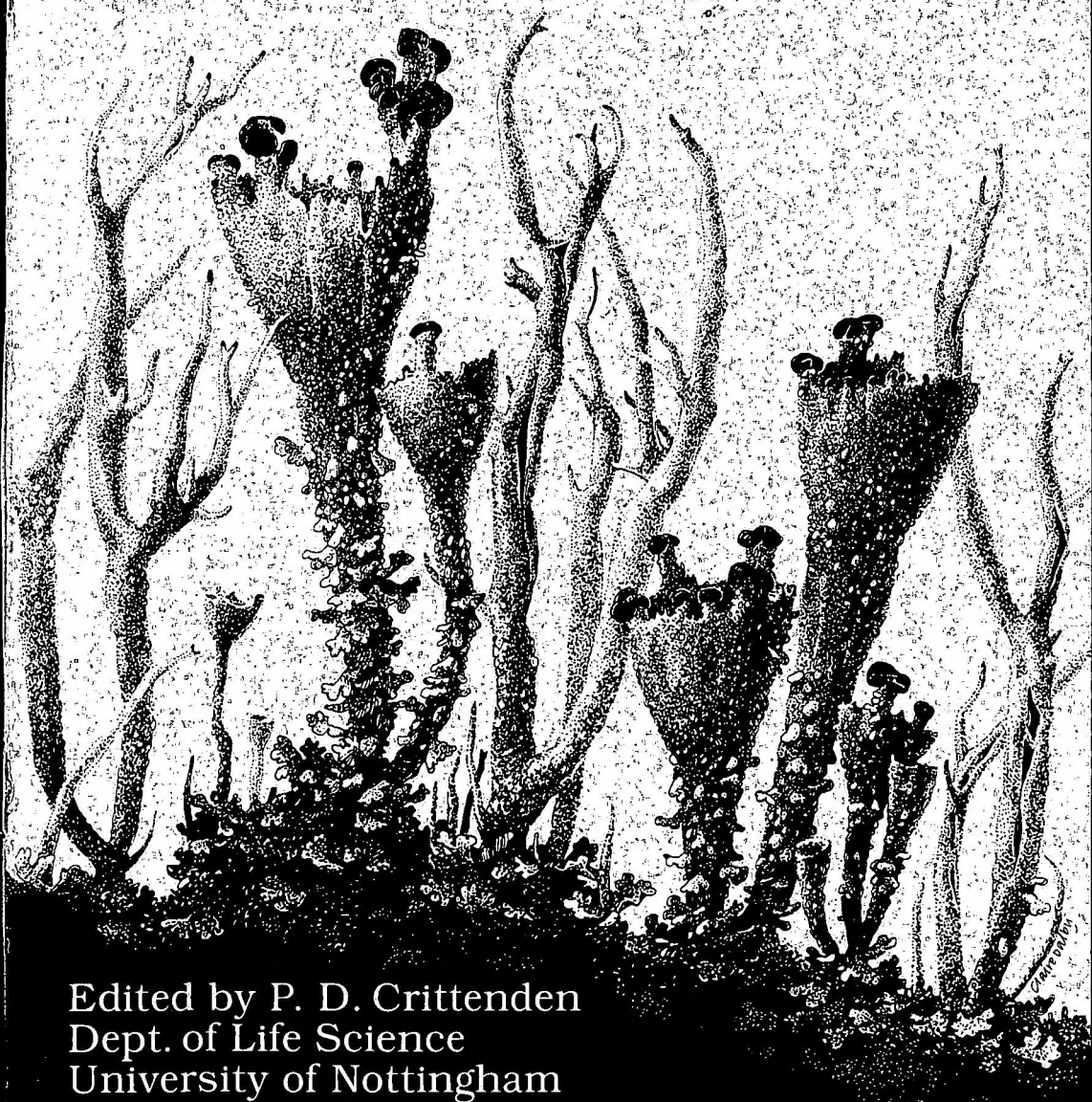


BRITISH LICHEN SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Edited by P. D. Crittenden
Dept. of Life Science
University of Nottingham

Semenov of the Murmansk Area Department for Hydrometeorology & Environmental Monitoring reported that the radionuclide content of *Cladonia* lichens in the region is lower than in those further south in Scandinavia. Small areas c. 20 km in diameter with slightly higher levels of contamination were thought to be due to localised rainout of Chernobyl-derived products. Dr V. Krychkov from the Institute of Economic Problems, Apatity, confirmed that dose rates in the region are generally within the range 13-16 R h⁻¹.

Peter Crittenden

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR THE LARGEST LICHEN

In 1989 (Bulletin 65:22) Oliver Gilbert asked the question 'Where are Britain's largest lichens?' In this article he refers to a number of large lichens that he had seen in his travels as a lichenologist. These lichens included a *Caloplaca flavescens* 27 cm in diameter in the churchyard at Burford, Oxfordshire, an *Ochrolechia parella* 54 x 52 cm seen in Caenlochan Glen, Angus, and a *Lecidea fuscoatra* 35 x 33 cm at Melrose Abbey, Roxburghshire.

Prof. G. Degelius followed this with accounts of some large lichens he had found on the Island of Vega Norway (Bulletin 66:25). The largest of these being an *Anaptychia runcinata* 75 cm in diameter and a *Parmelia alpicola* about 70 cm in diameter.

All these lichens, being large, are almost certainly of some considerable age. This produces the problem of whether they are one large thallus or, at some time in the past, formed from two or more genetically similar thalli which have fused together. It is not possible to be certain and possibly the best that it is possible to do is to look for thalli that have roughly circular outlines. Obvious distortions in the outline may well be caused by thalli growing together.

Since the time of these articles there has been silence and I feel that it is now time to recommence the search. Since 1989 the lichens have had quite some time in which to grow larger! The largest lichen which I know about is the famous specimen of *Lobaria amplissima* found by Francis Rose near Lawrenny in Pembroke. I measured the thallus in 1993 when the greatest continuous width was 998 mm and the maximum depth 795 mm. Comparing the photograph below with one taken two years earlier it does appear to

have grown. It is therefore likely that this has now passed the one metre mark. I will report on its size next time I am in the area.

Is this the largest lichen in Britain? I think so; but I expect that some member of the Society will be able to prove me wrong.

Frank Dobson



Lobaria amplissima at Lawrenny, Pembroke. Is this Britain's largest lichen?

LICHEN FLORA OF SURREY

I have started work on a Lichen Flora of Surrey and would be very grateful to receive any records that you may have in your possession. Interesting comments on sites or species will be especially welcome. The area to be surveyed is that of Vice-county 17 'Surrey' and not the reduced size that the county now has after the local government reorganisations.

Please send any information to me at the address given under Treasurer on the back inside cover.

Frank Dobson