

EDITORIAL

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For anyone interested in basidiomycete fungi the *Checklist of the British & Irish Basidiomycota* (Legon & Henrici, 2005), along with its online updates, should be considered an essential reference work. Not only does it list the species regarded as authentically British but it also gives valuable information on synonymies, habitat, recommended iconographies and frequency. The printed version is still available from www.summerfieldbooks.com for £38.50.

At the present time there are 10 online updates available as well as two useful compendia of the updates. Their home however has now moved to a new site, Paul Cannon's excellent Fungi of Great Britain and Ireland website:

<https://fungi.myspecies.info/content/checklists>

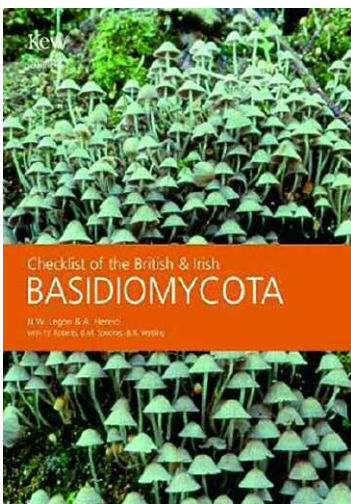
This useful website also includes provisional checklists of the ascomycetes and a link to the British Lichen Society's database; thus making it a one-stop 'shop' for information on British and Irish fungi.

I cannot imagine how I would be able to write my books or produce this magazine without the knowledge contained in this work and its updates. It should be in the library of everyone interested in recording the fungi that they find.

Reference

Legon, N.W. & Henrici, A. (2005).

Checklist of the British & Irish Basidiomycota
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



While putting this column together an article appeared in most of the online news sites and in several printed newspapers, detailing the discoveries made during a survey in the Cairngorms in Scotland.

The survey studied the fungal DNA extracted from soil samples at different altitudes from 55 of the 58 Munros in the Cairngorms National Park in 2021 and was undertaken by the James Hutton Institute.

It resulted in 2,748 separate taxa being recovered including some new to Britain and at least one new to science. These included *Amanita groenlandica*, a species known to occur in alpine and subalpine localities across the Palearctic but not authentically recorded in Britain (previous British reports of this species seem highly doubtful based on their DNA). Also *Acrodontium antarcticum*, an ascomycete species formerly known from Antarctica.

The unknown to science species is particularly interesting as it is a species of *Squamanita*. This is a parasitic genus whose species are host specific and when they invade their host replace the spore-producing part of the fruitbody with its own, resulting in a strange chimaera. Of course, what is not known here is what the host is for this new species. That will have to wait until infected fruitbodies are found above ground.

Several *Squamanita* species are known in Britain, all uncommon to rare. Another species was also recorded during the survey: *S. contortipes*, one of the rarer British species which parasitises *Galerina* spp. (see FM14(2):58, and 16(2):71 for more on this species).

As Project manager Keilidh Ewan of Plantlife said: "There are more living organisms in just one teaspoon of soil than there are people on the planet, and soil biodiversity has a hugely important role to play in the functioning of ecosystems". Projects such as this one will undoubtedly continue to surprise us with more and more species new to these islands and indeed to science.



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