

Microbiology in the Regions report

Basidio2005

a conference on the biology of basidiomycete fungi

15 April 2005 Warwick HRI, University of Warwick



The first *Basidio* conference was held in 2003 at the then Wellesbourne site of Horticulture Research Institute (HRI); an institute with a long history of research into Basidiomycetes, especially of *Agaricus bisporus* (the cultivated mushroom). HRI has evolved into a department of the University of Warwick and *Basidio2005* was held at the new Warwick HRI. Although it was organized as a forum for the UK basidiomycete community, we were pleased to welcome international delegates from Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands. There were three main sessions each with an invited keynote speaker followed by four offered papers, plus offered poster presentations.

The meeting was opened by Dr Kerry Burton (Warwick HRI) who also gave the first keynote talk on *Sense and antisensibility – abundant natural antisense transcripts in Agaricus bisporus*. Kerry's lecture was aided by a fine set of animated slides produced by his PhD student Emilie Combet on the different mechanisms of antisense RNA production.

The second keynote was given by Professor David Read FRS (Sheffield University) who picked us all up after lunch with an excellent talk on *Basidiomycetes as mutualistic symbionts in ecosystems*. It was in this session that the co-author of this report, Dr John Thomas, gave his SGM/SfAM microbiology communication £150 prize-winning talk on *Molecular characterization of the interaction between Agaricus bisporus and Verticillium fungicola*. An additional prize of £50 was awarded to the best poster presentation by Bram Herman, a Warwick

HRI/Coventry University MSc student on *Heterologous expression of mushroom lectins which inhibit in vitro proliferation of human colon cancer cells*.

The final keynote *Ecology of saprotrophic woodland basidiomycetes*, was presented by Professor Lynne Boddy (Cardiff University) who enthralled her audience with a wide-ranging and enthusiastic account of this diverse field. Lynne concluded with a statement that this warm and friendly conference had been even better than its predecessor and that delegates were looking forward to *Basidio2007*, *Basidio2009* and so on. The meeting was closed by Professor Peter Mills (Warwick HRI) and the prizes were presented by Professor Lorna Casselton FRS (SGM Council member).

Basidio2005 would not have been possible without the generous support of the sponsoring societies (SGM, SfAM and the BMS). On behalf of the local organizing committee, the authors would like to extend a big thank you to the SGM and SfAM for the special topic meeting grant. Plans for *Basidio 2007* are underway and information will be posted on <http://www.basidio.net/>.

Dr Mike Challen and Dr D. John I. Thomas

Warwick HRI, The University of Warwick, Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9EF

- ▲ The basidiomycete *Pleurotus ostreatus* (oyster mushroom). Steve Taylor / Science Photo Library.
- ▲ Inset Dr John Thomas is presented with his prize by Professor Lorna Casselton. John Thomas