it is mainly found under pines on sandy soil or on limestone. It was discovered by Geoff Kibby, *Field Mycologist* editor.

Dr Peter Rhind, CCW coastal ecologist, said "It is amazing that we found these two new species so close to each other. These discoveries suggest that we do indeed need to carry out further survey work across Wales and we may find that Wales has many more rarities waiting to be found. We will be keeping the site secret at the moment so that these rarities can be studied in more detail and allowed to flourish".

+++++

In a recent article in Metro magazine, the world's largest living organism was reported, the fungus *Armillaria ostoyae*, covering an area of 1665 football fields! However, this was not the fruit body but its invisible mycelium. It was estimated to have started its life 2000 years ago from a microscopic spore, and since then has been spreading underground by its rhizomorphs, killing trees in its path. Research showed that it stretched 3½ miles across and covered an area of 2200 acres.

It was discovered when scientists investigated reports that a large number of trees had died from root rot in the ancient Malheur Forest in Oregon, USA. From aerial photographs, areas where trees had died were pinpointed from which root samples were taken. By carrying out DNA tests and comparing cultures of fungus grown from 112 root samples it was found that more than half the trees had been killed by the same organism.

The largest previous *Armillaria ostoyae* clone was discovered eight years ago in Washington state and covered 1500 acres. They do things big in America.

Ted Blackwell. 31/8/2000.