

Some 2016 New Forest highlights

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Two years ago, after the BMS Autumn Foray in Wales in 2014, I wrote enthusiastically about the advantages of such events as convivial ways to learn a lot in a week (Henrici, 2015). The corresponding week in the New Forest last November reinforced this notion; there was almost too much to take in. Alas it was no longer a 'foray', as such things were called for nigh on 150 years. This was an 'Autumn Study and Recording Week'. The BMS has killed off the term 'foray', now conflated in the public mind with 'forage', with nasty overtones of ransacking the countryside and of habitat despoliation. Over the years this is a subject that has generated more emotion than scientific evidence, but it has for instance led to a total ban imposed last year on fungal picking throughout the New Forest unless a special permit is obtained.

Note the timing of this event, Nov. 1–6, a risky choice that paid off. September and October had been horribly dry but macrofungi were now in some abundance. Another shrewd move was to engage Thomas Læssøe from Denmark as 'guest mycologist/tutor'. His combination of ecological

awareness and encyclopaedic knowledge caused an impressive number of unusual species to be recorded, several of them new to Britain. In the last issue of FM I reviewed his splendid new jointly authored *Mycena* book (Aronsen & Læssøe, 2016). Additions to the British *Mycena* list were an obvious possibility, but the four such species identified by Thomas exceeded expectations. Three of these are treated in *Funga Nordica*: *M. tenuispinosa* (only in the 2nd edition), *M. silvaepristiniae* and *M. riparia*. The fourth, *M. scirpicola*, is less clearly novel, as it may well constitute a major part of the common *M. leptocephala*, now considered too variable to remain a single species, but still in need of further study.

To further encourage readers to buy this book, I reproduce here (Fig. 1) a photo from it of one of the above novelties. *M. tenuispinosa* is a little-known species that was found on fallen *Salix* leaves beside the River Test on the Leckford Estate (Fig. 2), the one site visited outside the New Forest. Although small (up to 4 mm cap diam.) the slender spines on the cap are visible under a x10 handlens. It has also been found on *Salix* leaves in Denmark but most other records have been on wood. The well known *M. stylobates* is rather similar but with shorter spines and clearly different cheilocystidia.

The best find of the week, inevitably by Thomas, came on the last day, when Millyford Bridge became the sixth site known in the world for *Hirticlavula elegans* - see my Notes and Records column in this issue for further details. Three other possible British novelties were also found:

- 1) an alien, *Omphalotus olearius* growing with an olive in a tub at Leckford Farm - new on the assumption, not totally proven, that the few previous British records with other hosts all belong to the closely related *O. illudens*.
- 2) A uniformly pink *Rhodocollybia* (Fig. 3) in the marl pits at Marlborough Deeps that keyed at best to *R. fodiens* which should be typically bicoloured with somewhat larger spores. The spores fitted Bon's concept of this species



Fig.1. *Mycena tenuispinosa*, showing the slender cap spines for which it is named. Reproduced from Aronsen & Læssøe (2016). Photograph © Jens Petersen.

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Fig. 2. *Mycena tenuispinosa*, the first British record, on a *Salix* leaf, identified by Thomas Læssøe during the autumn meeting in the New Forest, 2016.

Photograph © Thomas Læssøe.

(Bon, 1999), but the cap colour was very different. It has been put into the Kew fungarium as *R. cf. fodiens*.

- 3) *Lindtneria* sp. (undescribed?) found by Thomas among grass roots in Longstock churchyard, taken back to Denmark for further study. He finds the base of clumps of long grass to be an unduly neglected habitat, especially for small clavarioids and some corticioids.



Fig. 3. *Rhodocollybia cf. fodiens*. A puzzling collection that didn't really fit this or any other *Rhodocollybia* traced in European literature. Photograph © Richard Shotbolt.

Erastia salmonicolor (formerly in *Hapalopilus*), a \pm resupinate polypore on conifers, is known from a few native Scottish pine woods, but a collection by Vivien Hodge (Fig. 4) on a decorticated, very rotten log of *Pinus sylvestris* from Marlborough Deepes, seems new to England. The same goes for *Tretomyces micro-sporus*, a recently described corticioid related to *Byssocorticium*, distinctive in having spores only c. $3 \times 2 \mu\text{m}$. I found it on conifer wood, probably Douglas Fir, in Holidays Hill

Inclosure. Previous British records were on *Calluna* and on pine in two places in northern Scotland.

Two interesting species were found on New Forest pony dung. *Psilocybe liniformans*, similar to *P. fimetaria* but with a gelatinous gill edge, seemed to be widespread. It was first recorded from Britain only in 2015 on Exmoor pony dung in N. Devon and S. Somerset. *Psathyrella sphaerocystis*, found by Thomas, was described by Orton from horse dung in Scotland (Rannoch), seemingly unique in the genus in Europe in having a veil consisting largely of sphaerocysts. The only previous British collections in Kew are Orton's 1960 type material and one from Burnham Beeches. Collections from the rest of Europe are also few and far between.

Some other highlights: a first *Squamanita* from the New Forest, *S. paradoxa* found in Denny Wood on its usual host *Cystoderma amianthinum*. *Spongipellis pachyodon* (Fig. 5), not so much found as visited, in Rushpole wood at its only known site in the Forest, where this impressive rarity has fruited extensively for the last three or four years on a fallen beech trunk. And it's time I mentioned an ascomycete, as these are dear to Thomas's heart and he found it. This was a beautiful small, deep green disco on fallen hazel leaves (Fig. 6) that he knew as *Chlorociboria aeruginella*, and nobody else knew at all. It has led me into an interesting investigation at Kew. I had thought there were just two

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