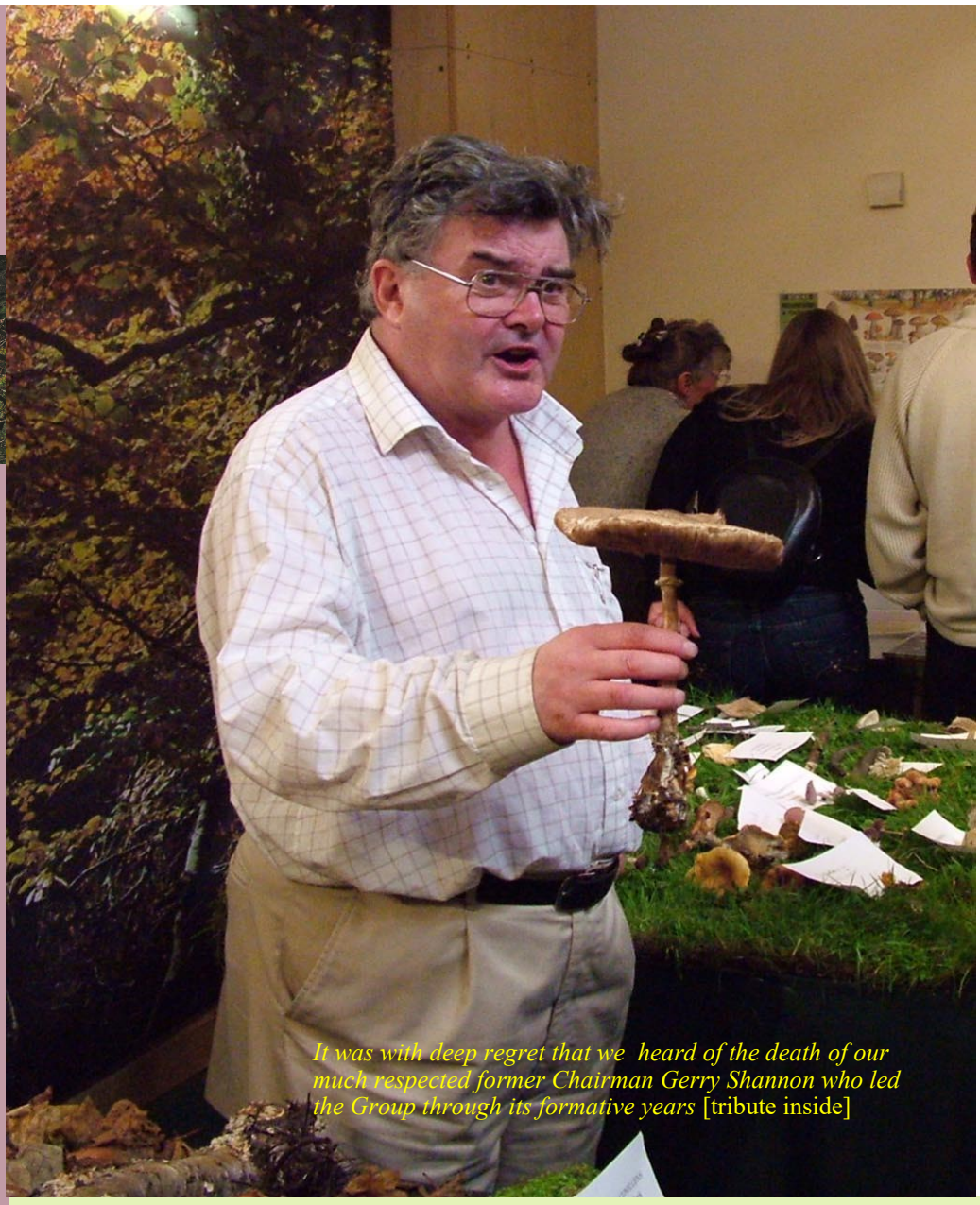
Issue 14

July 2010

NIFG NEWS

Breaking News! - deadly SOD outbreak in Co Antrim—see pp 10,11



It was with deep regret that we heard of the death of our much respected former Chairman Gerry Shannon who led the Group through its formative years [tribute inside]

Mystery fungus—what is this? [see page 14]

inside…

NIFG NEWS 2010

Hello Everyone

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of our former Chairman and founder member Gerry Shannon on 4 May 2010.

Gerry has been with us from the start, an inspiration and friendly face who greeted new members and attendees at our forays with an inviting and convivial spirit. He will be sorely missed by the Group, though much more so by his wife Joan, who has also had to bear the loss of a son around the same time. Our deep condolences go out to her.

Gerry in foray mode with Chris, Clandeboye 2008

Those of you who were at the inaugural meetings of the Group at Deerpark Hotel, Antrim around 1995 (Peg, Mary, David, Mark, myself, Gerry) will remember the modest start from which the current Group grew. There was a lot of enthusiasm with some expertise (David Mitchel and Mark Wright) which seems to have made an enduring mix. It is difficult to remember with the passage of years who took on the mantle of Chairman at first, it may have been David, with Mark as the Newsletter Editor. But Gerry soon showed by his commitment and attention to detail that he was the man for the job. Gerry held the post of Chairman from before 2000 up to 2008 when Debbie took over. Some of the founder members have drifted away but David still runs the NIFG website from his home in Wales, Peg comes along at least to the AGM, I am now the Newsletter Editor, and Gerry has remained faithful to the end.

Many happy memories remain of Gerry in full flow at the AGM or Apple Festival or at the Residentials. Always good fun, with many a story and witty riposte, coupled with an enquiring mind that enjoyed both the cameraderie and the intellectual challenge of sorting those 'dratted' *Inocybes* and *Mycenas*. Gerry will be missed!

Roy Anderson, Editor 18 August

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Chairman's Report 2009

Welcome everyone to another year of foraying!

2009 was in some aspects quite disappointing due to the forces of nature. Many forays were too dry, too warm or too wet leaving us with only a few finds. Even the residential was washed out with torrential squalls leaving many of us drenched to the bone. It was, however, a great chance to meet up with one of the founding members and our Webmaster David Mitchel and his wife who were foraying for grassland fungi in Donegal. Sadly we were unable to add vast numbers of species to the list but all in all it was a great trip.

So far 2010 is proving to be much more stimulating for fungi with many interesting things already turning up, so fingers crossed that this continues throughout the year.

Unfortunately, 2010 foraying season did not start of in the best of ways as we very sadly lost one of our founding and loyal members, Gerry Shannon. Gerry was a part of the group that no-one will ever forget. His knowledge and enthusiasm will remain and live on with everyone. At the first foray of the season, at Straidkilly Nature reserve, we all raised a glass and had a short silence to remember Gerry in all his glory. Gerry will be missed by us all.

You can read a little more of Gerry's life with mycology on page (___)

On a happier note I would like to add a welcome to all the new members that have come along to meetings. Its nice to see new faces and to know that the Group is doing an excellent job of educating people about the fungi around them.

I recently returned from the British Mycological Societies Group Leaders meeting, held in Alston Hall, Preston. This is a biennial event where the group leaders from across the UK come together, chat about their groups, any issues they have come across and useful hints & information that has arisen from problems. It was great to meet everyone again, and to see some younger faces this year. Just goes to show that the illusion of elderly, retired folk running forays is well out the window.

The meeting itself through up some interesting points. The main point being that through education we can show people how important fungi are in the world, that the plants around us simply would not survive without the fungi attached to them and also through our help and guidance the public can be much more informed as to the dangers of picking & eating fungi without aid from a knowledgeable person. The instances of poisonings are going down and group memberships are on a rise.. So we must be doing something right. Something I feel we all do very well.

Without word of mouth from all of you, encouraging people to join the group, experience the fungi world (and a whole host of other fields like insects, birds, plants etc) I feel we could not exist as a group and more people would fall foul to eating the wrong things & we certainly would never find the numbers of species and new records that we are currently coming across.

One other important point raised is that, all being well, I have sent out an invite from Northern Ireland to the BMS to come and have another large foray here. In 2000, a large number of mycologists came to the Fermanagh area and identified unprecedented numbers of species with a fantastic amount of new species (you can read more about this on the website). Fingers crossed everything is set for a week long foray in the Fermanagh area again for the week of the 20th-26th October 2012. This does seem very far ahead but is necessary due to BMS timetabling and also the fact that we need to try to raise funding towards this event.

I know I say this every year but Thank You all for your continued support, for attending forays whether its rain, hail or shine and also for spreading the word of the group.

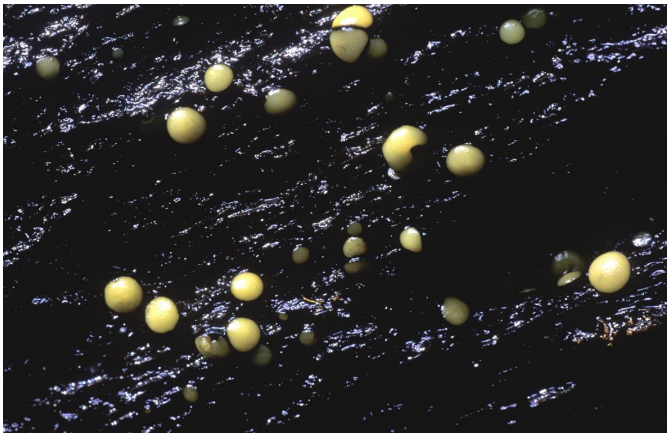
Debbie [Chairperson]

Fungi Picture Quiz

Foray and other finds 2009/10

Foray Records

2009 began with a foray on to Woodburn Glen, that is, once the Chairman and others finally found the carpark we were due to meet in! This was by Lower Woodburn Reservoir. The Glen follows the runoff from the reservoir down a steep and winding track which has seen little maintenance in recent years. Water flow is choked in several places by fallen trees and dead wood was much in evidence although there was little enough to see by way of fungi. However, Robert Cobain managed to collect an assortment of 'micros' from nettles by the path which included: *Acrospermum compressum; Dasyscyphus sulphurellus; Pyrenopeziza urticicola; Lachnella alboviolascens; Lasiosphaeria spermoides.* A later visit by Roy Anderson netted a rare cup fungus *Vibrissea guernisacii* growing on submerged logs in the stream. This appears to be a new record for Ireland—widespread but rare in Britain.



On July 18 a visit was made to Castle Leslie just across the Border in Co Monaghan. Pickings were generally sparse, probably reflecting the earliness of the season, but included the red-spored dapperling *Melanophyllym haematospermum,* with its bright reddish gills. This has few Irish records. There was a lot of Entomophthora about, on flies. This infects the body fluids of flies, probably in the larval stage and whenever they have reproduced 'collars them' by rapid growth of hyphae through the body and out through any weak points, usually in the abdomen (see picture). The fungussed fly then hangs dead wherever it happens to be, spreading fungal spores in the wind. Several were seen on plants and also a dung fly like the one illustrated, sitting dead on dung. There was lots of dead wood about and bracket fungi such as Dryad's saddle on which Roy found a delightful selection of fungus beetles to take home and study. Meanwhile, several members had 'retired' early to the comfort of the bar in the nearby Hunting Lodge to ponder what might have been.

The next foray was to Banagher Glen on 8 August but here there were several unusual finds. One was *Crepidotus caspari* (=*lundellii*) a small gilled fungus which grows on wood and appears to have no stem. There appears to be previous records only for Fermanagh. The unusual form of the blusher *Amanita rubescens* var. *annulosulphurea*, with yellow ring on the stipe was also seen. Chris took an unusual cup fungus on soil on a bank. Unfortunately by the time Roy, who was unable to attend this for-

ay, saw it, it was beyond determination. It had a brown, flattened disc with large ascospores with some ornament at each end. Possibly *Disciotis venosa?* This is widespread but rare on woodland soils. Chris also took Cortinarius uliginosus which is also widespread and rare, under willows.

On August 20 members met at Moyola Wood on the road to Knockloughrim from Toome. This is mainly conifer plantation but with patches of older broadleaf woods here and there. Prospects didn't seem good at first but several *Helvella macropus* were found by the path and several *Lycoperdon umbrinum*, the conifer puffball, were found under spruce.

A visit to the Argory on 19 September was much more productive. The death cap *Amanita phalloides* was found under hazel, a tree with which it has been associated at several sites now. The acid, peaty soil at this site was also suitable for the false death cap *Amanita citrina* and for the tawny grisette *A. fulva.* The pale-capped, red-netted, rapidly bluing and yellow-pored bolete *Boletus calopus* was found under beech.and the rare *Boletus queletii* under oak. The latter has a punctuate stipe rather than netted, and the pores are orange rather than red as in *B. luridiformis* (= *erythropus*). The lawns around Argory House also yielded some interesting waxcaps: *Hygrocybe irrigata; H. aurantiosplendens.*

Carnfunnock Country Park was visited on October 4. This was also a public foray organised together with park staff. Debbie acted as leader. A feast of *Agaricus augustus* was had as usual near the public carpark. This almost annual abundance under young pines has become something of a landmark tradition at the Park. *Agaricus silvaticus* was also found up the hill under beech along with *Ossicaulis lignatilis,* formerly a *Pleurotus.* The latter was on rotted beech and is a first for N. Ireland. *Peziza michelii* was found on soil under beech and this also is new for N. Ireland.

Boletus queletii

The disappointments of the early part of the season left behind, forayers visited Mourne Park near Rostrevor on 10 October. This has a very large area of fine broadleaf woods, virtually undisturbed, along the banks of the Whitewater River flowing towards the sea in Carlingford Lough. The group parked in a carpark next to the golf course and set off through the woods to the River. It had obviously been a good year for Amanitas. Four species were found, sometimes in abundance: *Amanita citrina; A. citrina var. alba; A. muscaria; A. muscaria var. formosa (common); A. crocea; A. virosa.* Three specimens were found of the destroying angel *A. virosa,* this being the first time that this comparatively rare species had been seen by most members (including the Newsletter editor). Two specimens were put on exhibit the following week at the Apple Festival in Crawfordsburn (with suitable precautions to prevent handling by young children!!). A fair amount of *Hydnum repandum* the edible hedgehog fungus was found under beech and a sizeable patch of horn of plenty *Craterellus cornucopoides* was found

[continued on p. 13]

at roots of beech on a high clayey bank by the path.

October 24/25 were the dates and Dungloe, Co Donegal the venue for the annual residential weekend. Socially this was a great success but the weather was little short of appalling, with gale force winds, and at times, heavy rain. Notwithstanding the worst that the weather could do a full weekend's foraying was (endured) enjoyed. This was the last outing that the members saw our late Chairman Gerry Shannon. He participated happily in all the ups and downs of the weekend to the last!

The fungi were a bit like the weather—disappointing. David Mitchel, a founder member, nowadays rarely seen because of his residence in Wales, came for the Sunday, taking a day off from some Heritage Council surveys of grassland fungi in the area. As it turned out, David made some exciting discoveries in Donegal, but not while he was with us. The sand dunes and machair that we visited between Narin and Cruits Island proved singularly devoid of interest. Dooey Point yielded *Peziza ammophila* and *Hygrocybe mucronella* but not much else. We had *H. mucronella* again at Narin dunes with *H. calciphila* but otherwise only a few common species. And Donegal Airport not much at all apart from *Ascobolus carbonarius* at a fire site. Extraordinary!

Later the next week David visited Arranmore Island. One of his finds was a pyrenomycete on coastal juniper wood. This he sent to me (Roy Anderson) and which I identified as *Gloniella adianti*, only previously recorded from West Galway within the British Isles, on a fern rachis (*Blechnum spicant*). David took 19 waxcaps on Arranmore and several other rarities including *Clavaria zollingeri, Dermoloma magicum* and *Stropharia albonitens.*


Peziza ammophila

The final foray of the year was held at Divis Mountain north of Belfast on November 7. On an overcast but dry day a good list of waxcaps was taken on the hill pastures. The total was 13 species and two varieties of waxcap. The most interesting was a purplish-pink form of the parrot waxcap, var. *scaphanoides.* This has only otherwise been recorded from a single site in Wales. Another good find was *Clavulinopsis umbrinella,* in a grazed Juncus sward.

The previous year Roy had taken a curious eyelash fungus on cattle dung in this area. This keys out to *Scutellinia hyperborea,* not previously recorded from the British isles and generally boreal or high arctic in Europe.

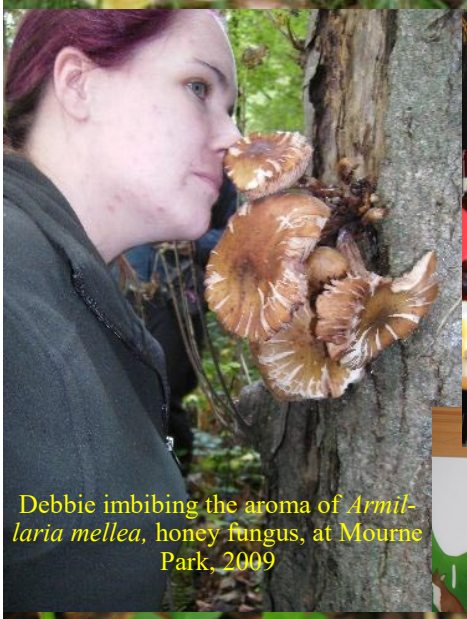

Hygrocybe psittacina v. *scaphanoides*


Scutellinia hyporea

Miscellaneous Pics, 2010

Armillaria at Mourne Park

Chris and Debbie consult on a fungus problem at the 2010 AGM



Debbie imbibing the aroma of *Armillaria mellea,* honey fungus, at Mourne Park, 2009

Royall, Howard and Maria, AGM

Mystery *Russula (?aurata)* from Straidkilly, 2009

Come on! - tuck in!, AGM

Deadly airborne fungus spreading in USA

[National Geographic News, May 2010]

A new strain of hypervirulent, deadly *Cryptococcus gattii* fungus has been discovered in the United States, a new study says. The outbreak has already killed six people in Oregon, and it will likely creep into northern California and possibly farther, experts say.

The new strain is of the species *Cryptococcus gattii,* an airborne fungus native to tropical and subtropical regions, including Papua New Guinea, Australia, and parts of South America. An older strain of the fungus was first detected in North America in British Columbia, Canada, in 1999.

No one knows how the species got to North America or how the fungus can thrive in a temperate region, experts say.

"The alarming thing is that it's occurring in this region, it's affecting healthy people, and geographically it's been expanding," said study co-author Edmond Byrnes, a graduate student at the Joseph Heitman Lab at Duke University.

Less common than bacterial and viral infections, fungal diseases usually strike people with weakened immune systems—part of what makes the recent deaths of otherwise healthy people in Oregon so worrisome.

People can become infected with *Cryptococcus gattii* by inhaling the microscopic organisms—and there's not much you can do about it.

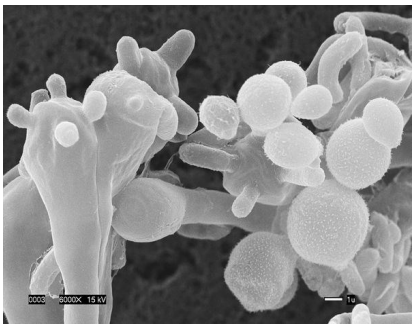
There's no vaccination or other preventative measure available for the new strain, though the infection can be treated with antifungals, the study says. And "there are no particular precautions that can be taken to avoid *Cryptococcosis,"* according to the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. "You can, however, be alert for long lasting or severe symptoms and consult a physician (or veterinarian for animals) for early diagnosis and treatment."

Appearing several months after exposure to the fungus, the infection causes a bad cough and shortness of breath, among other symptoms.

On a positive note, fungal infections, unlike viruses, can't be passed from person to person.

Fast-Spreading *Cryptococcus Gattii* Superfungi

The first U.S. *Cryptococcus gattii* cases were identified in 2005. It wasn't until the new study, though, that



genetic analysis revealed that the fungus is a new strain that had originated in Oregon.

Of the 21 known cases involving the new strain, 6 have been fatal—about 25 percent. The new strain has so far been deadlier than the strain in British Columbia, which killed 19 out of 218 known victims, or 8.7 percent.

The organism has also attacked domestic and wild animals, according to the study, published April 22 in the journal *PLoS Pathogens*.

Though the reason for the new strain's severity is unknown, "one thing fungi do that bacteria don't is they have sex with each other," Byrnes noted. (Related: "Rainmaking Bacteria Ride Clouds to 'Colonize' Earth?")

As with humans, nearly every fungus offspring represents a new combination of genes and their resulting traits. So it's possible that the new fast-spreading superfungi is the result of *Cryptococcus gattii* mating. (Learn more about human diseases.)

No matter how it arose, the tropical interloper looks like "it's going to stick around," Byrnes said, "at least for the foreseeable future."

Truffle grower hopes to unearth profit after five years

[Daily Telegraph—November 2009]

When Paul Thomas appeared on the first series of Dragon's Den four years ago he asked a lot of the Dragons. He wanted £75000 to get his truffle growing business going in the UK and overseas. Sporting a plant sciences Ph.D. from Sheffield University, Thomas 29, thought it was about time to bring some science to the often random growing of these expensive delicacies.

The problem for the Dragons was that they were facing a long term project. Once Thomas had planted the trees, with their fungus-coated roots, there would be a wait of between four and seven years before he really knew if he was on the right track.

This sort of time scale is not normally attractive to private investors. Still, Yo! Sushi's Simon Woodroffe backed Thomas. It was only after the filming of the show that Thomas realised the plantation-acquiring model he had presented was not the best way of achieving his aims. He and Woodroffe agreed to put their deal on hold.

Fast forward four years and Thomas's company, Mycorrhizal Systems, is preparing for crunch time—this May (2010) will be the first time the couple of thousand oaks and hazel trees planted in 2005 will begin bearing fruit, well—fungus.

It could be a storming year. He's expecting his summer truffle trees to yield between 70 kg and 230 kg a hectare and sell for around €280 per kg, but this varies during the year. The more delicate black truffles have a lower yield but sell for four to five times that price. "People have been growing truffles in the UK for close to 40 years. What we have done is to bring the technology up to date, making it more reliable" says Thomas.

From his base in the Hope Valley near Sheffield, he has teamed up with farmers in 15 counties to grow summer truffles on their land in the UK. He has similar deals in 14 other countries including South Africa, Australia and the US to cultivate the famous black truffles that require warmer climes.

"We grow them in a lab environment and culture them. We get the fungus to grow on the roots system and then we transfer them to a glasshouse and then at this time of year (November) we plant them out in the field" says Thomas.

He adds that the scale of the planting and the data gathered from the different soils has provided some valuable insights. "We have learnt a lot about maintaining soil pH

through liming applications and how the trees should be planted, contradicting a lot of

what was in the original literature".

A sideline business in "grow your own truffle trees" has developed says Thomas. "We also have a dog training school down in Hampshire. It was set up for our partners [the farmers] but we found that quite a lot of people want to go truffle hunting across woodlands themselves" he says.

Scientists map gene of 'black diamond'

[Daily Mail—February 2010]

Europe's most gifted and mysterious fungus, the black Périgord truffle, has been genetically mapped in a move that could help banish fake imports and shed light on its enigmatic life cycle.

A team of French and Italian researchers took five years to sequence the DNA of the knobbly, golfball-sized truffle, whose name refers to the area in the Dordogne where it can cost almost £1000 per kg in markets.

Nicknamed the "black diamond" in France, the *Tuber melanosporum* also grows in Spain and Italy.

The mapped truffle has already yielded some of its secrets—for instance, that it has slightly varied DNA signatures depending on where it grows. This will help to differentiate between the real thing and an invasion of Chinese truffles passed off as "black diamonds".

The researchers also discovered that the truffle's cherished flavour comes from the fungus itself, not the bacteria inside it. They intend to create a truffle databank" that could help produce truffles according to the subtle taste differences. It is hoped that the gene sequencing may help in boosting truffle production, which has traditionally been a hit and miss affair. The truffle shares 6000 genes with other fungi but has 1500 more that play a key role in its symbiotic growth with the roots of a host tree, predominantly the oak.

Understanding which genes determine the sex may explain why attempts at getting it to reproduce by injecting spores into trees are so haphazard.

Trffle production has fallen in France in recent decades, from 800 tonnes at the start of the twentieth century to about 10 to 20 tonnes today. A decline in its natural habitat and global warming are often blamed.

Despite the genetic breakthrough, there is no suggestion that harvesting truffles will get any easier. For now, it will be rooted out the usual way—by dogs or pigs.

BREAKING NEWS - MASSIVE OUTBREAK OF SUDDEN OAK DEATH IN EAST ANTRIM!!

Your roving reporter (Roy) was coming home from an event at Carnfunnock on 17 July when something extraordinary caught his attention.

The larch plantations in Ballyboley Forest, overlooking the Larne Road, were completely denuded of growth and looked dead!!

A visit was fitted in to a busy itinerary the following Friday and the forest was indeed almost completely dead! Something catastrophic had occurred. Samples were taken by cutting bark and twigs from the dead and dying larches and taken to a acolleague in Plant Pathology Division at Newforge Lane (AFBI).

Yes, there had been a suspected outbreak of SOD (Sudden Oak Death) at a plantation in Co. Antrim, not at Ballyboley but at Lord Rathcavan's estate at Cleggan Lodge in the Braid Valley (we once visited this on a foray). No samples had proved positive for SOD but my samples would be sent to the Forestry Commission in Britain.

Those of you watching the news will have seen what happened next. Lord Rathcavan commissioned his own tests and they came out positive for SOD. Roy's sample, diusappoiuntingly, proved negative but a subsequent sample taken by DARD staff at Ballyboley proved positive.

The Ballyboley plantation seemed in good health in 2009 when I passed it. What could have devastated almost the entire crop of Japanese larch inside a year? A definitive answer is not forthcoming as yet but a combination of drought following a very dry spring and SOD seems the most plausible answer. Drought-weakened plants may have succumbed much faster than normal to the disease.

Similar outbreaks (though not as devastating have occurred in Cornwall within the last year. The only answer seems to be protective felling. My information is that almost the entire crop of larch in east Antrim from Glenariff to Woodburn will have to be felled and burnt.

SOD is a devastating fungal disease (*Phytophthora ramorum*) which belongs to the same group (Oomyces) and genus as the infamous *P. infestans* which caused the Irish Potato Famine. The outlook for Ulster's commercial forest looks bleak if the disease spreads.

The bad news is that DARD had thinned the Ballyboley Forest in May and June, probably trailing diseased timber all over the Province in the process. We shall just have to wait and see what happens.

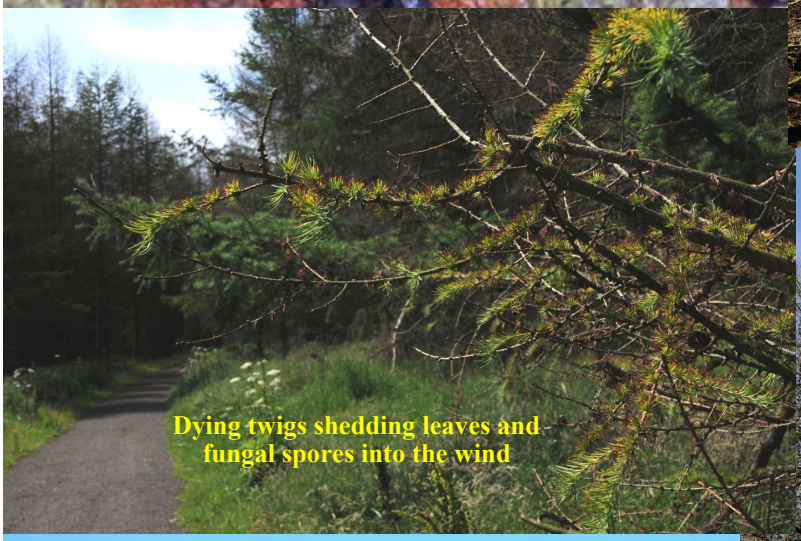
Look out for signs:

1. Defoliation of trees (larch, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, ash and shrubs such as Viburnum, Camellia and Rhododendron) without obvious cause
2. The formation of 'bleeding' sores on bark with a reddish fluid produced

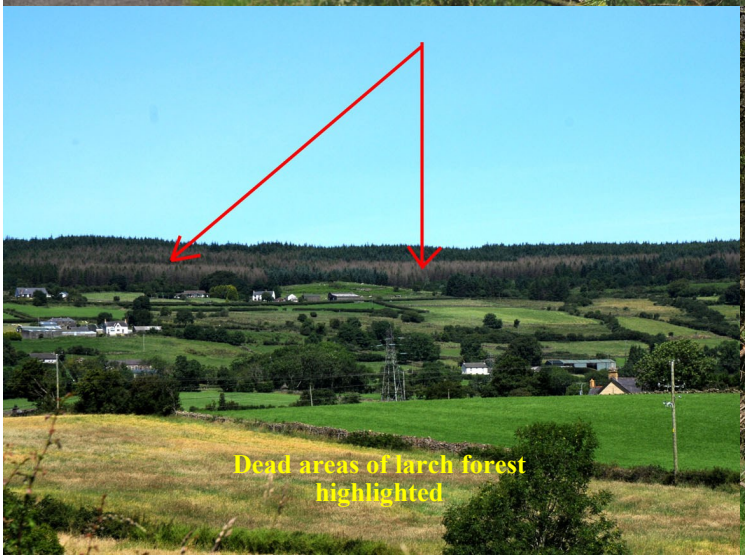
BREAKING NEWS - SUDDEN OAK DEATH IN CO ANTRIM

Bleeding canker on horse chestnut

Thining operations had taken place in the middle of the epidemic



Dying twigs shedding leaves and fungal spores into the wind



Dead areas of larch forest highlighted

Completely dead!

British Red Data List Species in N. Ireland [update on last year's list]

Current Name	New RDL assessment	92 RDL Listing	
Agarics and Boleti			
Amanita friabilis	Endangered / B	Endangered	Glenarm (2006)
Amanita lividopallescens	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Glenarm (2006)
Armillaria ectypa	Endangered / B	Vulnerable	Garron Plateau
Boletus fragrans	Near Threatened		Raughlan (19th cent)
Boletus satanas	Annex	Rare	3x 19th cent records
Coprinus sterquilinus	Vulnerable / B		J47, pre-1990
Cortinarius cyanites	Vulnerable / B	Vulnerable	Donard Pk, pre-1900
Cortinarius porphyropus	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Fermanagh (BMS 2000)
Cortinarius violaceus	Near Threatened	Endangered	J17, J46 etc., recent
Entoloma bloxamii	Annex	Endangered	Widespread, scarce
Hygrocybe calciphila	Near Threatened		Derry & Fermanagh
Hygrocybe calyptriformis	Annex	Vulnerable	Common
Hygrocybe xanthochroa	Near Threatened		Colin Mountain (2000)
Hygrophorus nemoreus	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Fermanagh (BMS 2000)
Hygrophorus penarius	Vulnerable / D2	Vulnerable	J45, pre-1990
Melanoleuca schumacheri	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Fermanagh (BMS 2000)
Phylloporus pelletieri	Annex		H66—recent
Rimbachia arachnoidea	Near Threatened		Fermanagh (BMS 2000)
Russula aurea	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Glenarm 2006, Saintfield pre-1990
Squamanita paradoxa	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	D12, recent
Tricholoma colossus	Endangered / B	Endangered	J11, pre-1900
Tricholoma sulphurescens	Vulnerable / D2	Vulnerable	Ferm. (BMS 2000)
Ascomycota (mainly cup fungi)			Ballynahone Bog (1997)
Dencoeliopsis johnstonii	Vulnerable / D2		Glashagh (2008), Ferm. (BMS 2000)
Encoelia glauca	Vulnerable / D2	Vulnerable	Not uncommon
Geoglossum atropurpureum	Annex	Rare	Not uncommon
Microglossum olivaceum	Annex	Vulnerable	Not uncommon
Onygena equina	Near Threatened		Not uncommon
Spathularia flavida	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Ballynahone Bog and Peatlands Park
Trichoglossum walteri	Near Threatened		
Xenotypa aterrima	Vulnerable / D2		
			Not rare
Non Agaricoid Hymenomycetes			3 recent sites
(incl. brackets, chanterelles & stipitates)			Glenarm & Crom (recent)
Clavaria straminea	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Newcastle (recent)
Hydnellum aurantiacum	Vulnerable / B	Endangered	Raughlan, pre-1900
Hydnellum concrescens	Annex	Vulnerable	Donard Pk, pre-1900
Hydnellum spongiosipes	Annex	Rare	Several recent sites
Perenniporia medulla-panis	Extinct 1854		Not uncommon
Phellodon melaleucus	Annex	Vulnerable	Glenarm (2006)
Ramaria formosa	Vulnerable / B		
Trametes suaveolens	Vulnerable / B		
Tremella steidleri	Near Threatened	Rare	

Conservation News Etc.

A rare fungus has been sighted in England for the first time.

[BBC Earth News, June 2010]

The fungus *Multiclavula vernalis*, which forms a tiny, orange fruiting body, was found in Hampshire on land used for training by the British Army.

Experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew confirmed the fungus's identity.

The fungus usually prefers much colder climates and has only previously been recorded in the British Isles in the Outer Hebrides and on the Shetland Isles.

Moving south

Keith Blackmore, assistant reserves and grazing project officer for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, found the small patch of tiny, orange, club-shaped fungi on a site owned and used by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for army training.

"I knew it was a very unusual discovery when I saw it but I didn't know exactly what it was," said Blackmore.

"Having sought expert advice, I'm really thrilled to find out it's an exciting first for England. It's a great addition to the flora and fauna that already exists on these wonderful wildlife reserves."

Samples were sent to the head of mycology at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who confirmed their identity as *Multiclavula vernalis*, a fungus rare in the British Isles and never recorded in England before.

It is usually found in colder climes, either nearer the Arctic Circle or in mountainous regions.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which looks after the site, will be monitoring the fungus to see if it continues to inhabit the site in Hampshire, or spreads.

Fungi Scientists are an en- dangered species

[The Independent, Nov., 2008]

They give us our daily bread and beer, provide us with life-saving medicines and recycle our waste, yet the study of fungi – life forms that include everything from penicillin to truffles – could end within the next 10 years in Britain.

Experts have warned that the science of identifying and classifying the many different species of fungi faces extinction in the UK, with less than a handful of qualified mycologists left in full-time employment by 2011 and none at all by 2018. Mycology – the study of fungi – is no longer taught as a distinct subject in British universities and budget cuts have led to fewer scientists engaged in taxonomy and systematics, the scientific classification of species.

Joan Kelley, head of mycology at the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (Cabi) in Oxfordshire, said there is now no formal training in fungal systematics and taxonomy in the UK at any level within the education system, and this could lead to a complete lack of mycologists in 10 years. Cabi has one of the most important collections of fungi in Britain but even this is at risk of being destroyed unless the Government can provide the funding as well as the training needed to keep the science of mycology alive, Dr Kelley said.

"There does seem to be an 'out of sight, out of mind' approach to funding. But without fungi, life as we know it would not be possible. Assessing ecosystems without taking into account the fungi is like taking care of computer boxes but not the chips inside," Dr Kelley said.

"Yet major pieces of work continue to be published considering ecology and climate change without any mention of fungi."

Fungi perform two vital roles for life on Earth. They rot down the tough lignin and cellulose of fallen trees and they form close relationships with the roots of plants in a mutual symbiosis that allows vegetation to survive. They also provide important sources of food – from expensive truffles to the filamentous fungi used in Quorn, the meat substitute – as well as medicines such as the antibiotic penicillin and the cholesterol-lowering statins.

"We still don't have a complete checklist of fungi in Britain and we don't know what's out there," said Peter Roberts, a senior mycologist at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, who retires next year. "We're still finding species in Britain that are new to science, but there is a decreasing number of increasingly elderly mycologists in the UK. Systematics and taxonomy are not seen as cutting-edge science. Many young people think that the classification of fungi has been done years ago. I know botanists and zoologists are finding the same kinds of problem and it's not seen as easily reversed."

Some of the most damaging diseases of important food crops are caused by fungi.

FORAY PROGRAMME 2010

Foray layout:

A days foraying begins, for those wanting a full day, at 11am at the designated meeting point. Returning to the car park for lunch between 12.30 & 1pm. Then foraying again from 1 – 4pm. You are welcome to join at either of these starting times.

1. We recommend highly that you WEAR SUITABLE OUTDOOR CLOTHING.. that is sensible footwear (high heels or sandals are not recommended). Trainers, wellies or waterproof walking boots are a must for some sites. Please bring a raincoat and/or waterproof bottoms. It can suddenly start raining and you'll regret not having some form of waterproofs with you. If you don't need them at least you've come prepared.

2. Some sites may be hilly! Please do check the sites before you plan to come along. We have tried to give you as much detail regarding the site ie grid ref and O.S. map no's so you can find them and check the terrain on your maps. If you need more advice please contact us. It can be off putting if you arrive to find a mountain site and you are unable to cope physically with it.

3. If you are planning on spending the whole day with the group do bring a packed lunch as some venues are 'out of the way' and may not have shops nearby.

4. If you are wishing to collect a few specimens to take home and identify yourself bring a collection container of basket (mushroom boxes from your local green grocers are good! And you are recycling which is good for the environment too!!!). Craft tubs or small plastic tool boxes from your local hardware shop are good as they have handles as well and are relatively cheap.

5. A small guide book is also recommended. These can be obtained from any local bookstore. The Collins Field Guides are very good but will only have the very commonly found species in them. This is good for beginners and helps you establish which ones you may come across on a regular basis. Once you feel more confident you can invest in more advanced books.

Apart from those main points the day is pretty relaxed. Join in, make friends and have fun and learn a bit about our environment and habitats while your there.

[PLEASE NOTE - Space is limited and it has not been possible to reproduce the site maps in the Newsletter— please consult the maps, if needed, at www.nifg.org.uk]

5 May 2010

Straidkilly Nature reserve. UWT Reserve.

OS map No. 9. D306160

Follow to Larne. Along the Coast road to Glenarm. Pass the harbour, turn right. At the stone wall follow to the left. Pass the entrance to Glenarm Estate and road to B'mena on left. Continue on. On the small country road, you will pass a large farm shed on your left. Layby infront of this building and on the opposite side of road also. Entrance to the reserve 20yds in front.

From the North. Follow the main road to Ballymena. On the M2 take B'shane jnct. Continue left to Glenarm/Carnlough, A42. Follow rd for some miles to split in road. Take B97 (right) to Glenarm. At end of road turn left. Follow to the layby as above.

24 July 2010

Hollymount Forest,

Downpatrick,

OS map No.21 J460430.

From Belfast. Follow A24 to Carryduff, then take left A7 to Saintfield to Crossgar to Downpatrick. From West, follow M1 to H'borough. Folow signs for B'hinch. Follow for Downpatrick. Once at main r'bout. Take right, town centre. Continue through 1st traffic lights*. Veer left at 2 traffic lights, Take immediate right for Clough (market St. becomes Ballydugan road. Continue on, pass the racecourse on your left. Take next right onto Drumcullen rd. Pass Ballyduggen Mill and follow short distance to the reservoir, turn left onto Lake Rd Park here near the pub.

***Stop Press**!!

Due to road works you will need to follow a diversion, straight ahead, up the hill past the police station on your right, at the traffic lights (and large crossroads) go RIGHT, follow round to the end of the road and at the lights go LEFT! this will take you back to the route directions in your foray plan, passing ASDA and following out of Downpatrick to the turn for the forest..

7 August

Prehen Wood., Co. Derry. OS map No. C424148

Follow all directions to Derry. If

approaching from E/NE/SE on the Glenshane Pass. Follow to the final roundabout. Take left. Keep to the left, passing the bridge, follow directions for Strabane. Onto Victoria Road. Pass the Lough's Agency Centre on right. On left look for Prehen Road (2 entrances to same road) turn into Prehen park. Park on this street, near forest entrance. From South/West Follow through Omagh to Strabane A5. Once through New Buildings, Look for Prehen road on left. Follow as above.

21 August
Kilbroney Centre/Carrickbawn Wood.
OS map No. 29, J181185
Follow all roads to Newry. Once in Newry follow signs for Rostrevor/ Warrenpoint A2. Once on Warrenpoint road, follow, straight at all roundabouts. In W'point, follow signs for Rostrevor. In town, follow up main street onto B25 Church Street. Kilbroney Centre on your right. Signposted.

4 September 2010
Peatlands Park, Co. Tyrone.
OS map. No. 19 H898603
Follow from your location onto the M1. Follow either direction to J13 (loughgall). Take J13.
Peatlands Park is signposted from this junction on the North side of the Motorway. Meet at the carpark.

18 September 2010
Brantry Lough, Co. Tyrone
OS Map No. 19 H750535
From North/East, Follow M1 west. Pass j15, M1 ends. Take B45 on left for Eglish. Continue through Eglish. Road forks keep right, just after fork take next right onto Carrycastle Road. The main rd on left is Brantry Road. Follow down here to the carpark on your right at Lough.
From West follow north towards Belfast. Pass Ballygawley, after main road to Dungannon on left, carry on until the Eglish Road on right. Follow as above.

26 September 2010
Carfunnock Country Pk (not part of the main group timetabled forays.)
Group asked to guide walk. Chairperson will guide the walk. Members are welcome to attend.
Follow roads to Larne. Carry on Coast road until you come to the Country park on your left.

2 October 2010.
Clandeboye Estate.
Joint with Belfast Naturalists Field Club
OS map No. 15 J474800
From North and West. Follow either M1 or M2 to Belfast. Once in Belfast, follow directions for Bangor A2. Once on A2 continue past Holywood, continue straight. Pass Ballyrobert Car sales. Through lights. Continue on until passing Garden Centre on left. Move to right hand lane. Keep straight. After Junction 50yds, indicate right. Entrance to Estate is through large stone pillars. Continue on through estate over ramps until main buildings appear on your right. Pull into large carpark. Park at the right beside grass bank.

9 October 2010
Cottage Farm Reserve, Omagh OS Map No. 12 H448779
Take A5 north from Omagh for 3 miles and turn right along minor road signposted to Gortin (Gortnagarn Road). After crossing Knockmoyle Bridge, turn left and continue for a mile to farm.

22 -23d October 2010.
NIFG Residential.
Venue To be Confirmed

6 November 2010.
Mount Stewart National Trust. OS Map No. J550702
Follow to Belfast. From your direction, continue along road posted for Newtownards. Once in
Newtownards follow signs for Portaferry, A20. Once on the A20 continue straight. Strangford Lough will be on your right hand side. Continue on. Mount Stewart is well signposted from the road and
entrance is wide.

20 November 2010.
Slemish Mountain Area.
OS Map No. 9 J218057
Follow from your location to the M2 and continue to Ballymena. Once At Ballymena. From South, take
M2 back onto ring road/M'way. Take junction 11 (Broughshane). From North, follow to Ballymena and take J11. Follow direction for Broughshane A42. Once in the town pass up Main St. On R take the B94, Rathkeel road. From here follow signs for Slemish.

It's a fungi old world

Have you heard about the fungus and

PICTURE QUIZ

1. Birch woodwart
2. *Taphrina pruni*
3. *Meripilus giganteus*
4. Plums and custard
5. *Stereum hirsutum*
6. *Mycena rosea*
7. *Volvariella speciosa*
8. *Cudoniella acicularis*
9. *Clavulinopsis corniculata*
10. *Hericium cirrhatum*
11. Velvet shank
12. Beechwood sickener

Mystery Fungus of 2010

Bolete collected under beech at Florencecourt: up to 21 cm across; cap bright yellow with pink flush at margins, strongly bluing (on touch); pale net high on stipe, red lower down; strongly bluing flesh; orange pores; no red in flesh above pores; Melzer's—inky blue; ammonia —pinkish; KOH—deep red-brown; spores elongate-elliptical 12-15.5 x 4.9-6.2 µm

??All points to *B. xanthocyaneus* [=*B. rhodopurpureus* var. *xanthocyaneus*]

Why not visit our Website at

Http://www.nifg.org.uk/

And see

The Online Atlas