

# Ever been had?

Tony Leech\*

It is not unusual for a new find on a recording foray to be greeted with, “Do you think it is a fungus?”. After several opinions have been voiced, the specimen is either taken or discarded. Sometimes the wrong decision is made.

## Case 1.

A few minutes of picture-scanning suggested that the fungus-like structures on the asparagus leaf (Fig. 1) might be an *Acrospermum* sp. (Fig. 2). I should have noticed that the leaf was looking healthy! It was not until cutting into the structure revealed a milky fluid that it became obvious that it was not a fungus at all. Much later I came across an image of the eggs of the Asparagus Beetle, *Crioceris asparagi* and the correct identification was made.

## Case 2.

Choke is the name given to a group of *Epichloë* species which girdle the flowering stems of various grasses (Fig. 3). When I came across a similar whitish collar on Sharp Rush, *Juncus acutus* (Fig. 4), I wondered whether there was a

related fungus on this host. There is not. When microscopic examination revealed the presence of diatoms rather than spores, I realised that I was looking at flood debris that had accreted round the stem.

## Case 3.

When we found a cluster of rather pretty objects on cow dung (Fig. 5), we did at least consider it unlikely that they were fungal. Flowering plant seeds were high on the list of possibilities but dipterist Tony Irwin subsequently identified them as eggs of a dung fly *Scathophaga* sp. Again, we had the wrong kingdom.

I am grateful to the photographers acknowledged in the captions for permission to use their photographs.

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Fig. 1. Egg of Asparagus Beetle found at East Tuddenham, Norfolk, June 2013 by Alec Bull. Photo © Tony Leech.



Figure 2. *Acrospermum compressum* on dead stem of Stinging Nettle, *Urtica dioica*, SW Yorkshire. Photo © Paul Cannon, Fungi of Great Britain and Ireland website: <https://fungi.myspecies.info>.



Figure 3. *Epichloë clarkii* on Yorkshire Fog, *Holcus lanatus*. Photo © Steve Judd.



Figure 4. Flood debris on Sharp Rush, *Juncus acuta*. Cranwich, Norfolk. Photo © Tony Leech.



Figure 5. Eggs of dung fly *Scathophaga* sp., Ringstead, Norfolk. Photo © Mark Joy.