

Dorset Environmental Records Centre

Newsletter No.79 Spring/Summer 2018



With the milder winters we have seen recently, the recording season never really seems to stop but it certainly gets a boost as the warmer weather comes in. Many of you are now using Living Record to collect data, and with over half a million records for Dorset collected by Living Record since it started in 2010, it has made a huge difference to the way we work. There are other recording systems available, often used for specific projects or recording groups, like the BirdTrack apps developed by BTO. We are beginning to incorporate some of this data into our database but we have to look at each dataset individually and assess the quality of the data before preparing it for import.

All these systems handle the data in different ways. One of the advantages of Living Record for DERC, is that it

allows us to set different sensitivity levels for different species. So for some species like bats and badgers, DERC will get the detailed data but on the distribution maps visible to all recorders, the resolution can be set at 1 km or 10 km. At DERC, the list of 'sensitive' species is relatively short. With guidance from the county recorders we have identified those species which may be at risk and set our levels of access to data accordingly. However, not all systems have the same local control levels. iRecord, for example, uses a national list to set the resolution level. Any additional restriction is set by the recorder or verifier on individual records. Although this is not an issue for the majority of records, it can bypass the considerations applied by the records centre or local conservation groups, so please, be aware.

For those of you looking for a new challenge, I recently read an interesting article by Douglas Boyes on some of the moths found in birds' nests. Whilst cleaning out the nest boxes in his Welsh garden Douglas took the disused nests and stored them in an unheated outbuilding to see what emerged. He found four moth species including *Niditinea striolella* The Brindled Clothes Moth, a relatively scarce moth with a limited distribution. Douglas followed this up by collecting 250 nests to study, adding several more species. The full article can be read here: www.mothscount.org/uploads/E-moth%20April%202017%20final.pdf. Birds cannot be disturbed during the breeding season but it would be interesting to discover if a broader selection would be found in nests from the southern counties.

Carolyn Steele
Records Centre Manager

Dorset Building Stone

Work continues to expand the Dorset Building Stone website, launched in 2017. The website was set up by a small group of amateur and retired professional geologists who wish to investigate, publicise, celebrate and archive information about the building stones used in Dorset's historic churches and buildings.

The purpose of the study is to identify the stone used in historic buildings while exploring the county and enjoying ourselves immensely! The purpose of the website is to add to the sum of knowledge about historic buildings in Dorset.

Under one menu the website provides information about the main building stones of Dorset, plus those from outside the county like Ham Hill Stone and which are used in Dorset buildings. The largest section of the site is devoted to churches, arranged geographically. In time we plan to add further to the sections covering Other Historic Buildings and Quarries and Pits.

Dorset Building Stone can be found at dorsetbuildingstone.weebly.com

Kelvin Huff



Ham Hill Stone at St Mary's Church, Bradford Abbas



Banded flint & Heathstone at St Nicholas' Church, Winterborne Kingston

Dorset Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites

A reminder to anyone interested in geology, including practical conservation on local sites, DIGS may be the group for you. Although some of the group are academically trained in geology no geological knowledge is necessary to be a member of the group. If you would like to join, have a look at the website dorsetriffs.org.uk/ or get in touch with the chairman, Alan Holiday at alanholiday@btinternet.com. New members will be very welcome.

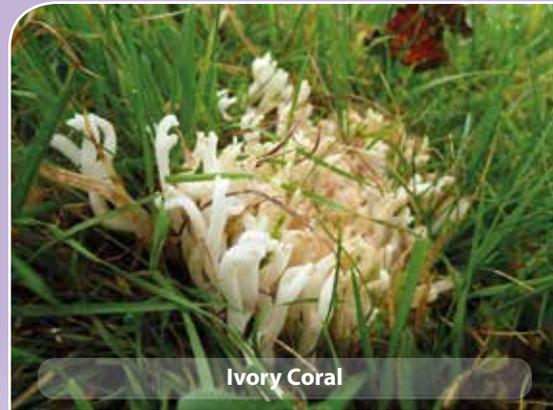


A Year of Purple, Clubs and Corals

Back in the Autumn/Winter 2016 DERC newsletter I wrote in more detail about waxcap grasslands. In recent years survey work undertaken by a number of keen grassland fungi enthusiasts as well as funded surveys has revealed how important Dorset is for not just waxcaps but the allies regularly found in grassland habitats. This is important work as it's also the case that the UK as a whole is of international importance for the grassland fungi assemblage.

In the last few years records of waxcaps (*Hygrocybe s.l.*), or the number of species and sites where they are found, has been increasing steadily. Each year is also different and 2017 proved to be an exceptional year for new species records but also for the diversity at some key sites.

So looking at some of the highlights, the first group to mention is the *Clavariaceae* the clubs, corals and spindles. Despite relatively drier than average early autumn conditions, by the second week of October enough moisture has arrived to bring forth mushroom fruiting bodies. At a site close to Pilsdon Pen the widespread but rarely recorded Straw Club *Clavaria straminea* and Ivory Coral *Ramariopsis kunzei* were found, the latter in some abundance in one spot. Both of these were new Dorset records occurring in a recently discovered rich waxcap grassland site. At the same site the nationally scarce earthtongue *Trichoglossum walteri* was the second county record along with another rarity, Matt Fanvault *Camarophyllopsis schluzeri*. Not all finds were from unimproved grasslands. Old lawns can be important for fungi and the second recent county record of Olive Earthtongue *Microglossum olivaceum*, a UK BAP Priority Species, was found at Bovington along with the 1st record for the club *Clavaria tenuipes*.



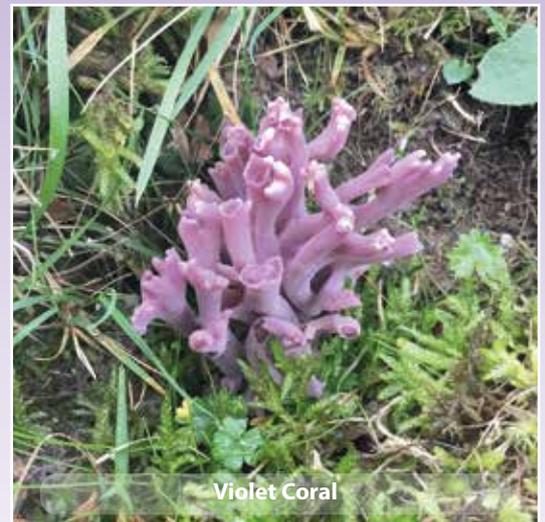
Ivory Coral



Straw Club



Jubilee Waxcap



Violet Coral

Survey at Aunt Mary's Bottom SSSI and the surrounding grasslands has identified this area as being particularly important for grassland fungi. This is a very important site for waxcaps and their allies and the big highlight this year was the purple/pink Jubilee Waxcap *Gliophorus reginae*, at the time, the fifteenth UK record. Only recognised as a full species recently, it was named to commemorate the diamond jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2012 and the 60th anniversary of her Coronation in 2013.

In early November, after a few minor frosts had set back inland grassland fungi sites, West Dorset's coastal grasslands were turning out to be particularly rich. A few visits to Abbotsbury Castle SSSI

found a good selection of *Hygrocybe* species including Blushing Waxcap *H. ovina* with just the one previous county record. But it was another *Clavariaceae* that stole the show again. Nestling on a northerly, mossy bank the discovery of the spectacular and beautiful Violet Coral *Clavaria zollingeri*. Another Dorset first, this scarce species is widespread in Wales and northern England so its discovery was a big surprise. Further west the grasslands on the Golden Cap Estate have proved to be very rich yielding another record of Blushing Waxcap plus the uncommon Beige Coral *Clavulinopsis umbrinella*.

Sean Cooch
Natural England
Senior Advisor

