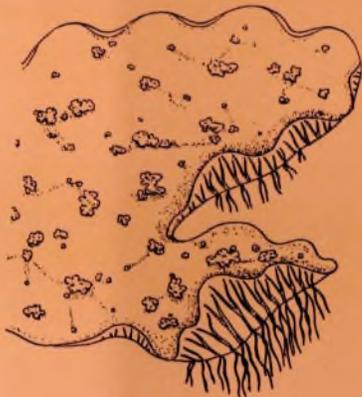


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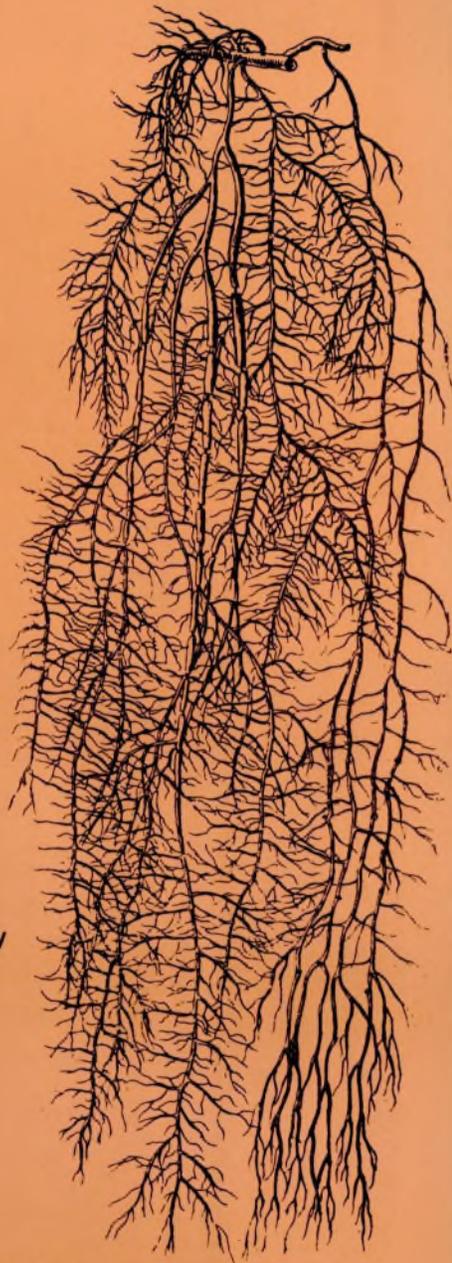
**BRITISH
LICHEN
SOCIETY
BULLETIN**



Nephroma

Peltigera

chemistry



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HEAVY METAL-RICH RIVER GRAVEL

Oliver Gilbert in his Lichen Flora of Northumberland (Lichenologist 12, 357) draws attention to the interesting lichens of heavy metal-rich shingle beside the rivers of the North Pennines. His photo of the South Tyne reminded me of areas beside the River Ystwyth in Cardiganshire I had passed years ago which were then occupied by the unlikely teepees of the magic mushroom brigade, late of Stonehenge fame. A recent trip to Aberystwyth, a meeting finishing early and an unexpected request for any information on these gravels which had been discovered to be entomologically interesting, found me unexpectedly in my best trousers in a late afternoon snow shower, standing amid the best part of two miles of gravel in forestry near Llanafan.

Now the officionados of terricolous lichens will have recognised three drawbacks here. 1. The trousers - its a hands and knees job; 2. the snow - it's cold; 3. two miles - a long way on hands and knees. Lack of collecting packets was remedied by the temporary sacrifice of the morning's notes (a small price to pay), the knees and cold remedied by finding a fertilizer sack in a tree and stuffing it with Molinea leaves. Ignoring most of the site solved (for the time being) the distance problem.

Baeomyces roseus fruiting over acres and forests of Cladonias promised a site of some interest. The Baeomyces proved to be well infested with an Arthrorhaphis species. Not A. grisea which seems to confine its attentions to B. rufus, but A. fuscireagens, kindly identified by Brian Coppins. My joy at a second British record was somewhat marred when Brian reminded me I was present at its discovery. I can only recall it was the wettest, coldest day of my life when wearing every stitch of clothing I had including my pyjamas and a range of matching polythene accessories, we crawled over the summit ridge of Ben Dearg near Ullapool. Nothing could stop the wind and rain that day - or the Coppins. Was it the third or fourth new British record of the day? I forget. It was all a blur. But it was a good training ground and made the Ystwyth gravels seem bosky. It also limited the range of search since in Brian's company one learns quickly to ignore the bits that are obviously covered in lichens and search the apparently bare places.

Veizdaea species have become a bit of a passion with me, so I searched

the squidgy algal lawns that covered the bryophytes which appeared to have been overcome by a surfeit of lead. Grey translucent fruits focussed up in the x10 lens; a likely candidate. Close by the orange cup-like fruits of a possible Gyalecta appeared in view. Then down came the snow and the increasing distress of my trousers forced a retreat, stopping only for a pick 'n' mix session on the ghastly collection of Cladonias which stretched in every varying ranks as far as the snow would allow me to see.

So what had I found? Back home, the "Veizdaea" proved to be weird, with huge sickle shaped paraphyses. It defeated Brian, who as ever, refusing to give up without a fight, detected Veizdaea acicularis amongst it (see the Lichenologist for a description), a third world record. The "Gyalecta" with three septate lemon shaped spores "fell off" the end of all my keys to the genus. Brian, having seen it in Brittany, recognised Abscontitella trivialis, a genus I'd never heard of, but which with this specimen, lodged its fifth species in the British flora.

With still another 1.99 miles to search in this site, and others upstream, acres of gravel in the Rheidol and Twyi Valleys, heavy metal-rich shingle is clearly no longer a monopoly of the North Pennines. We must encourage these entomologists as well. Its not just old parklands we share an interest in; and what really were the magic mushroom brigade into? You surely can't scrape up that quantity of Veizdaea!

R. G. WOODS

WINTER FIELD MEETING AT MASHAM, N. YORKS

The joint meeting of the B.L.S. and the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union was initiated, organised and carried through by Mark Seaward in his dual capacity as Lichen Ambassador Extraordinary of the Society and President (now retired) of the Y.N.U. The accommodation that he arranged at Jervaulx Hall was spectacular; possibly the most luxurious ever provided for a lichen meet. The owner had opened up the hotel specially for us and was amused to be handed spot-on clues to our distinguishing features which enable him to key us out immediately.

After a quick recce of the Coverdale valley in winter sunshine on Saturday, we met up at the King's head with Brian Fox and Albert Henderson, who were welcome additions to our number, and then adjourned to the Town Hall after lunch for the