

# **HYDNOTRYA CUBISPORA IN WALES**

**Bryan Lack**

34 Coppice Drive, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 9RQ

**A** first record for Wales was made by the author in September 2002, namely *Hydnotrya cubispora* - a hypogeous fungus related to truffles. It is associated with coniferous woodland, particularly pines, and develops underground before emerging as a soft, hollow, convoluted, subglobose ascoma, about 3cm diameter, shown in Fig. 1.

It was identified by Dr Spooner at Kew and is only the fourth record for the UK. It appears the fungus was first named in 1939 in the USA, and is also known from Canada although not from elsewhere in Europe. It was probably introduced to Britain on imported conifers.

A single fruit body was found at the Llyn Llech Owain Country Park near Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. This is designated a SSSI on account of the rare plants that live in the peat bog surrounding the lake, rather than its fungal associations. There are plans to clear-fell all the conifers around the outside of the bog, so that the area reverts to what it was like many years ago, but this plan may now be reconsidered.

*H. cubispora* is notable for the size and shape of the mature spores, the latter having given rise to its name. The spores are shown in Fig. 2, and each can be up to 47 µm long including the ornamentation. Within the ascus they look rather like a series of vertebrae. The fungus is fully described in Pegler, Spooner and Young, *BRITISH TRUFFLES A revision of British Hypogeous Fungi*, 1993. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

This record was first reported in the Herefordshire F.S.G. News Sheet, Spring 2003.



Fig.1. *Hydnotrya cubispora*, found under pines in Llyn Llech Owain Country Park near Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, Wales, September 2002. Approx. 3.5 cms diameter. (note: photo was not taken *in situ*).

Fig. 2. Spores of *Hydnotrya cubispora* photographed at x 400, showing the cubical structure which gives the species its name. Photographs © Bryan Lack.