

MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

27 July 2012

As Olympic fever hits the nation, those of us who are more inclined to take our exercise in the fields and woods rather than on a sofa with a remote: take heart. The very wet early summer, followed by the last week of proper heat, is starting to pay fungal dividends. If anyone wants to read to the end there are boring details of readers' offers on my publications and reminders about the autumn forays, but meanwhile, let's cut to the much more important mushroom news . . .

The most exciting latest snippet of which is the first cast-iron identification of a porcino this year (found 22 July). This comes from reader Bill Dale on the Isle of Man.



Bill Dale has found the season's first porcino

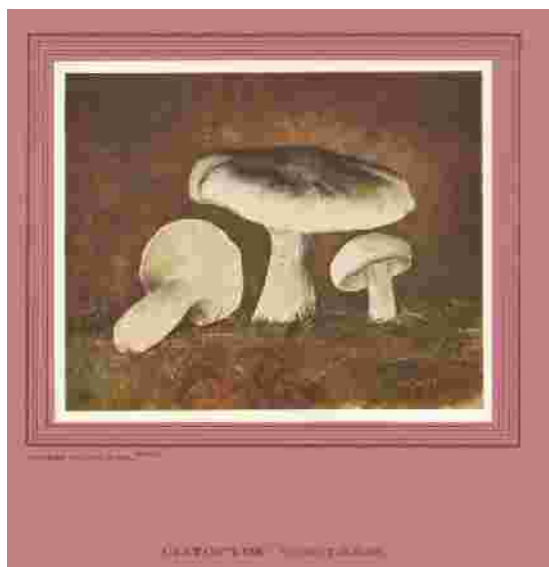
Meanwhile, Les Nettleton reports shaggy parasols in Llandod Wells, in Cheshire Karl Rundle has found his first giant puffball (ever), while a fortnight ago Andrew Wright reports *Pholiota mutabilis* in Gloucestershire. He points out that while these are missing from Phillips, they are: 'listed as edible and good in both Rinaldi and Tyndalo, and Lange and Horta'. He was going to give them a culinary bash. I think I might have followed his lead.



Les found shaggy parasols under conifers . . .

On a similar theme of gastronomic enquiry, I have just stumbled across an advertisement from the 1950s. It was part of a range of plates of edible mushrooms produced by a Harley Street practice to promote penicil in and other antibiotics. One suggests Clouded Agaric (*Clitocybe nebularis*) is 'delicious', although it concedes it is 'peppery'. In contrast Phillips labels it as 'said to be edible but known to cause gastic upsets in any people.'

Given it was published in an age when garlic and olive oil were unknown in British kitchens, let alone wild mushrooms, I wonder if the publishers might not have mistaken it for the closely-related trooping funnel (*Clitocybe geotropa*)? Does anyone have any experience here?



CLITOCYBE NEBULARIS
(CLOUDED AGARIC)

Amongst the most excellent of our edible mushrooms, and the delight of the gourmet, the Clouded Agaric is characterized by a thick cap, which tapers to a thinner edge at the periphery. Some say a smooth fibrous skin, usually removed before cooking. Wholeness has a strong odour and a peppery taste. September onwards is the best time to collect this succulent specimen, when it will be found hidden beneath the falling Autumn leaves.

From lunch to supper is but a short step, particularly when cooked in butter and accompanied by a velvety wine sauce.

As I predicted in the last newsletter, reports of chanterelles are positively flooding in, including one of 'albinos' from Dylan Read:

My wife and I went for our first chanterelle hunt of the season today in North Norfolk. Growing near our normal chanterelles we came across a large patch of what appeared to be cream white 'albino' chanterelles, which smell more intensely apricoty than the normal ones. Have you ever come across this before?



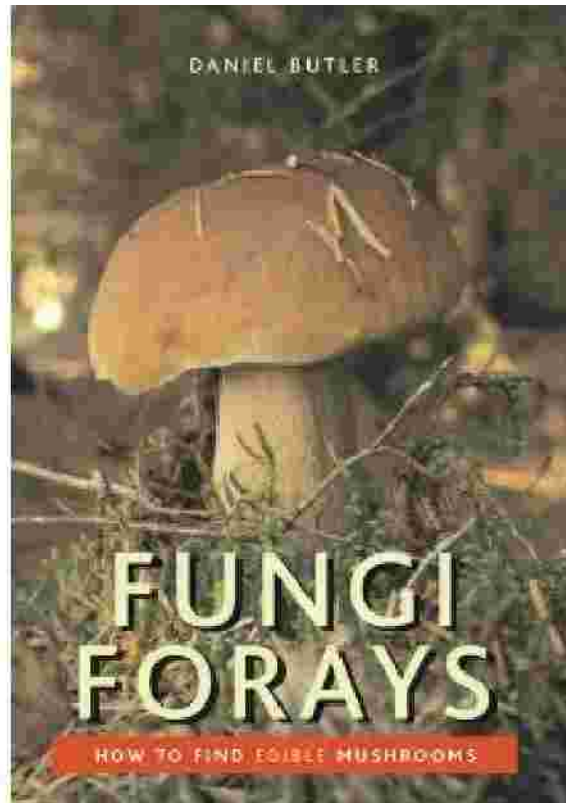
Dylan picked a good range of chanterelles – some very white indeed . . .

The answer is that I have seen these in almost every hue from near white to virtually orange. The pale ones, I would note, generally come from more open areas. I suspect they are probably just sun-bleached, so provided the structure and smell are encouraging, I wouldn't be too deterred by the hue.

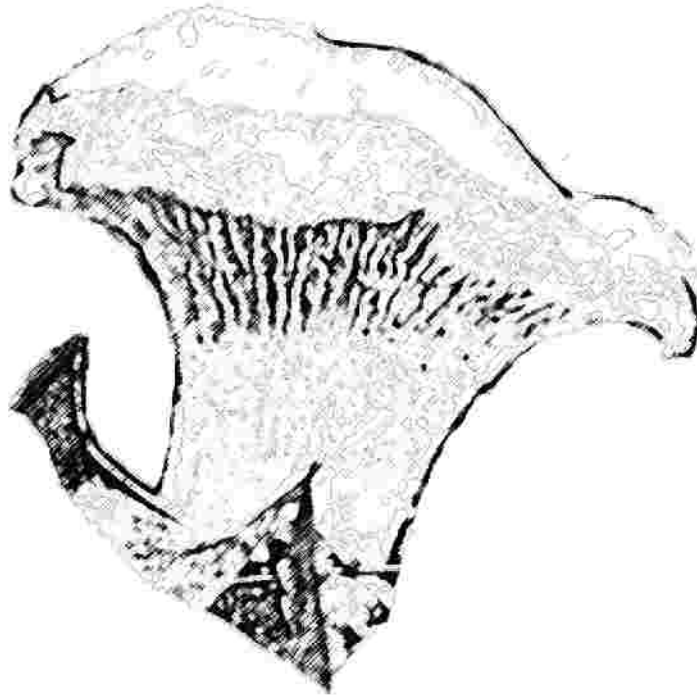


Chanterelles can vary widely in colouring – it's the shape and smell that matter . . .

I now have plenty of copies of Fungi Forays (New Holland, £9.99). I have sent out free signed copies to all but one of those contributors who donated images, but could the couple who put me in touch with Mr Andrew Tutt please contact me? I don't have his details and am feeling guilty.



As a special newsletter subscriber offer, anyone else who wants a signed copy can get one at the cover price with their own choice of dedication (oh, and this includes P&P). The website price will be £11. Otherwise you can get the unvandalised versions from Amazon for £8.79 (plus p&p).



The book to come is simply illustrated . . .

A Mushroom Is A Misunderstood Rose is nearing the finishing tape too – as soon as I get an ISBN number at the end of next week (c. 4 August), this too should hit the e-bookshelves, priced £4.99 to download on Kindle. Just to whet your whistles, I attach another sample chapter.

Otherwise, the new-look www.fungiforays.co.uk is now back on-line (check out whether you feature) and bookings for this autumn's eight one-day forays are starting to flood in. For the record these are:

22, 23, 29, 30 September

6, 7, 13, 14 October

If you plan on coming, don't leave it too late!

Happy hunting!

Daniel Butler

www.fungiforays.co.uk

01597 811168 / 0779 429 4221

P.S. As always, let me know if you want to be removed from the list and I will do it forthwith.