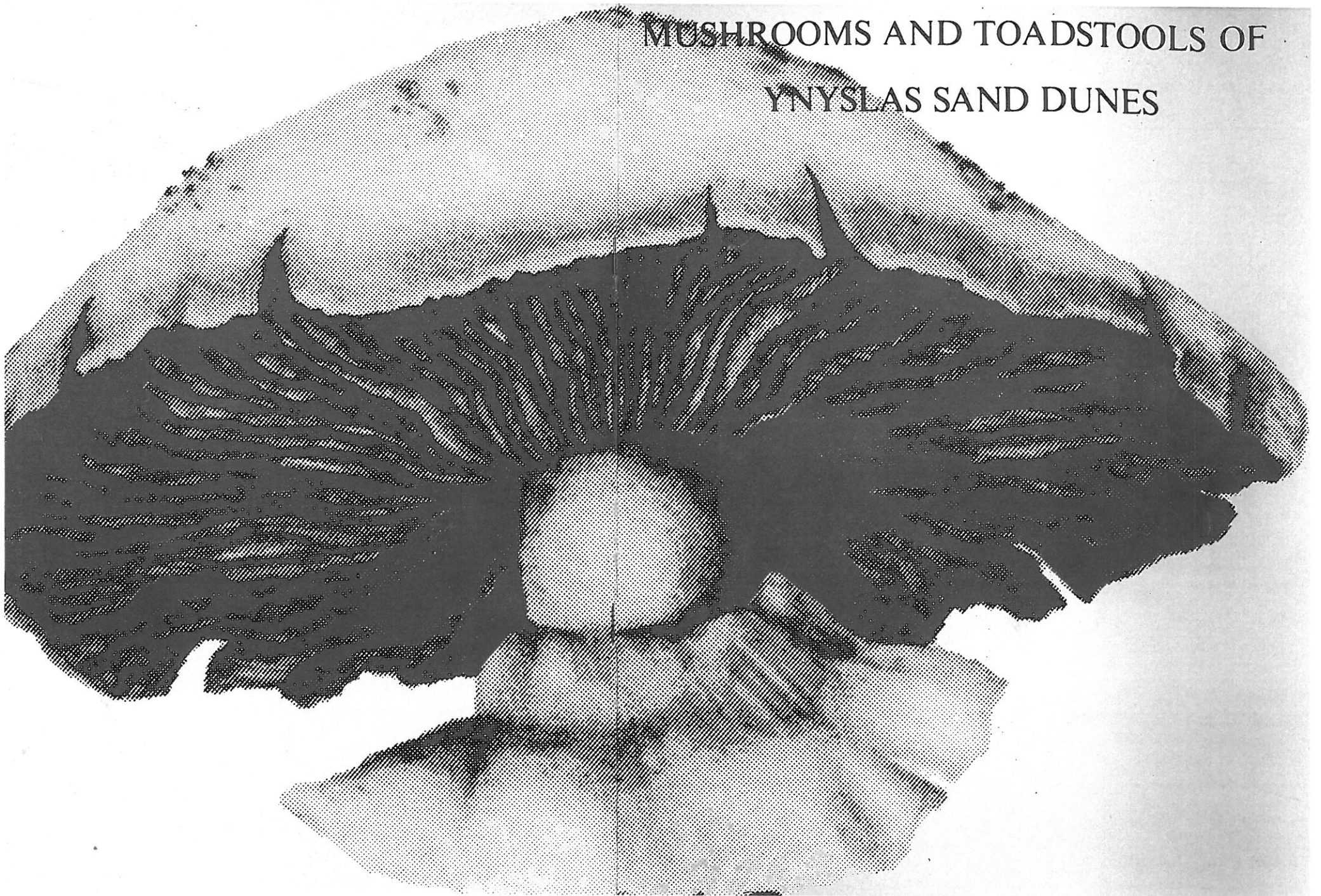
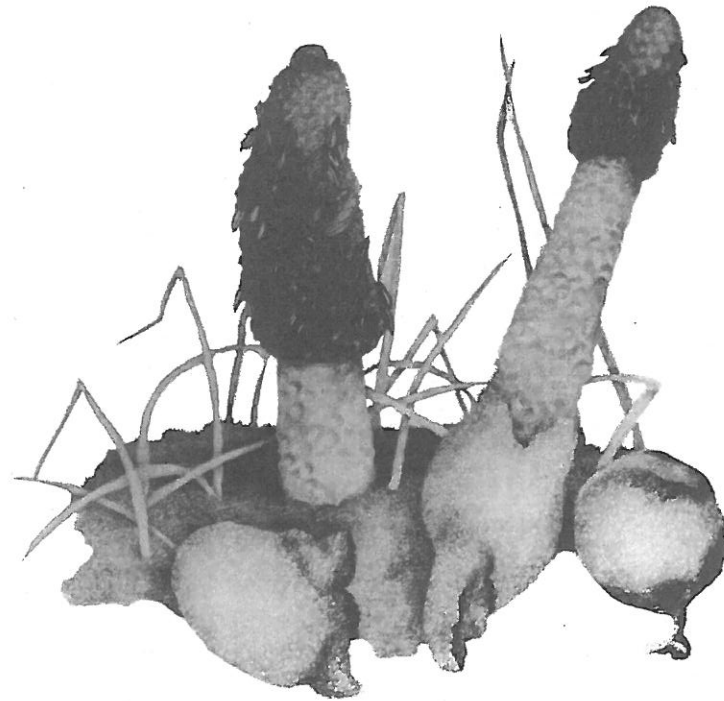


MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS OF
YNYSLAS SAND DUNES



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YNYSLAS SAND DUNES

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Text by John Hedger
Illustrations by Christina Snelling

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Christina Snelling

Ynyslas sand dunes support a rich variety of mushrooms and toadstools (fungi). Many of these are uncommon in the woodland habitats we normally associate with the fungi and include some which are found nowhere else but on sand dunes and coastal grasslands. Nearly all the fungi which occur in these maritime habitats in Britain can be found at Ynyslas. However, Ynyslas does possess a British rarity: the Birds Nest Fungus *Cyathus stercoreus* (illus. 4) This has only been found in Britain at Ynyslas, although it is widespread on the continent.

Like fungi in other habitats, sand dune fungi show seasonal appearance. 'Flushes' of mushrooms and toadstools occur in the spring and early summer, and most especially in the late summer and autumn. However, because of the mild coastal climate, a few fungi can be found even during the coldest winter months, though the dry conditions during a hot summer usually mean that toadstools may be absent.

The illustrations in this guide should enable a person visiting the dunes during the late summer and early autumn to identify most of the fungi which he sees. The figures are arranged to reflect the changing flora of toadstools encountered whilst walking from the edge of the sea, through the dunes, to the dune slack next to the road: each area of dune encountered on this walk, that is, in order, embryo dune, grey dune, and dune slack, has a number of characteristic species of fungi. Each illustration is accompanied by a short note on the characteristics of the toadstool and a few points of interest about their ecology and edibility.

1 DUNE STINKHORN *Phallus hadrjani*

Occurs only on the embryo dunes. Develops within 24 hours from a white or purple egg buried in sand. Brown slimy cap with a strong smell which attracts numerous flies, is born on a spongy white stem 8-10 cm. long.

2 DUNE ROOTING SHANK *Melanoleuca excissa*

A gill fungus with a grey brown cap, up to 8 cm. diameter, white gills and grey stem. Base of stem has a long rooting base extending down into the sand, as shown in the illustration. Commonest on the embryo dunes.

3 DUNE CUP FUNGUS *Peziza ammophila*

2-3 cm. diameter, pale brown cup found partially buried in the sand of the embryo dunes

4 BIRDS NEST FUNGUS *Cyathus stercoreus*

This tiny fungus can be found by carefully searching on the embryo dunes. It consists of small black cups 1.0 cm. in diameter containing a number of grey 'eggs' and is usually attached to dead grass on the sand surface.

5 WOOD BIRDS NEST FUNGUS *Crucibulum vulgare*

This occurs on wooden fence posts throughout the dunes and consists of brown cups, with a white lining, containing white eggs.

6 FAIRY RING CHAMPIGNON *Marasmius oreades*

A small (2-4 cm.) buff coloured toadstool with a rounded cap and tough stem; grows as rings all over the grey dunes. It is edible and good.

7 FALSE FAIRY RING CHAMPIGNON

Clitocybe rivulosa

Grows in rings on the grey dunes like the Fairy Ring Champignon (6) but has a flat white cap and gills, and brittle stem. It is *poisonous*.

8 WOOD BLEWITTS *Lepista nuda*

A bright purple, sweet smelling toadstool, with a cap 2-8 cm. in diameter. It grows in large rings on the grey dunes and is edible and good.

9 DUNE PARASOL MUSHROOM *Lepiota gracilentia*

A large toadstool, growing up to 10 cm. tall, with a white cap bearing brown scales, white gills and a scaly stem bearing a ring. Occurs in the grey dunes and is good to eat.

10 DUNE MUSHROOM *Agaricus species*

These resemble field mushrooms (white cap 2-8 cm. diameter and stem with ring; pink, later brown, gills). All are edible and can be found on the grey dunes.

11 PYXIE CAPS *Omphalina fibula*

A tiny brown toadstool, only 1-2 cm. high, with brown funnell shaped cap and yellowish gills. It is common in the turf of the grey dunes.

12 DUNE PUFFBALL *Vascellum depressum*

A small brown grey-stalked puffball up to 3 cm. diameter which is extremely abundant on the grey dunes from September onwards. It emits clouds of spores when touched.

13 ROOTING PUFFBALL *Tulostoma brumale*

Tiny (1.0 cm. diameter) white puffball found in clumps of moss on the grey dunes; digging down will reveal it has long (up to 6 cm.) rooting base (see illustration).

14 STALKLESS PUFFBALL *Bovista nigrescens*

When young this appears as a fleshy white golf ball like object (3-6 cm.) in the turf. With age it turns black and leathery and may blow about the dunes. A related species *B. plumbea* is dull grey and smaller (1.3 cm.). Good to eat when young. Common on the grey dunes.

15 DUNE EARTH STAR *Geastrum nanum*

A striking star shaped puffball, a beaked sack being supported off the ground by 5-7 pointed rays. 2-3 cm. in diameter. Occasional in the grey dunes.

16 EARTH TONGUES *Geoglossum species*

Black tongue-shaped objects up to 4 cm. high growing amongst the grass in the dune slack and grey dunes. Very abundant in November.

17 ELF CAPS *Hygrocybe species*

These are very abundant in the dune slack and are brightly coloured (yellow, red or orange) toadstools with a pointed slimy cap. The commonest species, *H. nigrescens* is bright red, turning black with age or handling.



