

# Wyre Forest Study Group

The ancient woodland Lichen 'Bark Barnacles'  
*Thelotrema lepadinum*, continues to maintain  
a presence in Seckley Ravine

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*Thelotrema lepadinum* on Hazel, Seckley Ravine

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*Thelotrema lepadinum* is a crustose lichen that is often found on smooth bark and occasionally rough bark of deciduous trees. It is rarely present on rock. The thallus is greyish fawn to white, usually thin and smooth but may be rough/uneven on occasion. The apothecia have a thalline rim raised like a volcano within which is the true, smaller, apothecial rim. This gives it a barnacle-like appearance; hence this lichen has the common name of 'Bark Barnacles'. *T. lepadinum* is considered to be an ancient woodland indicator that is decreasing due to air pollution and woodland disturbance (Smith et al, 2009).

The Rev. Joseph Hesselgrave Thompson appears to have been the first person to record *T. lepadinum* from Wyre, in Seckley Wood. (The Botany of Worcestershire, Amphlett & Rea, 1909. in which it is recorded without date).

It was later recorded in 1968 by Hawksworth and Rose, during their lichen survey of Wyre Forest, on Ash bark in Seckley Ravine (Hawksworth and Rose, 1969). Subsequently it was found by Trevor Dukes in Seckley Ravine in 1993/94 (RW pers. comm.).

Prior to the publication of 'Nature in Wyre' (Pisces, 2015), I was asked to reconfirm, if possible, the presence of *T. lepadinum* in Seckley Ravine. It is now 23 years since it was last reported and, as one of the very few ancient woodland lichens recorded from Wyre, its continued presence is important. It may be



Hazel trunk with *Thelotrema lepadinum* and *Graphis scripta*,  
Seckley Ravine

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one of the last vestiges of a much richer Wyre lichen flora from the past.

On 17 April 2015, several hours were spent examining trees growing close to the small stream at the bottom of the Seckley ravine. Three thalli of *Thelotrema lepadinum* were found, one growing on the smooth bark of a Hazel stem. Two others were found at the base of an Ash tree not far from the top of the ravine. It is possible other thalli were overlooked but it is clear that the population there is very low.

Examination of smooth barked trees, especially Hazel, that grow adjacent to streams situated in humid, deep gullies in Wyre may well bring to light new *T. lepadinum* thalli.

This species often grows alongside another ancient woodland indicator (in the English Midlands that is), *Graphis scripta*. This lichen is also met with locally on smooth barked trees in Wyre close to stream sides.

## References

- Amphlett, J. & Rea, C., 1909. The Botany of Worcestershire, p. 496.  
 Hawksworth, D. L., & Rose, F., 1969. A note of the Lichens and Bryophytes of the Wyre Forest. Proceedings of the Birmingham Natural History Society 21(3): 191-197.  
 Smith et.al. 2009,. The Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland. British Lichen Society. p. 892

