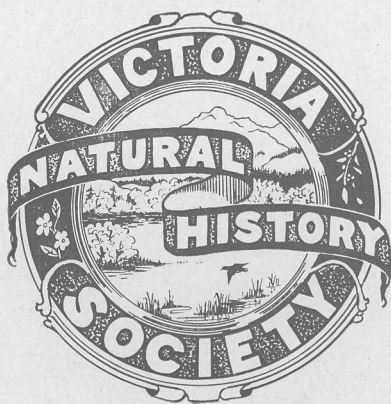


# *The* **VICTORIA NATURALIST**

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*Published by*



VICTORIA, B. C.

*Vol. 4, No. 5*

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NOVEMBER

1947

# THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

Published by

THE VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



CRESTED LEPIOTA.

*Lepiota cristata.*



LITTLE BELL OMPHALIA.

*Omphalia campanella.*

The October monthly meeting of the Society was held in the Provincial Library Reading Room on October 14th, with the President Dr. Carl taking the chair. Some correspondence was dealt with and Mr. Meugens gave an interim report on the finances of the Audubon Society lectures being held under the auspices of this Society. Mr. George Hardy of the Provincial museum then gave a report of his experiences in the Jordan Meadows area of Vancouver Island.

Mr. Hardy began his talk by describing his experiences in 1946 when he first tried to get to Jordan Meadows to study the flora of that area. He made three attempts, got lost several times and finally decided to make a more determined effort in 1947. So this year Mr. Hardy went in again, this time with two other scientists.

In the early days of settlers on Vancouver Island pasture land was a necessity for horses as well as cattle and settlers in the Sooke area went in search of free pasturage. Among these was a farmer called Weeks who settled at what is called Jordan Meadows. Jordan Meadows is fifty miles west of Victoria on the Port Renfrew road, and is a valley of triangular shape. Weeks built a good farm house and outhouses there which have since been removed. The only building now standing there is a trapper's hut which contains some of the furniture made by Weeks for his home. Mr. Hardy's party found also a home-made harrow and a hay-rack and old fence posts which must have been used on the Weeks farm forty years ago.

The Port Renfrew Road bisects the valley. Both the Jordan and the Leech river start in the Jordan Meadows. The great absorbent power of the Meadow is shown by the fact that in August of this year water was still flowing. The soil is a mixture of silt and peat. It has large areas covered with Burnet. The creek which flows through the area is 12 to 20 feet wide but broadens several times into small lakes. The sides of the creek often have a



ten foot drop. There is a lake called Trout Lake which is three-quarters of a mile long and is an old glacial basin.

Of the general flora 150 species were collected, 45 of them on the Meadows themselves. These latter were all swamp plants. Gentian was very plentiful. The long-leaved sundew grows on the sides of the creek. There are many very large trees on the slopes above the Meadows but these are past their prime. Nine species of fir trees were identified, including red and yellow cedar.

The most abundant mammal in the area is the red squirrel, but the black-tail deer, wolf and bear are also plentiful. Bears eat the roots of skunk cabbage and scoop out wasps' nests. The common toad and the red-legged frog were seen, and garter snakes.

Forty species of birds were identified, with Steller's and Canada jays most abundant.

On conclusion of Mr. Hardy's talk several members asked questions; Mr. Bowes wanted to know if there were any fish in the lakes and if so were they still diseased as they had been when he last met them some years ago. Mr. Hardy replied that there are still fish there and that they still had cists which made them unattractive for eating.

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### BUILD A HOME FOR "FLICKER"

The following is a suggestion or a reminder rather than anything in the way of a new idea, for many bird lovers have been just as successful and more so, than myself in winning some particular bird to stay around one's own locality.

Some may say - the flickers would stay there whether encouraged or not, but will they? Many of their natural homes in hollow trees are being cut down as the many new houses are going up, and with the new home owners there are increasing numbers of dogs and cats to chase these birds off the grounds where they get so much of their food. Then too, we have some folks who object to an unusually noisy bird and also see no other way but to call the police, in the hope of getting the bird shot. In most cases the objectionable bird dares to try to make a hole in a house in which to live, or is merely following its instinctive urge to hunt food or call its mate. Occasionally the drumming on a hollow sounding object may be for the very fun of it.

One such bird took to this pastime on my house, and at times it got beyond being funny especially in the early hours of the morning or when the children were supposed to be asleep. So I decided to build the bird a home to attract it from the house, for I knew that one, if not more, are in the habit of sleeping under the gables. In fact at one point flickers had pecked well into the ship-lap, after dislodging several pieces of shingle.

Fortunate are those folks who have trees on their property large enough to erect and camouflage so large a bird house as is necessary for a flicker, for it is hard to make anything which does not

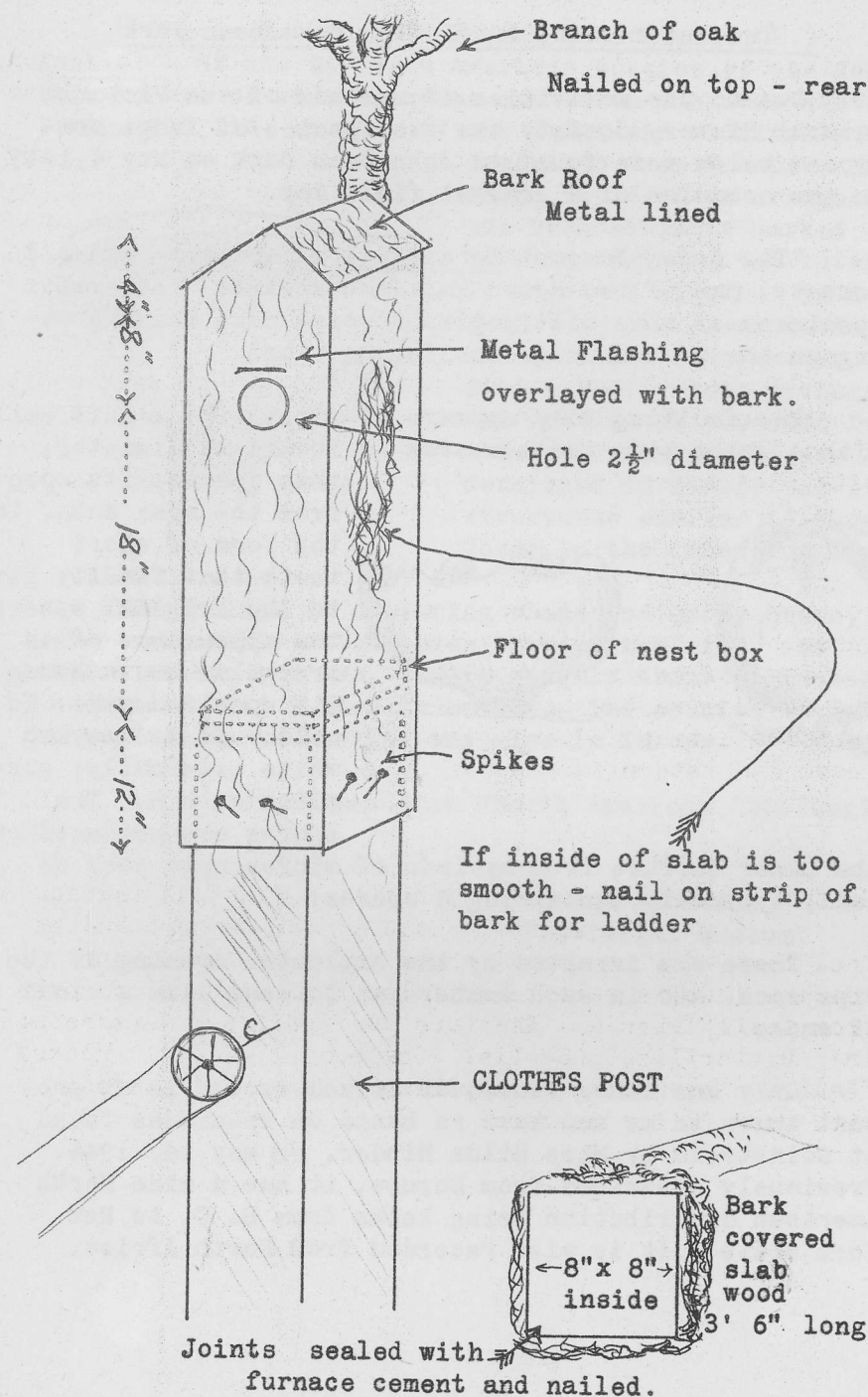
strike one as a "curious lump of wood." My back garden, surrounded with houses, has but a clothes-line post, so on this "tree" I made Flicker's home, using four-foot long slab wood (bark-covered) as building material. Anyone can design his or her own bird house so long as it has the general character of that made by the bird itself especially in regard to size of entrance hole and depth of nesting space, etc. (These details are shown in the diagram). (Page 53)

I know of four occupied woodpecker's houses where the respective holes face east, north, south and west, all within 500 yards of each other, so position of your site need be no bar to another "Flicker's home" right in the Victoria area.

For several months now a bird has occupied my box and has not bothered my house at all. I have seen three birds at a time fighting for possession of it. A nesting box certainly repays in interest by permitting one to observe the habits of flicker, especially the courting antics and the regularity with which they leave and return to the box.

J. Galliford.

Editor's note: The short article on Flickers was contributed by one of our members and we feel that this is a good opportunity to remind our readers that we welcome articles from members and even from their friends. What are you specially interested in? Butterflies? Shells? Seaweed? Insects? Rocks? Plants? Why not share anything of special interest with your fellow members?



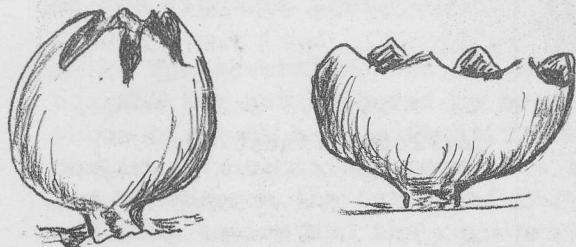


### Two Interesting Fungi from John Dean Park

Due to the activities of members of the Victoria Natural History Society the two species of fungi mentioned below were found in John Dean Park on May 4, 1947 on the occasion of a general field day.

"The Crown Fungus" Sarcosphaera coronaria (Jacq.) Schrot. One of two North American species. Several specimens of this distinctive species were found growing on the ground under coniferous trees.

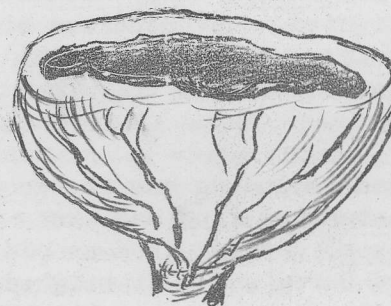
The fruiting body appears at first like a puff ball with a short stem and measures  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter; this soon splits open from the apex down, in the form of short teeth that finally give to the original sphere the appearance of an irregular crown hence its specific name. In colour it is greyish white externally; purplish within. The spores are produced on the inner surface from myriads of microscopic sacs or asci, typically containing 8 spores.



These are irrupted by the explosive opening of the ripe sacs, and in such numbers as to seem like a cloud of smoke.

Only one other Vancouver Island record is at present known to me and that is based on specimens found at Goldstream by Miss Hilda Hinder, on May 14, 1944. Previously described from Europe, it has a wide North American distribution being known from B. C. to New York State; it is also recorded from North Africa.

"The Socket Fungus" Paxina Ascetabulum (L.) Kuntze. Of the 14 North American species of the genus this is one of wide European and North American distribution and like so many of our fungi was originally described from Europe. In shape it is of an irregular cup with strongly marked veins or ribs on the outside; it might be compared to a tiny umbrella blown inside out or, before expansion, like a small brown cabbage. The spores are produced from the inner lining and are developed in minute sac-like structures similar to those found in the crown fungus.



The colour is of varying shades of smoky brown, paler externally at the base between the ribs, and darker within the cup. It is roughly about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and 1 inch in height. The species is found throughout North America and also in Europe.

Scientific names from "North American Cup-fungi", F. J. Seaver, 1942.

George A. Hardy,  
Provincial Museum.

FOURTH ANNUAL FUNGUS FORAY  
October 18th 1947

As in past years the Hudson's Bay woods were the contemplated hunting grounds, although, due to the rain that persisted throughout the afternoon, only a small part of the terrain was investigated. Nevertheless six members, three of whom were Juniors, appeared at the appointed time and place with an enthusiasm that the drenching rain failed to dampen.

Over 30 species were noted including one or two of exceptional interest. The outstanding find was the Hedgehog Fungus (Hydnum erinaceum) growing from an old branch stub on a small, stunted Garry oak. It weighed 1 lb. 5 oz. and measured 6" x 4".

Of almost equal interest was a fine specimen of the cauliflower Fungus (Sparassis crispa) at the base of a partially dead Balsam fir. It measured 12 inches across, and combined a remarkable compactness of form with a lightness of appearance.

On the ground near the oaks were the dun-coloured caps of the Honey Mushroom (Armillaria mellea), mute evidence of the deadly work its mycelium accomplished within the trunks or roots of its host tree.

In grassy places near the woodland border, the sticky heads of the Peg-top (Gomphidius glutinosa) were just appearing above ground, and the small slippery caps of the Pasture Stropharia (S. semi-globata) were noticed, while in the shade of the trees a few examples of the Woodland Agaric (Agaricus sylvicola) were seen.

The magnificent Orange Mushroom (Pholiota malicola) grew in cheerful colonies at the base of a rain-soaked Balsam fir, their caps, the colour and scent of oranges, adding a welcome glow to their surroundings.

Among shrubs of Waxberry in an open space at

the edge of the wood a large specimen of the deadly Fly Agaric (Amanita muscaria) was found, the yellowish wart-covered cap proclaiming its identity.

Under the oaks were the Oak-lover (Collybia dryophila) and two fine examples of the Waxy Laccaria (L. (Clitocybe) laccata var. amethystina.) Here also several other species of Clitocybe occurred, including C. nebularis. Both the Pear-shaped Puffball (Lycoperdon pyriforma) and the Gemmed Puffball (L. gemmatum) were occasionally seen, dotting the grassy places with their conspicuous white knobs. On stumps, the red-stemmed Mycena haematopa grew in small clumps, while the Shiny-stemmed Mycena (M. galericulata) was abundant in the debris of the forest floor. The dead Douglas fir cones sported their little colonies of the Cone mushroom (Collybia albipilata), one of the commonest species encountered. The gay little Bell Omphalia (O. campanella) crowded in cheerful groups on rotten logs.

The creamy caps of the Fringed Hypholoma (H. (Stropharia) ambigua) appeared as scattered individuals everywhere. A few specimens of the dainty Crested Lepiota (L. cristata) were seen, growing in protected places under the fir trees.

Among the bracket fungi the unique Globe Polypore (Cryptoporus volvatus) gladdened the eye, while the early stages of the Pine destroyer (Fomes pinicola) attracted attention, with its white, weeping excrescences. Here and there the Oak stumps were gay with the little ruffles of Stereum that almost covered the bark in overwhelming numbers.

Occasionally the dark brown irregular caps of the Velvet-top Fungus (Polyporus Schweinitzii) marked the site where it had ravaged, in the mycelial stage, the underground roots of the nearby fir trees. A lone False Chanterelle (Cantharellus aurantiacus) did its best to brighten the sodden ground.

George A. Hardy,  
Prov. Museum.



### JUNIOR PAGE

The first regular Saturday morning meeting of the Junior Naturalists was held in Dr. Carl's office in the Museum on September 20. At that meeting it was decided to hold the election of officers the following Saturday - the 27th. The result of that election follows:

Chairman - Ronald Forbes (re-elected).  
 Vice-Chairman - Ronald Sibbald.  
 Secretary - Brian Ainscough (re-elected).  
 Junior Editor - Charles Faulkner.  
 Assistant Junior Editor - David Duke.

Again this year Mrs. Bland has very kindly volunteered to act as convener for our group.

#### Activities:

A series of trips to the different departments in the Legislative Buildings has been planned and already several have been undertaken.

On September 20th the collection of cut and polished stones in the Provincial Library was examined while Mr. W. G. Stalker answered scores of questions from the interested members, mainly Ron S.

On September 27th the members adjourned to the Mineral Museum where Dr. Holland explained the interesting displays.

On October 18th the Forestry Department were hosts to the Juniors. An interesting film on reforestation was shown by Mr. Monk who also presented each member with a small booklet and a two year old Douglas fir seedling.

Trips not yet undertaken include visits to: the Provincial Archives, the Agricultural Department, the Mapping Department, and the Entomological Laboratory.

On October 4th and 11th minor expeditions were made to Beacon Hill Park under the supervision of Mr. Hardy. On the former the main purpose was to identify native trees. Included in the list were: Oregon ash, Scouler's willow, Garry oak, Arbutus, Hawthorn, Douglas fir. On the latter expedition fungi were the object. Found were, among others: Sulphur polypore, three types of Rusula, Fly agaric, Inky cap fungi, Peg top mushroom, Waxy Laccaria, Honey mushroom.

Dick Goulding and Ron Edwards have been appointed to be in charge of the case in the Museum hall and we are hoping to have a display of native plant seeds, or twigs of native evergreens.

This year we have quite a few new members and hope they will enjoy being members.

Charles Faulkner.

#### LIST OF JUNIOR MEMBERS - - - OCTOBER 1947.

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Brian Ainscough   | Ronald Edwards   |
| David Birley      | James Evans      |
| Brian Capon       | Charles Faulkner |
| Donald Carey      | Ronald Forbes    |
| Robert Carmichael | Richard Golding  |
| Bruce Cuppage     | David Palmer     |
| Valerie Dowling   | Ronald Sibbald   |
| Margaret Duke     | Allan Watson     |
| David Duke        | Russell Wiggs    |
|                   | Robert Young     |

--- NOTICES ---

Nov.3rd (Monday)

2nd Audubon Lecture at the Prince Robert House

Time - 8 p.m.

Note: Due to the great interest shown in these lectures it is expected that the hall will be quite full. Seats for season ticket holders will not be held after 7:45 p.m.

Tuesday

Nov.18th: Monthly Meeting in the Provincial Library Reading Room at eight o'clock.

Speaker: Mr. G. Andrews, of the Dept. of Lands, Aerial Surveys.

Subject: Mapping B.C. from the Air.

(Members will please note that as Nov.11th is a holiday, the monthly meeting is being held a week later than usual)

Tuesday

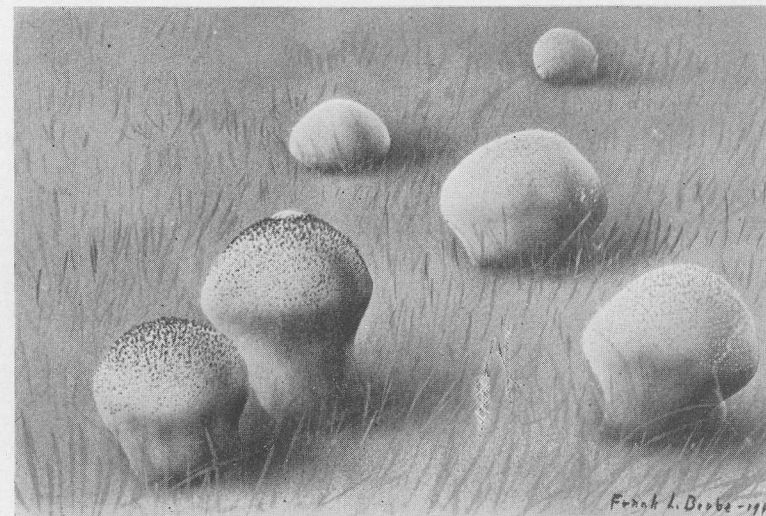
Nov.25th: Marine biology Group Meeting at Museum, at 8 o'clock.

Speaker: Mr. G. Hardy.

Tuesday

Dec.2nd: Zoology group meeting at Mrs. Hobson's, 2284 Windsor Rd.

Speaker: Dr. Carl.



GEMMED PUFFBALL.

*Lycoperdon gemmatum.*



TAN-COLOURED RUSSULA.

*Russula alutacea.*



# Victoria Natural History Society

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