Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group

News Sheet Nº 7: Spring 2004

Lepiota konradii (Mains Wood – 3/12/03)

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President & Recorder:	Ted Blackwell
Chair & Secretary:	Sheila Spence
Treasurer:	Ray Bray

Welcome to the Spring 2004 News Sheet

It is amazing to think that the HFSG has now formally been in existence for five years.

It seems no time at all since that first, tentative foray (actually, six months before the inauguration), where we got together to see if there would be enough interest to form a group. I well remember that occasion when, as a complete and utter novice (with, if it is possible, even less of a clue than I have now!) and with some considerable trepidation, we first met with those terrifying experts who actually knew what they were talking about.

Thanks to the dedication and patience of those experts (especially, of course to our guru Ted), I believe that we have come a long way as a Group since then: even the most ignorant of us can now occasionally identify something! We are also becoming aware of each other's 'special interests' and, although long ago the Group rejected the idea of individuals specialising in any structured manner, it is, in any case, now beginning to happen to a certain extent de facto.

Possibly, though, as HFSG becomes more confident and mature, there is an argument for looking more deeply at what we do and how we do it. One example of this is the way that data is collected and recorded: the problem is not unique to us, but seems to be universal in the mycology world.

The likelihood of recording a species in a particular place seems to be, almost always, a matter of pure chance. Most forays, including our own, involve the forayers ambling around at random, usually independently, or in pairs. It is certainly most pleasurable to work in this way and a relatively large area is usually covered by doing so. It is also difficult to be certain of how it could be done better – especially, given the independent nature of mycologists!

However, it does mean that for any given site, not only are many 'finds' (possibly, a majority) missed, but, as individual forayers criss-cross that site, some species may be recorded several times under different finders – altogether, giving a rather misleading record.

In this piece I am not going to come up with any wonderful solutions to problems, but I believe that the time has come where it might be useful to start thinking about issues such as these.

In the mean time, once again, I should like to thank the many contributors to this News Sheet for the hard work they have done and hope that you will enjoy your reading!

Mike Stroud

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

What an odd sort of a year it has been! Spring and early Summer were fairly normal, but then we hit the dry spell and it went on… and on…and on…
- seemingly endless weeks of no rain, or certainly not enough to make a difference to the fungi.

However, not to be daunted, HFSG struggled on and turned up an amazing number of records for the arid conditions. Then, eventually, it rained properly and towards the end of October and throughout November things improved and got quite exciting….and writing this in mid-February, they still are!

Certainly, throughout December and January there was an amazing quantity of fungi still appearing - not just in Herefordshire, but also in the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire. This was brought to my attention on receiving the records from a New Year foray at Westonbirt Arboretum, when a small party of CFG members saw the 2004 season in by finding 120 species during the day - only 101 species were recorded at the BMS foray the previous October; but with so many more people looking.

Many thanks must go to all those of you who have produced articles, etc. to make our News Sheets so interesting. Also, huge amounts of thanks are due to Ted Blackwell, our President and Recorder, for all the work he does, not just in recording, but also producing an interesting and informative piece for the News Sheet each time.

We also benefited from his expertise recently when 9 members joined a microscopy workshop at Woolhope. I, for one, gained not just knowledge, but also confidence that day and I am sure that applies to the others as well. So thanks Ted, from all of us!!

News of things to come:

- HFSG have been asked to take a stand at two events run by the National Trust this year - their Wildlife Activity Days. The first will be held at Croft Castle on 12th - 13th June, followed by a similar event at Brockhampton on 10th -11th July.

- We can also look forward to a great weekend of mycology in the Forest of Dean during the weekend of 9th - 10th October, as Jack Marriott is putting together an exciting couple of days of forays and exhibitions. I hope the HFSG will show lots of support.

- Other events to look out for and support are the BMS Roadshow, which will be at the Spring Garden Show in Malvern during May, and again at the Autumn Garden Show in September. Full details can be obtained from me, if you have not already got them.

- Last but not least, don't forget to support the BMS day foray at Westonbirt Arboretum on 3rd October. It is a great day out, with a wonderful display of finds at the end of the afternoon.

Sheila Spence

RECORDER'S REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2003 – FEBRUARY 2004

The exceptional pattern of an early dry period followed by almost frost-free weather this autumn resulted in the highest number of species being found at the December foray, after a relatively poor showing in October and November.

GREAT DOWARD RESERVES (SO 54/55 15/16) 3rd SEPTEMBER:
This Carboniferous Limestone site is very free draining and combined with the dryness of the season left the ground conditions very arid, resulting in few Agarics or Russulales. Some compensation was afforded by Aphyllophores, and such as rusts, Powdery Mildews, and conidial fungi.

Panus conchatus (= torulosus) – Great Doward (3/9/03)

Amongst some of the interesting fungi found were: the deeply trumpet-shaped *Panus conchatus* (= *torulosus*) both in Lords Wood area and at Leeping Stocks; *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, parasitic on conifers, and in times past employed as the source of a yellow dye; *Polyporus varius* var. *nummularius* which is not common; *Russula violeipes*, said, when fresh, to smell of shrimps; *Rhodotus palmatus*, once prolific on dead elms following Dutch Elm disease, but now much less common. *Litschaueria corticiorum* which parasitises Corticioid fungi, is a perithecial fungus with spikes (setae) on its surface and with dark ascospores. A total of about 60 species identified.

HOLLYWELL DINGLE (SO3151), 10th September:
Leucopaxillus paradoxus (confirmed by Geoff Kibby), recorded only once before by the Woolhope Club circa 1880s. It more usually occurs in southern coastal counties and has a characteristic smell reminiscent of citrus or Hyacinth. Other infrequently occurring fungi were the anise-scented *Lentinellus cochleatus*, and *Uloporus lividus*, the latter always in association with alders.

Leucopaxillus paradoxus – Hollywell Dingle (10/9/03 photograph by Cherry Greenway)

Lentinellus cochleatus – Hollywell Dingle (10/9/03)

Ascomycetes included the diminutive cup fungus *Humaria hemisphaerica*, and the "Black Mildew" *Appendicullela calostroma*, parasitic on bramble stems and thought to be rare but here found for the third time this year. About 79 species identified.

BROCKHAMPTON ESTATE (SO6854), 20th September:
Dry ground conditions were offset by numerous species on wood, such as the Agaric *Oudemansiella mucida*, the Porcelaim Fungus (notable for its unusually large globose spores) and various Aphyllophores. Numbers of Boletes and Russulales, however, were restricted to only one and two respectively.

A first Herefordshire record occurred as *Guepiniopsis buccina*, which is a diminutive cup-shaped jelly fungus, probably overlooked in the past. *Helminthosporium velutinum* is a Hyphomycete with impressively large multiseptate conidia and has been recorded in Herefordshire only once before, in 1951 on hops near Hereford. About 84 species identified.

*Oudemansiella mucida – Brockhampton (20/9/03**)***

DINMORE HILL ARBORETUM (SO5051), 11th OCTOBER:
Ground conditions were described as arid, so there were some surprising finds, such as *Bulbilomyces farinosus* (in its *Aegerita* anamorph state), normally a species of damp, periodically flooded places. Despite the drought a couple of *Lactarius* and several Agarics were found including *Volvariella speciosa* (=*gloiocephala*). Also present were *Merulius tremellosus*, and such as the less-frequently recorded *Hapalopilus nidulans*. Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*, normally frequent at this time, was recorded here for only the second time in Herefordshire this season. About 47 species identified - including lichens.

CREDENHILL PARK WOOD (SO4544), 22nd October:
The continuing drought restricted the number of Agarics recorded, even allowing for the abundant Honey Fungus; Boletes and Russulales were completely absent. The first Herefordshire record of the winter fungus *Asteromassaria macrospora* was recorded from beech branches. Although not rare, its winter occurrence probably accounts for it having escaped previous notice. About 60 species identified - including lichens.

DAVIES MEADOW (SO3748) 5th November:
Surprisingly for a meadow habitat, grassland fungi were few and no waxcaps were found. Also, amongst the macrofungi there was a conspicuous absence of mycorrhizal species such as *Amanita, Boletus, Russula*, and *Lactarius* - perhaps the continuing effects of drought. But among the Agaric saprobes the inconspicuous *Resupinatus applicatus* on wood, and *Marasmius hudsonii,* on dead Holly leaves, were found. Presaging the end of season and the dwindling of 'things on living leaves', there were no rusts and only a single Powdery Mildew, *Phyllactinia guttata*. Fourteen lichens were recorded, which compensated for otherwise low species numbers, some lichens such as *Parmelia sulcata* and *Scoliciosporium* sp. being parasitised by *Illosporiopsis christiansenii*, conspicuous by its pink sporodochia. *Nectria episphaeria* was amongst the micro-Ascos (like minute orange collapsed balloons), parasitic on Pyrenomycetes; and *Peroneutypa heteracantha*, exhibiting multiple protruding perithecial beaks like spiders on their backs. Adding to the variety, the lollipop-shaped Hyphomycete, *Stilbella erythrocephala,* was collected on a rabbit pellet, conspicuous by its pinkish-orange heads. A total of about 60 species identified, including 14 lichens.

Peroneutypa heteracantha – Davies Meadow (5/11/03)

BRADNOR HILL (SO2858) 19th November:
A site of grazed grassland at an altitude of about 370m - higher than most foray sites we visit. Less parched than previous sites, it produced a wealth of fruitbodies, but only a modest score of species - including a clutch of *Mycena*, amongst which was *M. leucogala,* which B & K 3 describes as rare.

Interestingly there were three *Galerina* species, which have not been recorded before and rather more grassland fungi than on the previous Davies Meadow foray, including *Bovista dermoxantha* which is probably the first Herefordshire record. About 50 species identified.

Galerina laevis – Bradnor Hill (19/11/03)

MAINS WOOD (SO6338) 3rd December:
The strangeness of the season is demonstrated by the record number (75) of Agarics recorded for a 2003 Herefordshire foray, at a time of year when frosts have usually reduced expectations to a low figure. The list even includes a few mycorrhizal fungi, such as *Amanita muscaria, Cortinarius sanguineus, Boletus* (*Chalciporus*) *piperatus*, and *Suillus bovinus*, when one might have expected the cessation of photosynthesis. By contrast, there was a complete absence of Powdery Mildews, only one rust, *Milesina blechni* and only one Myxomycete, *Physarum nutans.*

Physarum nutans – Mains Wood (3/12/03)

Three species recorded only twice before were *Ripartites helomorpha, Tremella globospora*, and *Psathyrella laevissima*. An unidentifiable conidial fungus on fallen wood was suspected of being a *Hypoxylon* anamorph, so was sent to Dr. Brian Spooner at Kew. He replied that it was *Nodulisporium umbrinum,* "probably a *Hypoxylon* state". About 130 species identified.

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In addition to records from programmed forays, species have been reported by members which are seldom recorded or have not been recorded before in VC36, including some from CGFA churchyard surveys. The following is a representative selection:

Phellinus contiguus was reported from Fishpool Valley by John Bingham, sometime in 2003.

Septocyta ruborum on bramble stem, 30/5, Richards Castle (CFGA Survey), Ted Blackwell.

Septoria leucanthemi on *Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*, and *Aulographium hederae* on ivy leaves, 10/7, Richards Castle (CFGA Survey) Jo Weightman.

Leccinum durisculum on *Salix* 8/8 Linley Green (SO695535), Cherry Greenway.

Entoloma incarnatofuscescens, Barnett Wood 8/8, Jo Weightman.

Lepiota griseovirens, Barnett Wood, 8/8, Jo Weightman.

Tazzetta scotica, Mary Knoll Valley, 11/8, Jo Weightman. (Note spelling of *Tazzetta*, now held to be correct!).

Uncinula flexuosa on Horse Chestnut leaves, Byton Hand 5/9, Ted Blackwell (closely followed by additional findings at Moccas Park by Jo Weightman and at Durlow Common by Ray Bray).

Heather Colls reported the finding of the Devil's Boletus, *Boletus satanas*, at the usual Great Doward site on 12 October; it had been seen there earlier in mid July, which implies its time of fruiting extends over a much longer period than previously thought.

Ustilago anomala on *Polygonum hydropiper* (Water Peper), Mallins Wood (SO7449) 23/10. Cherry Greenway.

Phyllosticta polemoniii on Jacob's Ladder in garden at Durlow common 15/11. Ray Bray.

Dichomitus campestris, Brilley Green Dingle, 1/11, George Spence, confirmed at Kew.

Lamproderma scintillans, Wigmore Rolls 17/11, Jo Weightman.

Laetisaria fuciformis, Red Thread Disease of turf, Moccas 21/11, Jo Weightman, confirmed at Kew.

Pulcherrhicium caeruleum, Wigmore Rolls SO3969 17/11, Jo Weightman

Illosporiopsis christiansenii on *Xanthoria parientina*, found by Heather Colls at Davies Meadow 5/11, also by Ted Blackwell at Bodenham Lakes 24/12.

Phellinus punctatus was reported from Queen's Wood, Dymock, on 1st January 04 by George Spence.

Sphaeropsis visci, a Coelomycete, was found on mistletoe by Ray Bray at Durlow Common on 3/2/04 (see also, the article on page 8), then again by Cherry Greenway at Storridge Farm (SO7448) on 29/2/04. These are the first Herefordshire records of a microscopically quite distinctive fungus on a rarely mentioned host, having unusually large "potato-shaped" oblong or obovoid, dusky-olive conidia, 45-55 x 18-26μ. Considering the abundance of mistletoe in Herefordshire these first records might be considered somewhat overdue!

Geopora sumneriana was collected by Shelly and Mike Stroud at How Capel churchyard on 18/2/04 - a regular Herefordshire site for it, but the earliest find there so far. "*Geopora*" may be translated as "hole in the ground", from its initially hypogeous growth and the cavity created as it expands; "sumneriana" was a name bestowed by M. C. Cooke in honour of a Mrs Holme Sumner of Fetcham Park, near Leatherhead. Despite considerable research, I have been unable to find which it was of several women of that name.

Geopora sumneriana – How Caple churchyard (18/2/04)

Ciborea amentacea was recorded on alder catkins by Cherry Greenway at Birchwood (SO7449) on 1/3/04.

At Durlow Common, on 4/3/04 Ray Bray recorded the Coelomycetes *Phomopsis pterophila* and *Phoma samararum* on the winged seeds of ash, the former a first Herefordshire record, the latter, not recorded since Woolhope Club times, 18xx.

Pachyella violaceonigra, a brownish-purple wrinked cup-fungus about 50 mm diameter, was collected by Cherry Greenway on 9/3/04 at Mallins Wood (SO7449), a first Herefordshire record.

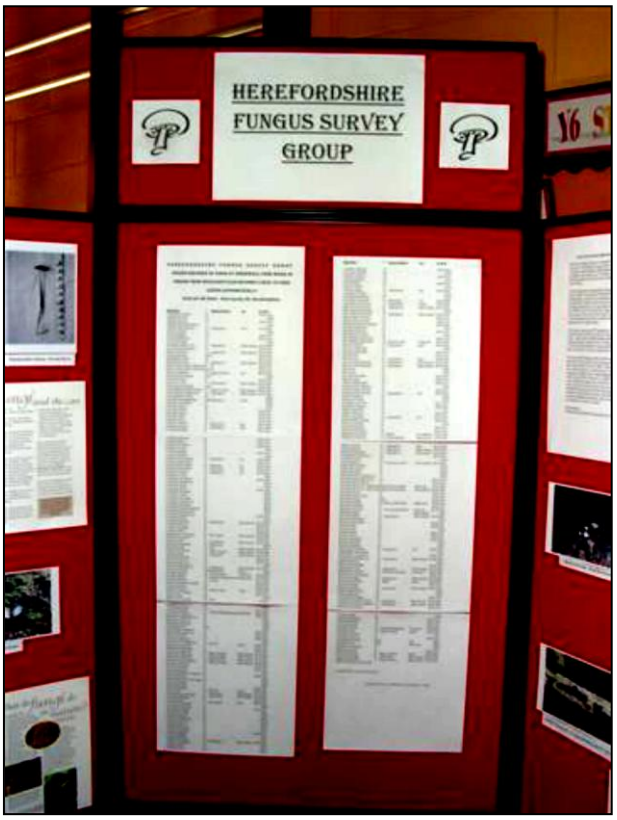
Pachyella violaceonigra - Mallins Wood (9/3/04). Photograph by Cherry Greenway

My thanks to all collectors and recorders who have contributed lists and results of home-work and who continue to expand the Herefordshire records of fungi. Additional thanks to Heather Colls for lichen records.

Ted Blackwell.
Recorder

CFGA CHURCHYARD SITES

Under the "Caring for God's Acre" Project, several Group members carried out surveys from May to November of seven Herefordshire churchyards - namely Hatton, Letton, Pudleston, Richards Castle, Upton Bishop, Weobley, and Yatton. The surveys were done sporadically, the surveyors timing their visits mainly to suit themselves, but presumably selecting optimum conditions after favourable weather.



Exhibition stand at Credenhill (Photograph by G. Spence)

One may speculate whether or not churchyards might be considered a distinct fungus habitat type, as they are for lichens. I imagine many years of similar recording would be necessary before a definite pattern might be discerned, but one might guess that grassland fungi and those associated with yew trees would stand out.

However, for this limited exercise over a single season, a simple analysis of the records is interesting. One needs to bear in mind that the summer was dryer than average, the autumn relatively free of frosts, and that some surveyors may (in desperation) have resorted to searching for microfungi when Agarics and other macrofungi were not appearing due to drought.

Lumping all churchyard records together, the survey produced 437 records, of which species totalled 208. **Agaricales** topped the list with 55 species (26.4%), followed by **Powdery Mildews** 25 (12%), **Rusts** 23 (11%), **conidial (mitosporic) fungi** 21 (10%), **Aphyllophores** 18 (8.6%), **Leotiales** 12 (5.7%), **Sphaerials** 10 (4.8%), **Diatrypales** 5 (2.4%), **Myxomycetes** 4 (1.9%), and **other groups** (mainly micros) being three or less species each (making up the balance of 17.2%). The only poroid Boletes were two *B. chrysenteron*, while Russulales, Smuts, and Pezizales were completely absent. Despite what seemed to be predominantly grass areas, and the variety of Agarics found in grass, there was no plethora of the more celebrated grassland fungi, no *Entoloma*, and just a single *Hygrocybe conica* to represent the waxcaps. Of fungi growing directly on yew, only two records of *Amylostereum laevigatum* and one of *Laetiporus sulphureus*.

These results appear to be the inverse of those from a typical broadleaved woodland foray, in that Agarics, Aphyllophores and other macrofungi (e.g. *Daldinia, Xylaria*, and similar Sphaeriales) are below 50%, while microfungi species predominate. Is this a character of the churchyard habitat, or merely a one-off reflection of a dryish season and hard-pressed microfungi-phile surveyors?

Whatever the conclusion, I, for one, found churchyard foraying interestingly different and assessing the results a stimulating challenge.

Ted Blackwell, Recorder

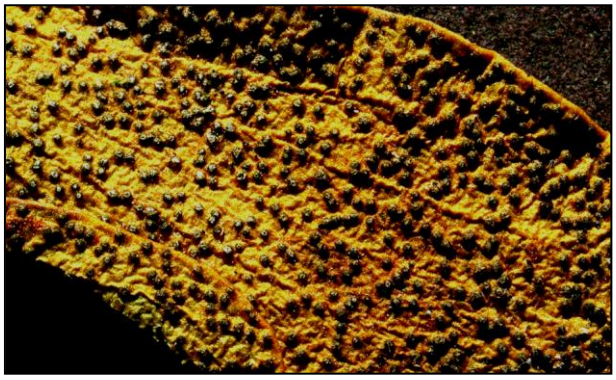
Just a note from me, as Ted has said it all really. However, I have received many letters of thanks from the churches involved in the fungus survey project through CFGA and I would like to pass them on to those of you who took part. They are all very grateful for the time and effort put in, not just doing the surveys, but also putting the results together and the reports to go with them. So, on behalf of all the churches involved this year, thank you very much for all your hard work.

Sheila Spence

Puccinia sessilis aecia on Arum – Weobley Churchyard (2/5/03)

***SPHAEROPSIS VISCI* AND OTHER MICROFUNGI ON MISTLETOE**

Close by my home in the Herefordshire hamlet of Durlow there is a venerable apple orchard, where many of the knarled, ivy-clad, lichen-encrusted, mistletoe-festooned trees in various stages of decrepitude are said to have been mature in 1915. For more than a year I had noticed the gradual wilting of a bunch of mistletoe growing from a large canker on a tree bearing perhaps a dozen other bunches, most apparently in good health, others less so. The ailing bunch, by then brown and dead, was fragmented and brought down in the gales of January 2004. It was at once evident, without a lens, that leaves and twigs, and even some of the more woody growth, were peppered with swollen black "spots". A closer inspection of the orchard revealed other mistletoe similarly infected.



Top: *Mistletoe leaf with 'spots' of Sphaeropsis visci*
Bottom: *Sphaeropsis visci spores (microscope at x 400)*

Examination under the microscope suggested that the spots were pycnidia of a Coelomycete, one of the groups of anamorphic fungi, as we must now call them. Without specialist literature I could do no more, so I sent material to Ted Blackwell. He identified the parasite as Sphaeropsis visci Sacc. and provided the following description by Grove (1937):

"Pycnidia gregarious, immersed, somewhat prominent, globose, black, about 300□ diam, with an obtuse conical papilla, and at first white contents. Spores oblong or obovoid, dusky-olive, granulose within, often constricted about the middle, 45-55x18-26□, sporophores filiform, rather short, becoming longer on losing the spore. On leaves (both surfaces) and twigs of *Viscum album*. Probably introduced with the host from the Continent"

French foray reports of 2002 & 2003, available on the web, refer to S. visci as the anamorph of the ascomycete *Botryosphaeria visci*. I have been unable to substantiate this as I write, but *B. visci* is listed in CABI Bioscience's world database (Index Fungorum) although not in the BMSFRD. Nor is it mentioned by Dennis (1978). Dr Dennis does, however, mention *Gibberidea visci* Fuckel on mistletoe with brownish ascospores about 38 x 7□, with several cross septa . Again, there is no record in the BMSFRD, but it is listed in Index Fungorum.

The BMSFRD has records of *Sphaeropsis visci* Sacc. from Surrey in 1996 and 1999. It also includes records of four other fungi on mistletoe, all Hyphomycetes or Coelomycetes ie anamorphic fungi:

Phoma visci: The only record on the database is that of the Woolhope Club in the 19th century, finder, date and site unknown.

We know, however, from Ted's report in News Sheet No. 6, that Jo Weightman collected this in April 2002 at Moccas.

Rhabdospora visci, Septocyta visci-britannicae, Volutella ciliata: These three species were recorded once each in Surrey in 2000. The last one named is not confined to mistletoe (Ellis & Ellis, 1997).

Ray Bray

References:

Dennis,R.W.G.(1978), British Ascomycetes, J. Cramer

Ellis, M.B. & Ellis, J.P.(1997), Microfungi on Land Plants, The Richmond Publishing Co.Ltd.

Grove,W.B.(1937), British stem- and leaf-fungi, Vol II, C.U.P.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LICHENS: 3. CLADONIA – A GENUS OF LICHEN WHICH STANDS OUT FROM THE OTHERS!.

One of the wonders of nature is that it does not play by man-made rules, and in this article I want to introduce you to a lichen genus which does not fit easily into the usual types of lichen thallus structure, i.e. leprose, crustose, foliose, or fruticose. These are is the *Cladonias*. In Herefordshire we commonly see half a dozen or so of them, out of the sixty-four species known to grow in Britain.

Cladonia is the genus to which that group of lichens loosely called 'Reindeer Moss' belong. Reindeer Moss is the stable food of reindeer in the Arctic and we have two representatives of this group forming pale wiry patches on our heathland - the greenish-grey *C. portentosa* and the usually rather smaller, greenish-white *C. ciliata*.

The pixie-cups lichens are also Cladonias: those small grey-green structures, which are particularly noticeable in winter, growing on stumps, or on the ground, ranging in shape from goblets to golf-tees.

A Cladonia *starts life as a primary thallus of small crusty granules, or small squamules. This then produces a secondary, fruiticose thallus, which consists of hollow stalk-like outgrowths, termed podetia. In many species the primary thallus then dies away.*

The podetia can be straight and upright, or richly branched and matted together; they bear the spore-producing bodies on their tips, which may be either pointed, as in *C. ciliata,* or cup-shaped, as in *C. disversa*.

The cup at the top of a *Cladonia* podetia is called a scypha and it is by studying the characteristics of this scypha that our common Herefordshire cup lichens can be distinguished in the field. Look for the fruits at the edge of the cup. If they are red you are lucky, as it is *Cladonia diversa*! All the other local cup lichens are in the brown-fruited group and you will need to study the surface, or both the inside of the cup (scytha) and of its stalk (podetia) to key it to species. Have a look too at the ones with short straight pointed podetia in our woods, to see if they have fruits at their tips. If there is a small red fruit it is *C. macilenta* but, if not, you probably have *C. coniocraea*.

If you are rather lucky, you may find *C. floerkeana*, the Bengal Matchstick Lichen, with big bright red lumpy fruits, which are visible from quite a few yards away.

Heather Colls

Cladonia ciliata

Cladonia diversa

Cladonia floerkeana

FUNGAL FRAGMENTS

- You asked me to write down some notes on *Piptoporus betulinus*, after I mentioned its use by entomologists. Well, I thought I had better check my memory wasn't becoming wayward, but couldn't find a reference to the fungal source anywhere. In the 170-page British Museum (Nat.Hist.) "Instructions for Collectors No.4a - Insects" there were references to it, but not to the spp. of fungus! In desperation I turned to the one person I always turn to, …. Ted. As always, he came up with confirmation from Watling and also Ramsbottom. So here are the notes:

  Piptoporus betulinus is sometimes called the Razor-strop fungus. This is not due to its patently unabrasive flesh, but because of its ability to take up an abrasive dust into its porous surface. Depending on the hardness and size of the added material, this then becomes a sharpening surface, like that of various grades of sand, or emery paper.

  This is not a use I have had any experience of, or have known anyone that has. However, there is another use of which I do have experience.

  In my youth, as a member of the British Entomological Society, I had purchased "polypore strips" for the mounting of microlepidoptera. The fine, hair-like stainless steel pins required for species like clothes moths and even smaller would buckle against the resistance of cork lined cabinets. Therefore, a roughly 3x3mm strip of *Piptoporus betulinus* would be used to insert the micro pins into. The end of this "polypore strip" would then have a standard cabinet pin inserted right through, and this would be secured into the cork of the cabinet after a small data label had also been attached to the same pin. Several specimens, if directly related, could then be mounted upon the same strip, depending on the length of the strip eventually trimmed.

  Vaughan Fleming

- Carleton Rea (1861-1946), author of **British Basidiomycetae** was the leading authority on agarics in England for the first quarter of the 20th century, although trained as a barrister. He was one of the founders of the BMS and its first Secretary and Editor. According to W. P. K. Findlay (**Wayside and Woodland Fungi -**1967) "His sturdy figure, unconventionally dressed in breeches, with a fancy waistcoat beneath his jacket, high stiff collar and white tie, was a familiar figure at BMS forays up to the 2nd World War. His high colour and continual use of a monocle attracted attention". He enjoyed recalling how, when collecting polypores with an axe from trees near Worcester, he was followed by two staff members from a local psychiatric home, who suspected that he was an escaped patient.

  Ray Bray

- Although best known as author and illustrator of books for children, Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) was a keen naturalist who made hundreds of accurate and beautiful drawings of plants, fossils and fungi. She was the principal illustrator of **Wayside and Woodland Fungi** (W. P. K. Findlay -1967). In 1897,aged 30, her paper, "On the Germination of the Spores of the Agaricineae" was read at a Meeting of the Linnean Society. Soon after her animal stories brought her fame and fortune she bought a little farm in the Lake District, married a local solicitor, gave up both writing and painting, and devoted herself to sheep farming, the National Trust and to her domestic life.

  Ray Bray

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  Melanophyllum haematospermum (photograph by Cherry Greenway)

Perhaps it's a good year for *M. haematospermum*, but more likely one of those strange coincidences which seem to crop up in Mycology. There are only three Herefordshire records (all as *M. echinatum*) - 1978 at Hales End Wood (Fred Fincher), 1993 at Lea & Pagets (Merl Marsden), and again 1993 at Crow Wood, Turnastone (me). I think it is the only (British) Agaric with a red spore-print (there may be tropical ones).

Cherry Greenway

SMALL WHITE MYCENAS ET AL: 2. THE NEXT SIX

Continuing our series on this theme, we have another six, mostly, quite common 'little white(ish) jobs'.

Woody or herbaceous debris:
Mycena adscendens (tenerrima) - Cap up to 5mm, white, convex, striate and finely granular/pruinose. Gills distant, more or less free, sometimes appearing collared. Stipe 20 x 0.5mm, white, with **fine erect hairs** below and a rather **bulbous** base (not a fringed disk like *M. stylobates*).

Damp wood of broad-leaved trees:
Hemimycena tortuosa
Cap up to 10mm, white and pruinose. Gills white. Stipe short, sometimes excentric and often very curved. Best recognised by the tiny **beads of moisture** clinging to the cap and stipe (< 40 x 1.5 mm) which give it a decided ooh! factor. Common. Often found in nook and crannies underneath bits of fallen wood in damp places, hence the glistening droplets.

On dead beech leaves:
Mycena capillaris
Cap up to 3mm, **white pinheads**, well nigh invisible unless searched for, but actually very common. Gills ascending, if you can see them. Stipe white, up to 30 x 0.5mm, thread-like and often wavy.

Rummage gently through the leaf litter. This Mycena is often found on the damper underlying leaves. Can be confused

- either with *Marasmius setosus (recubans*) [see Autumn 2003 News Sheet], but the stipe of this species is red-brown - at least at bottom;
- or with *Mycena polyadelpha* (see below), which usually has few to no gills (broadly attached when present) and occurs mainly on oak leaves.

On dead oak leaves:
Mycena polyadelpha - Cap **minute** 0.5-2mm, white, very finely granular, convex to bell-shaped, finely grooved. Gills white, **few, irregular, often missing altogether**. When present (as in the illustration), broadly attached. Stipe thread-like 4 - 20 x 0.1 - 0.2mm, powdery becoming smooth. **No anchoring hairs**.

Although known as a coloniser of dead **oak** leaves, it has been recorded on beech. If you think you have it on a different tree species, make careful notes and get it to an expert. We need to know more about this Mycena. Look for this species where the leaf litter is deep – try an old ditch for starters. Get down on your knees – this is a seriously small fungus. Remove the top layer of dry leaves and examine the rotting humus carefully. I fancy it is quite common and just needs someone to love it enough to seek out its secret place.

Grassland:
Mycena flavoalba – Easily the most common "small white" in grass. . A "regular" in unimproved grassland where it occurs in troops.

Cap < 20 mm, usually pale yellow -at least in the centre - but can be wholly white, conical becoming flat, edge sometimes raffishly tilted on the dead stems or leaves on the dead stems or leaves, striate. Gills white, ascending, fairly distant. Stipe < 40 x 1.5 mm, yellowish-whitish. No special smell.

On rushes, etc.:
Mycena bulbosa - Locate a large clump of soft rush *Juncus effusus,* or some other large clumping wet-loving plant, preferably just out of reach on the edge of a pool. Wade in, bend over and rummage in the soggy centre of the mound where you will be charmed to find it on the dead stems or leaves. An easily recognised species, the only difficulty being keeping your balance.

Cap 2 - 5mm pale greyish/brownish, domed and grooved, often a little depressed in the centre, cuticle gelatinous and peelable. Gills whitish, fairly close, the edge peelable as gelatinous threads. Stipe < 10 x 0.5 mm, powdery or smooth, curved so that the cap is properly presented, base distinctly swollen and disc-like.

Jo Weightman

KNOW YOUR HOST PLANTS: 2. Self-heal, Bugle and Ground Ivy

All three of these spring and summer-flowering plants belong to the Deadnettle family or Lamiaceae (formerly Labiatae). Although there is a certain amount of variability in the members of this large family, almost all have square stems and all have a cluster of four 1-seeded nutlets, which is a giveaway when observed at the base of the calyx after the petals have fallen. The calyx is in the form of a tube, as is the corolla. The latter is five-petalled, but usually two-lipped and is thus bilaterally symmetrical. There are four stamens - two long and two short, attached to the corolla tube. The leaves are opposite.

Self-heal *(Prunella vulgaris)*
Self-heal flowers throughout the year, apart from the mid-winter months and is widespread in woodland, grassland and waste places – and indeed in gardens too, where it can become a bit of a thug. Its deep violet-blue flowers are borne in a terminal, short dense head, the whorls consisting of several flowers, being very close together.

It always had a reputation as a styptic. The 'Doctrine of Signatures' ruled that as the flower was shaped like a sickle it was the hedger's styptic – at hand to staunch everyday cuts. Other names include Hook-heal and Herb Carpenter.

Self-heal *(Prunella vulgaris)*

Bugle *(Ajuga reptans)*

Bugle *(Ajuga reptans)*
When in good order, Bugle is a handsome plant with its head of blue flowers. This is rather longer and with less congested whorls than in Self-heal. Its leaves are shiny, dark green and often suffused with violet-brown. Woods and shady places are its first choice habitats, where its stolons will run happily hither and thither, forming new rosettes of leaves as they go.

Bugle is another wound herb and its local names include Thunder-lighting [*NB correct spelling! – Ed.*], Dead-men's Bellows and Babie's Rattle. The Austrians call it Blauer Kirchturm, Blue Steeple. Perhaps that is the best name of the lot!

Ground Ivy *(Glechoma hederacea)*
Ground Ivy also has blue flowers. However, with only two flowers per whorl and the whorls farther apart than in the previous two plants, it presents a rather different appearance. Like Bugle it has stolons, which in this case are long and trailing and are particularly active after flowering ceases in midsummer. They can readily be recognised by their orbicular, crenate leaves – whereas both Bugle and Self-heal have longer leaves and margins that are usually entire.

Ground Ivy has many local names, including Tunhoof, Gill-go-on-the-ground, Devil's Candlestick, Blue Runner and Runaway Jack. It has been known as a strengthening and cleansing medicine and the chief bitter, before the general use and cultivation of hops. In Ludlow there was a tradition of eating pork stuffed with the leaves and, until recently, there were still cottagers who drank Gill-tea. The French name translates as St. John's Girdle.

Stephanie Thomson
Photographs by Peter Thomson

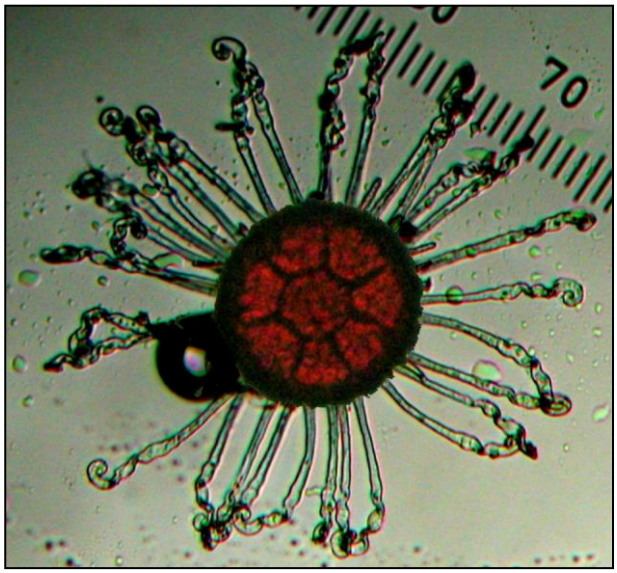
Ground Ivy *(Glechoma hederacea)*

MICROSCOPE WORKSHOP

To celebrate Ted's recovery from his operation, we were able to prevail upon him to run another of his very popular microscope workshop days. This took place on 18th February at our usual venue, Woolhope Village Hall, with lunch (also as usual) at The Crown.

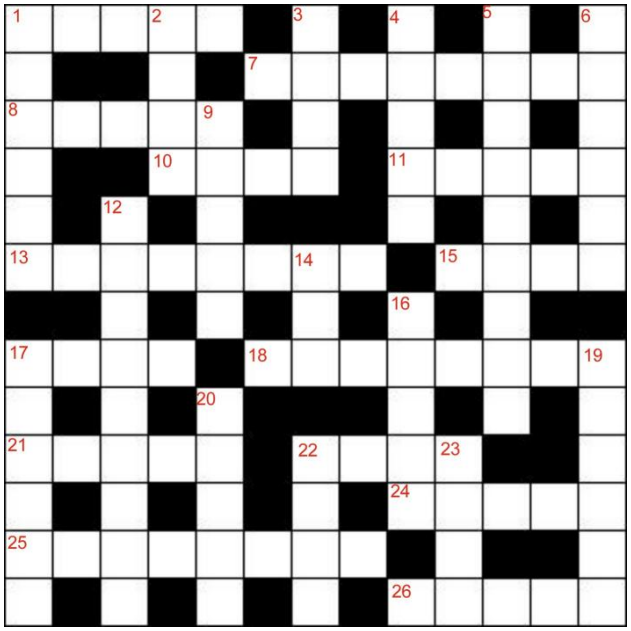
The format was slightly different to previous workshops, in that Ted produced a number of 'things on sticks and leaves' and asked us to identify as many of them as possible – giving not much more clue (mostly) than the substrate. Needless to say, the Ellis family, as well as B & K were well featured as authors of useful resource books.

Everyone found the day both very instructive and entertaining and we all came away feeling that we had gained a lot. Once again, many thanks, Ted – long may these continue!



One of the day's specimens, the Horse Chestnut powdery mildew, Uncinula flexuosa, showing the flexuous, coiled equatorial appendages and also a few shorter bristles (composite photograph - microscope at x100)

MYCROSSWORD – Ray Bray (Answers next time)



Across

1 Smooth crucible for fledglings? (5)
7 Shady, but a *Pluteus* not a Parasol (8)
8 Ramon etches – at heart a great artist (5)
10 Plant pathogen on moist iron (4)
11 Spicy fragrance in far Oman (5)
13 Vary this genus to give her an air (8)
15 Ecclesiastical niche in cap setae (4)
17 Ceremonial form sounds OK (4)
18 Stage disorderly with naval tot for an earthstar (8)
21 Brilliant intellectual loses eye, we hear, for taxonomic group (5)
22 Beat this! Homicide back without the sappers. (4)
24 Find an answer in Parasol veil (5)
25 Stem bases and apexes, it's said, are salaries (8)
26 *Clitocybe* with 11 across (5)

Down

1 Thin layer for a rising beast (6)
2 Steer clear of live ergot (4)
3 Dirty talk from *Ustilago*? (4)
4 Unicellular fungi give rise to this staple (5)
5 See 16 down (9)
6 A burnt *Tricholoma* could make us late (6)
7 To repel back for a buried genus (5)
11 Dishevelled paintress found in meadows (9)
14 *Entoloma sericeum* is frozen within (3)
16 A cuss out of order holds 5 down (5)
17 Being wrinkled upsets grouse (6)
19 Jane Cymru holds a backward agaric (6)
20 A spendthrift cut down a tremulous tree (5)
22 To act and act again yet long since dead (4)
23 *Penicillium* eg in the USA (4)

OCCASIONAL PORTRAITS – Ray Bray

Even under arctic conditions our brave forayers venture out into the wilderness to bring back rare and wonderful specimens!