

Have you seen this unidentified fungus?

Dubbed 'Hairy McLeary', for further identification was unsuccessful, this small (0.6 mm) ascomycete fungus, illustrated on the front cover, was found on decaying tawa wood in the Maungakotukutuku Valley, north of Wellington. The perithecial necks face in the same direction – presumably towards light, giving the appearance of a group of migrating moa.

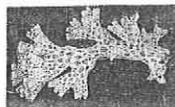
As the best key to critters of this size is '*British Ascomycetes*' by Dennis, identification difficulties are to be expected. But the combination of hyaline, septate, delicately striate ascospores with long-necked, black perithecia seems highly unusual, and, to date, even a family seems elusive.

But Hairy McLeary is not alone! A similar species, with larger perithecia, and larger, also striate ascospores, dubbed 'Hairy McLeary 2' was recently found by the Tongariro River Volcanic Plateau, Central North Island. AND during the recent (and excellent) N.Z. Fungal Foray at Haast, a further sister species, 'Hairy McLeary 3' was discovered lurking in the damp forest beside the Okuru Estuary.

So, if you fancy peering at very rotten wood with a hand lens, you may be rewarded by tiny, long-necked perithecia with anchoring hyphae. If so, I'd be interested!

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LICHEN PROFILE: *Cladia retipora* (Labill.) Nyl. - David Galloway

As a schoolboy in Invercargill in 1957, I was first made aware of the existence of lichens by finding *Cladia retipora*, the subject of this note, in a *Sphagnum* bog close to a popular family picnic spot at the Seaward Bush Scenic Reserve. On taking a handful of this curious, spongy, white, coral-like substance back to Southland Boy's High School the following day, I was given two different opinions on it by my teachers. Firstly, the Biology Master declared it to be a moss, which I thought could not be right, since in my mind all mosses were green, while the Chemistry Master, Mr G.C. Martin, told me that it was in fact a lichen, and further, that its name was *Cladonia retipora*, the epithet *retipora* referring to the network of holes that is its characteristic feature. Gordon Martin was the son of William Martin, a retired school Headmaster who was one of New Zealand's few publishing cryptogamists, and at that time writing a monograph on *Cladonia* in New Zealand (Martin 1958b). Gordon Martin, who suffered from multiple sclerosis, and was unable to leap across drainage ditches then criss-crossing parts of the Awarua Bog, enlisted my help as an agile pair of legs for him, and I thus began collecting specimens of *Cladonia* from peat bogs in the Invercargill area, which he then sometimes forwarded on to his father in Dunedin. He suggested that I might like to start a collection of lichens, and from that suggestion my subsequent rather circuitous path to a career in lichenology began. So for me the lichen *Cladia retipora* has always had an attraction and a major significance.