

## ILLUSTRATING FUNGI — 2

LORNA MINTON

In the last issue I introduced the subject of watercolour painting to the *Mycologist*, alongside a finished painting featuring a group of fungi. I will now continue with a step-by-step guide to producing such a painting.

Figs 1 & 2: The layout of the three fungi was the most important decision, because the foreground and background habitat could all be added later to complete the composition. Having drawn them in lightly, it is best to paint one cap at a time, completely finishing it before going onto the next one. A **background wash** is the first thing to apply, and this should be of the lightest colour which you can see in the cap. If you have difficulty determining this, try screwing up your eyes so that the cap is out of focus, and then the light and dark areas will become more apparent. In the case of the *Russula*, this colour was a very pale mix of 'New Gamboge'. This colour was then strengthened and applied again over those parts of the cap which were not catching the light, and finally a little 'Warm Sepia' was added to the areas in shadow, such as the depressed centre. With all these applications of colour, it was necessary to go carefully round the little pieces of plant matter which had attached themselves to the cap, so that they could be painted separately last of all.

Fig. 3: Next to be painted was the cap of the *Laccaria*, and 'Indian Red' proved to be a useful colour here, mixed with just a touch of 'Alizarin Crimson'. Again a very pale wash was applied first, and the stronger colour added, because when working in watercolour you must always **work from light to dark**. The *Coprinus* caps were treated in the same way, so that the tiny dark lines were applied last, when the underneath paint was totally dry.

Notice that I have not mentioned painting the stems yet, and this is because

their bases will be covered by other vegetation, so they cannot be painted until it is seen how much of each stem is still visible.

Fig. 4: The next stage in the painting is the habitat, and it now becomes necessary to work from the **front (bottom) of the picture to the back**, whilst still remembering to work from light to dark. Right at the front of the picture is some moss, and this was painted using a pale yellow/green wash first, and when this was dry, adding little touches of darker greens, and finally dark brown for the deep shadows. The rest of the background detail was added one by one, after having drawn in each item lightly, and finally, any gaps in the ground where white paper gleamed through, were dulled down with a non-descript shade of brown.

Just the stems are now left to be painted, and in order to show that they are round, the colour of each stem has to be **graded from light to quite dark on the shadow side of the picture**. Even almost white stems are actually quite dark on their shadow side, and there is always a heavy shadow at the top underneath the cap. By exaggerating the highlights and shadows in your fungi, you will help to produce the three dimensional effect which is so important to the success of any painting. Please refer to the previous issue of *The Mycologist* to see this painting completely finished.

In the next issue I will discuss the use of **gouache paints for painting fungi**.

TABLE

Useful palette for the Mycologist/Artist (Winsor & Newton ARTIST colours)	
New Gamboge	Warm Sepia
Naples Yellow	Burnt Sienna
Raw Sienna	Hookers Green Dark
Indian Red	Cobalt Blue
Alizarin Crimson	Neutral Tint

