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## ILLUSTRATING FUNGI 6

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### SKETCHING IN THE FIELD

On occasions it is convenient and satisfying to record specimens and data in the field. For this purpose many use a camera, but photography definitely has its limitations. One also needs to carry a flashgun, a tripod and extra films, and this becomes rather cumbersome.

So perhaps the answer is a **pad of paper attached to a clipboard**, a **pencil** and a **rubber**. A clutch pencil, such as the one made by *Staedtler* is ideal for you will not run out of lead in the field, and *Staedtler* also make a small rotary sharpener which will fit into any pocket and which will give a razor-sharp point to your lead in seconds. Both should be readily available at good art/graphics shops. Have at least two bulldog-clips attached to your clipboard to stop the paper flapping in the wind, and also a sheet of polythene to protect your artwork if it should rain. As for the rubber, my own preference is for a putty rubber for, as the name implies, you can mould the rubber into a shape (like a point) so that small lines of error can be removed without erasing the drawing around them. For real comfort, take a small folding stool in your rucksack, for fallen logs to sit on rarely put themselves in *exactly* the right position.

Once you have selected a specimen to sketch, draw it life-size, first to show the shape of the cap, and then again to show the gill-structure (or lack of it). On the same page make sketches of other data which are relevant to the identification of the species, and note down the colouring. Once you have learnt the names of the colours in the paint-box, you will find it easier to describe the colour in words. 'Sort of brown' is not a helpful description when you re-read the notes at home.

Pencil sketches are easily smudged, particularly if you favour the use of soft leads, so the answer to this problem is to buy a can of fixative from your art-shop, and spray your drawing with this when you get home. One word of warning though, these fixatives have a very pungent, rather unpleasant smell, so it is best to spray outdoors. Once the fixative is dry, which takes only a few minutes, the pungent smell disappears.

For the purpose of illustrating this article, I did not think that a few pencil sketches done in the field would be attractive enough to grace a page of *The Mycologist*. So instead I have done a painting which could easily have been produced at home at a later date from sketches done in the field. It features a particularly beautiful, and mature, specimen of *Collybia maculata*. There was a number of this species growing nearby, but it was the lovely colouring and the waviness of the cap of this particular one which really appealed to me to paint. The few bits of habitat included on the ground were put there for added interest and to save the *Collybia* from looking as if it was hanging in space. To turn a mycological study such as this into an attractive picture really needs a background, so '**Backgrounds for Paintings**' will be the subject discussed in the next article in this series.

