



# GRAMPIAN FUNGUS GROUP

Newsletter no. 17

Dec.2013

## Grampian Fungus Group: Aims

- To record the fungi of North East Scotland
- To encourage an interest in the importance of fungi in everyday life, wherever possible
- To develop a greater understanding of fungi through forays, talks and workshops open to members of the Group
- To increase the awareness of fungi through contact with local members of both professional and amateur groups which have environmental interests
- To promote the conservation of fungi and of threatened habitats of rare fungi

## Committee Members:

### Chairperson

#### **Toni Watt**

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### Group Leader / Foray Organizer / Newsletter Editor

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### Secretary, Recorder

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## Editorial

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First of all I would like to say a big thank you to Bill Burns who stood down as Chairperson at the last AGM. Bill's interest in and support of the GFG have been much appreciated as has his good company on many a foray. We hope to continue seeing him at forays in the future.

We are then delighted that Toni Watt has agreed to stand as the new Chairperson. Toni works for the National Trust for Scotland and has been coming out with the GFG for many years. We are very lucky to have her on board.

2013 saw the first UK Fungus Day - an initiative set up and supported by the British Mycological Society. October 13th is a little on the late side for the main Scottish fruiting season but as you will see in the reports below, the fungi did not disappoint.

Corticoid fungi continue to feature in our list of activities and following a successful weekend last April (report below), a further workshop is planned for 2014.

Last but not least, those of you who follow the Yahoo chatroom group will know that we annually have an informal New Year's Day fungal challenge! I have written up below one of the outcomes of this year's challenge - the Sunday Times did a great job!

*Liz Holden*

## Membership

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Just a reminder that **annual subscriptions are due on January 1<sup>st</sup>** for 2014. The 2013 AGM agreed to maintain the subscription at £5.00 and cheques should be made out to the Grampian Fungus Group and sent to Denis Bain at the address above.

**N.B. If you have recently changed your email or house address, please let Denis know so that he can update the records.**

### Grampian Fungus Group: Members

There were 36 paid up members at the end of Oct 2013, the following is a list of those who have already paid their 2014 subscription: Glenn Roberts, Moira Webster, Alex Lewis, Seb Hess, Joke Wardle and Leona Whiteoak

**N.B. if your name is not on the list above and you wish to remain a member, please send your cheque before you forget!!**

## Diary Dates

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A full list of forays and events will be sent out in the spring. One date for your diary is our spring foray / AGM taking place on **Sunday**

**April 27<sup>th</sup>**, meeting at 10.30am. Location details will follow in the spring.

## GFG - Foray Reports 2013

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The full species lists for the forays will be placed on the Scottish Fungi website in the spring (click on the following link <http://sites.google.com/site/scottishfungi/local-groups/grampian-fungus-group> and scroll down to the bottom (2012 lists are already there as a subpage); the following comments are just to give a flavour of each event. Distribution data are taken from the Fungal Records Database of Britain and Ireland (FRDBI), a database that is managed by the BMS.

### April 5 -7<sup>th</sup> 2013 Corticoid Workshop

Undaunted by late snowfall, eight of us took part in this weekend workshop. The event began with a refresher talk on what corticoids are (and what they are not!) as well as a look at some of the more obvious macro and micro characteristics. Saturday morning was bright and sunny and definitely on the crisp side of spring! Plenty of good material was collected though, even if some of it could have done with a shovel to locate!

As a group back in the workroom, we split the collections so that everybody had a small piece and then we each took a section and put it under our microscopes. Amazing how much easier it is to find clamps and basidia when there are eight of you searching! This proved very successful and I think that we all felt that we had learned something by the end of the weekend.

Particular thanks to Dave Savage for sharing some of his beautifully stained micro images with us - and telling about his journey into the world of corticoids with some excellent tips on the preparation of collections.



Fig. 1: Corticoid workshop 'extreme mycology' in action! (Liz Holden)

### Sun. April 28<sup>th</sup> Spring Foray and AGM

Returning to Castle Fraser for this event, the morning foray produced a good range of species. Most of the collections were wood rotting corticoids or brackets, including

beautiful material of *Antrodia serialis* on the cut end of a spruce trunk and the bright orangey patches of *Peniophora incarnata* on dead broom stems. The compost heap at the bottom of the garden area was host to *Melanoleuca cognata* - living up to its common name of Spring Cavalier, with its wonderful sweeping cap.



Fig. 2: *Melanoleuca cognata* (Liz Holden)

Many thanks to the National Trust for Scotland, which hosted the AGM again. Full minutes are available to members on request, the following being a brief overview:

Seven members attended with one apology.

Our events continue to be advertised on calendars on both the Scottish Fungi website and the yahoo chatroom. Click on the link: <http://sites.google.com/site/scottishfungi/local-groups/grampian-fungus-group>.

The Treasurer's report indicated that there were 30 members at the time of the AGM. The meeting agreed to maintain the subscription at £5.00.

Bill Burns stepped down as Chairperson and was thanked for all his support in that role. Toni Watt was elected as his successor.

A small stereo microscope has been bought and was on display at the meeting. Liz reported that it had been well used already at various workshops.

Liz Holden thanked those members who had offered to lead forays during 2013. The AGM was followed by tea and biscuits and some excellent slides from Mary Bain and Liz Holden.

#### Sat. Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>

A visit to Culbin Forest is always an event to look forward to with easy access (once the 'doggy zone' is behind you) and wonderful pine species to find.

This year, the tooth fungi that are usually an enjoyable element of the visit were barely visible. Turned out that they weren't just late in fruiting in 2013; they hardly appeared at all at

any of their usual sites on Deeside or Speyside. Maybe it was too dry at a crucial point in their development - who knows?! No sign of the *Laccaria maritima* either (this is its only UK site and it hasn't been found since 1999). Other fungi more than made up for this with a stunning display of both birch and pine mycorrhizal species. *Russula nauseosa* was recorded, an uncommon pine associate, it is one of the small and rather fragile *Russula* species with a cap usually less than 4cm across. It also has distinctive dark cream coloured gills and spore print.



Fig. 3: *Russula nauseosa* (Liz Holden)

#### Sun. Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>

The dry summer weather certainly took its toll on the Forvie fungi although we did find lovely material of *Cortinarius trivialis* growing with the willow scrub. Most exciting was the record of *Hygrocybe phaeococcinea*. This appears to be a species with a preference for dune grassland and at first glance could be mistaken for the much more frequently recorded *H. coccinea*. What distinguishes it in the field is the thin black layer on the cap, visible in the photo below. *H. phaeococcinea* is known from 5 other coastal sites in Scotland but this was a first for Forvie.



Fig. 4: *Hygrocybe phaeococcinea* (Liz Holden)

#### Sat. Sept. 7<sup>nd</sup>

A good turnout of people, 9 altogether on what turned out to be a beautiful day at Pitmeddon Gardens, a new site for the GFG. Brona, one of the garden staff joined us for the day which was a huge help as she could lead us to the

interesting areas of the gardens and to the gardeners' enormous wood stack – a very happy hunting ground for rotters! But maybe most interesting was one area of the lawns which Brona led us to which we thought would be all highly managed but turned out to be good for grassland species. Altogether we found *Entolomas*, a yellow *Clavulinopsis* and 4 different waxcaps including the lovely green parrot waxcaps, *Hygrocybe psittacina*, yellow *H. ceracea*, red *H. coccinea* and an orange / red one which was causing problems until it was looked at closely through a magnifying glass and gave off a strong smell of honey, *H. reidii*. It turns out the lawns at Pitmedden Gardens are highly managed but only by a lawnmower, not chemically treated in any way just cut regularly. Brona was so interested in the fungi that she has since contacted us to say they are leaving the lawns uncut now for the rest of the autumn and asked us for some interpretation to explain about the waxcaps to the public.

I did a follow up visit at the end of October and the number of waxcaps increased with the white *H. virginea*, sturdy meadow waxcaps, *H. pratensis* and a dull coloured waxcap with a viscid gill edge which turned out to be *H. laeta*.



Fig. 5: *Hygrocybe psittacina* (Toni Watt)

Toni Watt

#### Sun. Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>

The visit to Drum was threatened with high wind and dire weather warnings but 6 of us met in the car park and decided to see how far we would get. We soon lost the wind and it turned out to be a lovely day for us and for the fungi.

We explored a good variety of habitats, the lawns with their veteran trees, before heading away from the castle, through woodland edge, heath and then a birch wood and returning up the drive.

Highlights included a huge dead sequoia tree which had been felled for safety reasons 15 years ago and then left in situ to rot away. It has now become a mini-habitat in its own right with a lovely colony of Jelly Tooth Fungus – *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum* and surprisingly a few brick red *Lactarius* species which puzzled

me as I thought they were mycorrhizal, until I looked up and realised that young birch trees were also growing in the rotten tree hence the mycorrhizal fungi.

Other good finds were some Hedgehog Fungi, *Hydnum repandum*, near lots of Amethyst Deceivers *Laccaria amethystea*, Jelly Babies, *Leotia lubrica*, some extra large Porcelain Fungi, *Oudemansiella mucida*, and a beautiful clump of Angels Wings, *Pleurotellus porrigens*.



Fig. 6: Fallen sequoia tree wood rotter's heaven (Toni Watt)

Toni Watt

#### Sat. Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>

A group of 13 of us set out to explore Hazelhead Country Park in Aberdeen. A good selection of fruiting fungi were recorded including a fine collection of *Cortinarius bolaris*.

Andy Taylor

#### Sun. Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>

This foray saw us return to the Crannach, a site of regenerating pinewood on Deeside which is now owned and managed by the RSPB. Lovely material of both birch and pine associating species was collected including *Cortinarius armillatus*, *C. triumphans*, *Lactarius trivialis* and *Tricholoma stiparophyllum* (birch) and *Mycena rosella*, *Tricholoma equestre* and *T. portentosum* (pine). No tooth fungi this visit. The most intriguing species was collected in amongst young pine and when handed to me was almost completely white. This species had a cortina and when it produced red brown spores that evening, ticked boxes for the genus *Cortinarius*. It had a very bitter taste and working through the keys, the collection came out at *C. barbatus*. This would be new to Scotland and is currently with Andy Taylor awaiting molecular investigation.



Fig. 7. *Cortinarius barbatulus*? Red brown spores visible on the veil zone (Liz Holden)

**Sat. Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Another beautiful day and a good crowd of people turned up to Pitcaple Woods, a new place for the group to foray in. We also had the benefit of some children joining the group, with their sharp eyes and they were soon finding all sorts of fruiting bodies and bringing them back for identification.

I had been to the woods in the week previously and was concerned that there would not be much about – I shouldn't have worried, when you get 12 adults and 5 children hunting through the undergrowth they soon find lots of interesting fungi which Rosemary somehow managed to keep up with, producing a lovely long list.

Highlights included the scented *Clitocybe fragrans* all over the place which we soon all began to recognise, a group of *Hygrophorus pustulatus* with their scurfy stems and widely spaced gills and *Cortinarius hemitrichus* the frosty webcap. An interesting new wood to explore.



Fig. 8: *Hygrophorus pustulatus* (Toni Watt)

**Sun. Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>**

A day of family activities and forays was organised at Houghton Country Park to celebrate UK Fungus Day. The local press gave us good coverage leading up to the event and the weather was kind to us, however the turn out of visitors on the day was disappointing - we will have to do more advertising next year!

The fungi however were wonderful - October would normally be getting rather late for many species but 2013 was an exception in NE Scotland and fruiting went on into December and beyond in some places.



Fig. 9: Houghton Country Park display for UK Fungus Day (Liz Holden)

Pride of place must go to the collection of distorted *Clitocybe nebularis* (Clouded Agaric) which produced a perfect *Volvariella surrecta* (Piggyback Rosegill) - a first documented record for Scotland!



Fig. 10: *Volvariella surrecta* on distorted *Clitocybe nebularis* (Liz Holden)

*Liz Holden*

**Contributions from GFG Members and Friends**

**Fascinating Fungi: new residential course at Aigas Field Centre, Beaulieu**

A new teaching week was launched in 2013 by the Aigas Field Centre near Beaulieu in Inverness-shire. Aigas is the family home of Sir John and Lady Lucy Lister-Kaye and they have been running environmentally themed holidays there for 37 years. Meals are taken in the main house and accommodation is mostly in comfortable wooden lodges set in beautiful and fungus full grounds.

This course 'Fascinating Fungi' is aimed at complete beginners and is a relaxed introduction to the fungi, their habitats and life

styles, with the opportunity to join in with some of the Centre's other wildlife watching activities taking place in the evening if wished.



Fig. 11 *Ganoderma lucidum* (Liz Holden)

The nearby sites proved to be wonderful for collecting fungi. *Ganoderma lucidum* was found on the first morning out - only 5 Scottish sites and all in this corner; why here? Other interesting species included *Cortinarius cinnabarinus* - a once seen never forgotten colour fest of a fungus - almost impossible to reproduce its vibrancy in a photo!



Fig. 12 *Cortinarius cinnabarinus* - the colours were better than this honestly (Liz Holden)

With a range of habitats from the sweeping grasslands of Strathfarrar to the ancient birch and pine woods of Glen Affric and from the alder woods at Loch Fleet to the humid river gorge of Reelig Glen, this is a first class introduction to the fungi of Scotland.

This course will run again in 2014 from Sat Sept. 20th - 27th. Further information and booking contact given below.

**The Kindrogan Field Study Centre 'Identifying Fungi'** ran successfully again in 2013 with lots of wonderful fungi as ever. The course will run from Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> in 2014; further information and booking contact given below .

*Liz Holden*

## Tremella simplex and Beatrix Potter

Over the last three years, some of us who keep up with the Yahoo Chatroom, have entertained ourselves with an informal fungus collecting challenge on New Year's Day. This year I decided to foray close to home and see what I could find. One of the species obligingly fruiting was the rarely recorded and beautiful pink *Aleurodiscus amorphus* which was collected for the first time at Mar Lodge last winter, on fallen *Abies* twigs.

Roy Watling had mentioned for me to look out for an obligate mycoparasite of this fungus - *Tremella simplex* but despite my best efforts in 2013, I never saw it. Maybe the mild (relatively) and damp December made the difference but on January 1st this latter fungus was merrily fruiting away - blissfully unaware that this was the first collection in Scotland since 1938 - and that was only the third of two even older records.



Fig. 13 The pale blobs of *Tremella simplex* growing on the wood rotter *Aleurodiscus amorphus*

When I checked this species out on Mycologia Scotica

(<https://sites.google.com/site/mycologiascotica/mycologia-scotica-1>), I found that Roy had added a note to say that this is one of the species that Beatrix Potter had painted during a holiday on Tayside in 1896. She hadn't realised that the pale blobs were another fungus but from her notes and the illustrations of spores it is clear that this is what she was looking at.

Anyway, it turns out that I was not the only person to be amazed by this and the story was taken up by the Sunday Times on January 12th! Beatrix was an excellent illustrator of fungi and with the help of the local postman from Dunkeld, Charles McIntosh, identified and meticulously drew dozens of species. Several of these paintings are lodged at the Perth Museum and Art Gallery and many others at the Armit Museum in Cumbria.

*Liz Holden*

## Front page photo

*Pleurotus ostreatus* photographed by Mary Bain.

## Useful Fungal Information

The information given below is not exhaustive. If you know of any other relevant contacts, please let Liz know.

### Books and Other Publications

There is a wide range of material available for all levels of mycological interest - the only limit really being one's purse! Many books for beginners are available in good book stores but there are other sources that are useful to know about, especially as one progresses beyond the limits of beginners guides.

Paul Nichol has produced an excellent simple key to genus called '**An Initial Guide to the Identification of Mushrooms and Toadstools**'. The new, improved third edition is available from Liz Holden, cost £5.50.

The **BMS** have produced an excellent range of 'Guides For The Amateur Mycologist'.

The titles at present are '**Guide for the Beginner**'; '**Guide to Identification with a Microscope**'; '**Guide to Recording Fungi**'; '**Guide for the Kitchen Collector, Preservation and Cooking of Fungi**'; '**Downy Mildews, Powdery Mildews, Smuts and Rusts**'. Each costs £2.00. Individuals can order directly from Gill Butterfill, Library, British Mycological Society, Wolfson Wing, Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey TW9 3AB. (There is also a set of 16 postcards of larger fungi costing £3.00 plus 50p post available from the same address).

The BMS also publish **KEYS** which is a series of papers containing a range of keys and checklists details of which are available from Liz Holden. There are now eleven issues of this publication available on the BMS website

Many of the more advanced books and sets of identification keys are available from Retail Postal Book Sales Department, **The Richmond Publishing Co. Ltd.**, PO Box 963, Slough SL2 3RS. It is certainly worth comparing their catalogue with those of other natural history book specialists such as Subbuteo and the Natural History Book Service.

**Association of British Fungus Groups** produces a quarterly journal containing a range of material of interest to field mycologists. Annual subscription available from Michael Jordan, Harveys, Alston, Nr. Axminster, Devon EX13 7LG.

### Residential Courses on Fungi

A number of field centres run courses on various aspects of mycology: -

**Aigas Field Centre**, Aigas, Beauly, Inverness-shire IV4 7AD Tel:01463 782443. Email: info@aigas.co.uk

**Kindrogan Field Centre**, Enochdu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire PH10 7PG Tel: 01250 870150. Email: admin.kd@field-studies-council.org

**The Field Studies Council**, Head Office, Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

SY4 1HW Tel: 01743 850674. The FSC has centres located across England and Wales.

### Other Items of Mycological Interest

For those who wish to take their mycology a little more seriously and tackle some of the more advanced identification keys, a microscope is essential. The following six companies are those that I know of who will send out catalogues with products suitable for our needs:

**Meiji Techno UK Ltd.** Hillside, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2AN Tel: 01934 733 655 E-mail: [enquiries@meijitechno.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@meijitechno.co.uk) Web Sites: [www.meijitechno.co.uk](http://www.meijitechno.co.uk) [www.microscopes.co.uk](http://www.microscopes.co.uk)

**Brunel Microscopes Ltd.** Unit 12 Enterprise Centre, Bumpers Way, Bumpers Industrial Estate, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 6QA Tel: 01294 462655

**Optical Vision Ltd.**, Unit 2b, Woolpit Business Park, Woolpit, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9RT Tel: 01359 244200

**Mycologue** - a catalogue of accessories for mushroom collectors available from 47, Spencer Rise, London NW5 1AR

**Micro Instruments Ltd.**, 18, Hanborough Park, Long Hanborough, Witney, Oxen OX29 8LH 01993 883595. This company sell compound and stereo microscopes with good optics at very reasonable prices.

**Quekett Microscopical Club** - the club magazine often has second hand microscopes for sale and accepts 'items wanted' adverts too.

### Scottish Field Mycology - Yahoo Chatroom

The Scottish field mycology chat room is a wonderful facility for exchanging information and ideas. You can also use a spreadsheet posted on it to enter records - simply sign in and click on 'databases'. Do check it out and consider joining if you are not already a member.

[Scottish\\_field\\_mycology@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Scottish_field_mycology@yahoo.co.uk)  
[http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/scottish\\_field\\_mycology](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/scottish_field_mycology)

Click on the button 'join this group' and follow the instructions. There is no cost to become a member.

### Grampian Fungus Group - books and equipment at Dec 2012

The books, microscopes and chemicals are stored by Liz Holden and can be obtained by ringing or emailing Liz, preferably just before a meeting or foray.

The following is a list of the books and other equipment that the GFG can supply / lend to its members.

### Grampian Fungus Group Library

**The Genus Hygrocybe** (2010) by David Boertmann. This is the second edition of this very user friendly guide to the waxcaps. Goodkeys, photos, descriptions and English text.

**Boletus** (2005) one of the Fungi Europaei series, this book contains keys in English with many beautiful photographs of fruit bodies and line drawings of microscopic features.

**Funga Nordica** (2008) the updated keys building on those published in Nordic Macromycetes below. All in English and if you have a microscope, well worth trying.

**Microfungi on Land Plants** (1997) a fascinating and comprehensive guide – a real eye opener to the smaller fungi all around us. The fungi are listed under their host plant and can often be recognised from the macroscopic descriptions.

**MycoKey – 1.0** (2003) this is a computer-based key that is run from a CD. It is great fun to use, with one key designed for complete beginners and another for more experienced mycologists. The keys cover 500 genera.

**Nordic Macromycetes Vol. 2** (1992). A set of keys (in English) for Polyporales, Boletales, Agaricales and Russulales – not intended for beginners this is really what you need when you start identifying fungi with a microscope.

**Keys to Agarics and Boleti** (1978). A set of keys (in English) for Polyporales, Boletales, Agaricales and Russulales) – as above but a little older – still a very useful text.

**Mushrooms of Britain and Europe** (1999). A pocket sized photographic field guide by Regis Courtecuisse in the Collins Wildlife Trust Guide series, published by HarperCollins

**Waxcap-Grassland Fungi – Keys to *Hygrocybe*, *Camarophyllopsis*, *Dermoloma* and grassland *Leptonia* species in Britain** (1996) Alick Henrici – a set of photocopied keys using microscopic characters

**A key to the genera of the Agarics and Boleti (1950)** AA Pearson. Rather out of date but still a useful key to genus using microscopic characters

**Guides for the Amateur Mycologist 2. Guide to Identification with a microscope** (1994) JVR Marriott Full of useful information about working with a microscope

**Flora of British Fungi Colour Identification Chart** (1969) A colour chart, referred to in some British texts.

**The Mitchell Beazley pocket guide to Mushrooms and Toadstools** (1982) DN Pegler – a small field guide arranged by habitat.

**Chatto Nature Guides British and European Mushrooms and Fungi** (1977) A. Neuner – not very many species included but some very nice photographs

**Fungi of Britain and Europe** (1989) Stephan Buczacki – pocket field guide illustrated with drawings – a good range of species included

**A Colour Guide to familiar Mushrooms** (1978) M.Svrcek – a pocket field guide illustrated with nice drawings although not many species included

**Mushrooms** (1996) M. Svrcek a pocket field guide – illustrated with photographs – a much better range of species

**The new field guide to fungi** (1978) E. Soothill and A Fairhurst – reasonable amount of text and species although photographs are rather disappointing

**A handbook of Mushrooms** undated A. Pilat. Not very many species included: illustrated with drawings

**Les Champignons de France** (1946) A. Maublanc. Not very many species included: illustrated with rather nice drawings

**Fungi** (1998) P. Starosta and C Epinat A photographic essay – coffee table book

**Colour Encyclopedia of Mushrooms and Toadstools** (1979) G. Kibby – a photographic essay – coffee table book

**The Wonderful world of Mushrooms and other fungi** (1977) H. Pursey – a photographic essay – coffee table book

**I Funghi** A collection of cards – each card illustrating a species (text in Italian)

**Photographing Nature: Fungi** (1975) H. Angel – lots of information about how to photograph fungi – a bit out of date?

**How the Mushroom Got its Spots** (2002) An Explainers' Guide to Fungi. British Mycological Society and Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council

**Fungus Fred goes Foraying** (2002) Maggie Hadley. British Mycological Society

**The Fungi Name Trail** (2003) A key to commoner fungi. Field Studies Council / British Mycological Society

**Recommended English Names for Fungi** (2003) The Plantlife Bookstore

**Collecting and Recording Fungi** (2004) Guidance Notes. British Mycological Society.

**Identification of the Larger Fungi** (1973) R. Watling. Don't be misled by the date – this is a first class introduction to working with macro fungi and well worth a read.

### Grampian Fungus Group Microscopes and miscellaneous equipment

*Microscopes* - 1x Norvex binocular stereo microscope with built in LED illumination.

1 x Wessex compound binocular microscope with built in light source and mechanical stage

3 x Watson compound monocular microscopes with built in light source and mechanical stage

*Equipment - mostly for working with microscopes*

NB the chemicals come with health and safety information and are supplied in appropriate dispensers. There is a charge of £1.00 a bottle.

Glass microscope slides

Glass cover slips

Melzer's Reagent

10% Ammonia solution

10% Potassium hydroxide solution

Congo Red in ammoniacal solution

Ferrous crystals

1 x Bell-Howell slide projector and transit case.

Accepts carousels.