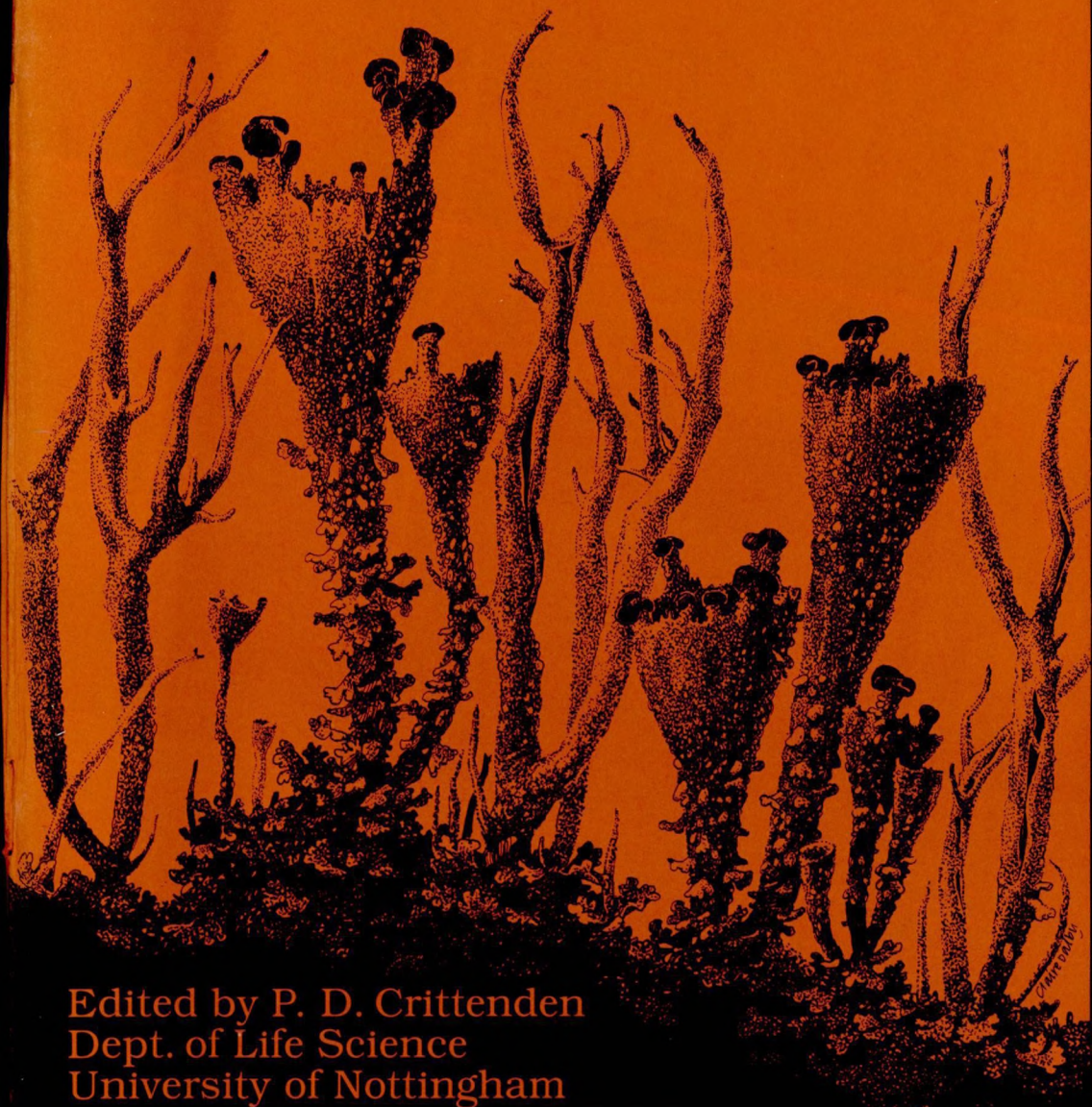


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+ key to non-yellow species of *Rhizocarpon*



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A NEGLECTED HABITAT: RESERVOIR DRAWDOWN ZONES

Reservoir drawdown zones are well known for supporting rare, ephemeral mosses and liverworts. As I was unaware of any lichen survey work in this habitat I spent a morning in January examining the drawdown zone of Ladybower Reservoir in the Peak District National Park. It is sited on Millstone Grit so the reservoir bed is covered with fragments and small flagstones of sandstone lying on sand or silt. In places a twenty percent cover of annual plants such as corn spurry, marsh cudweed and willow-herb had grown up.

One lichen was present in great abundance, this was *Trapelia coarctata*, which extended to 5 m (vertical) below top water mark. It became less frequent with increasing distance from the shore-line and at the very lowest level was represented by scattered sterile areoles. Growing with it was a small pyrenocarp with a dark thallus. This was later identified as *Verrucaria hydrella*. The drawdown zone must be a severely stressed habitat for lichens because these were the only two species that were at all common. At one point, 2 metres (vertical) below the shore-line, there was a group of about twenty stones well covered with a different pyrenocarp, it had a light coloured thallus and turned out to be *Thelidium minutulum*. The only other species encountered were *Lecidea crustulata* (rare) and an *Acarospora* (seen once) with all reactions negative. A haul of five lichens was disappointing and may be partly related to the acidity of the habitat. Most ruderal lichens such as *Peltigera didactyla* and *Steinia geophana* prefer nutrient-rich conditions.

A lowland reservoir at Ogsdon was visited next. Being on coal measures this also had a bed littered with pieces of sandstone. The main feature here was a 1 m wide band of abundantly fruiting *Lecania erysibe* just below top water mark. *Verrucaria funkii* was present further out and *Trapelia coarctata* was occasional. Other reservoir margins now need to be surveyed to help fill in the national picture. Some might be major sites for *Thelocarpon*. Who knows?

Oliver Gilbert