

## HFRG Report 2020

Well, isn't this fun?

It is probably fair to say that this year's AGM is somewhat different to last year's – had that not been postponed and then canceled!

Apart from the obvious limitations imposed by the virus and our response to it, the biggest change was Stuart and Eileen's decision to "Go West" which led him to step down as Chairman, Treasurer, Webmaster, Recorder etc.

Finding volunteers for the roles of Treasure (Ginnie Copsey), Webmaster (Phil Collier) and Recorder (Eric Janke) was not too difficult but as no individual was happy to take on the Chairman's mantle, it was suggested that the Group should be run by "committee" under the working title of a "Steering Group" comprising the three officers named above alongside "a few" other interested members.

The EGM held in 5<sup>th</sup> November ratified this change to the constitution, confirmed the officers and elected Paul Hugill, Tina Facey and Duncan Wright to the Steering Group, with Eric as "the person upon whose desk the buck stops".

Since then, Phil has started the not insignificant task of understanding what Stuart had done to the website over the last decade, we have started a process with Nationwide to change the signatories from Stuart, Alan and Eric to Ginnie, Eric and Paul and the registered address from Stuart to Ginnie and Duncan has started asking members what they would like to see the group doing.

Obviously, the lock-down in March led to the mothballing of the planned survey program and education events but the relaxation over the summer allowed us to restart the program in September with "non-interacting groups of 6 six or fewer pre-booked participants with each group following `covid-safe` procedures". While the second lock-down in November halted things for a time, we did manage 12 group surveys and logged up 1700 records covering 640 species, helped by input from people carrying out their own, individual surveys. Of the 640 species, at least 11 were new to Hampshire and 3 were new to Britain.

Thanks to the DNA input, the most interesting outing turned out to be the one to Hursley on the 12<sup>th</sup> September, when Sue found *Amanita huijsmanii* (new to Britain), Eric collected *Amanita alseides* (new to mainland Britain, having first been found by Sue on the IoW last year), they both collected *Amanita cf lividopallescens* and Eric picked up a couple of *Russulas* – *rutila* and *laeta* – which don't appear in the previous Hampshire records.

Unfortunately, the planned education sessions didn't happen although we are hoping to start something this year with the help of Zoom.

However, Eric did manage to conduct a couple of walks for members of the public and do some filming for The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) at Wellseley Woodland near Aldershot. This brought a some funds into the coffers and gave us access to several hours of footage we may be able to make use of at some point.

Denied the opportunity to get other people involved, Eric has ploughed on with the DNA work generating 190 sequences from 180 samples – the majority from our group but also a few from contacts in other areas, mostly Penny Cullington in Buckinghamshire.

Luckily, we have managed to get some funding from the BMS to cover the costs of the sequencing. In addition to the species listed above the following were confirmed:

*Antrodia macra*, found by Alan at Odiham last year.

*Sistotremastrum guttuliferum*, found by Eric on one of his local walks during lockdown

*Inocybe lacunarum*, another recently described species, collected by Eric in Tantany Wood on the first outing of the year.

Three identical collections of *Gymnopus/Marasmiellus villosipes* from Eric, Alan Outen and Penny. As this is a common US species, one has to wonder whether it was considered by Nick Legon before he named *G. obscuroides*, the type of which needs sequencing.

*Cortinarius hinnuleoarmillatus* collected by Penny

*Rhodocybe fumanellii*, a recently described species found by Penny.

*Inocybe lindrothii*, a member of the *I. leioccephala* complex collected by Penny.

*Neoboletus xanthopus* collected by Alison Keeble in Angus, which is an odd place to find a “thermophilic forest” species!

...and then there is a long list of “matches nothing”, which either means that our sequence will be the first one published (eg Alan’s *Trechispora clancularis*) or may be an undescribed species (eg a *Peziza* from a bonfire site in Crab Wood, which would be *echinospora* were they not perfectly smooth or a *Rhodocybe* from Exbury which isn’t what it got called at the time :-).

In case it wasn’t obvious before, fungal taxonomy “needs more work” and the public databases reflect this but the state of flux does present opportunities for publications:

Sue published an article with Alick Henrici on her *Leococoprinus griseofloccosus* and is working with Geoffrey Kibby on another on all the *Amanitas* Eric sequences for her.

Eric has another on *Rhodocybe* including Penny’s *fumanellii*, two other NTBs found by Nick Aplin and the oddity from Exbury.

The contract we had agreed with Buglife to survey Franchises Wood was put on hold unilaterally when all RSPB sites were closed in March. Unfortunately, all the BugLife contacts disappeared at the same time, so nothing was done until we were contacted by Anneka Schofield from Franchises in November and we had a quick poke around. Since then, communication has been re-established with BugLife and the contract has been extended by 12 months to the end of October but it is still not clear what we are going to be able to do...

The (Plant and) Fungi Tree of Life – (PA)FTOL – project has just started with Rich Wright as the co-ordinator. Requests have gone out to the field community to collect samples of the 3000 or so target species, of which only 500 have ever been seen by HFRG and only 160 were seen in 2019. The current request is for (very) fresh, clean material, preferably in largish quantities although there does appear to be another, related project for which dried material might be sufficient.

While the current request is for the target list, anything “rare” can also be submitted.

Requirements for sample preparation, metadata input and permissions are somewhat involved and Eric will distribute the information he was sent and run a Zoom session to go through it all with interested parties at some point.

Eric gave a short update on our DNA activities at the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) Recorders Meeting held on 07/03/20.