

## 2020 Member of the Year: Joan Heyding and Ian Gough



*Galerina marginata*. Photo by J. Heyding

*In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year.*

We are awarding Joan Heyding and Ian Gough, as Members of the Year, for fostering the development of amateur mycology in the OFNC.

It's not easy to teach yourself mushrooms. For Joan, it started in 2014 when she photographed some mushrooms on her campsite and tried to identify them.

She and Ian also found fungi flourishing in the forest near their cabin, studied field guides and attended the annual Fabulous Fall Fungi workshops led by Richard Aaron at the Queens University Biological Station. In 2017, at Richard Aaron's suggestion, they reached out to local alumnae of the workshops to ask if they wanted to foray occasionally. Joan invited everyone for a walk in Gatineau Park. About eight people showed up, enjoyed each other's company, and chatted about forming the Ottawa Mycology Circle. Ian created an online home for the new group to share photos and plans.

In the spring of 2018, Joan and Ian invited the group for a supper meeting at a friendly tavern to plan a few outings. Over the year, the circle grew to over 30 people and there was talk about how to share the group's enthusiasm with other naturalists in the region. Should they plant a foothold within the OFNC?

OFNC's directors welcomed the prospect of hosting more fungal events. So, in early 2019, Joan and Ian joined the Club and encouraged others in the Circle to do so. They rallied people to share their interests and lead an activity. A steady stream of fungal events ensued. Joan brought photos to OFNC's 2019 Photo Night. One member led a seminar on Beatrix Potter's watercolor paintings of fungi in February. Another gave a talk on mycorrhizal fungi in March. Joan co-led a workshop in April on wood-inhabiting fungi. In June, members forayed in a forest near Calabogie and identified their fungal finds at a member's cabin.

To prepare a fall fungal season, Joan and Ian convened another planning supper in August 2019. Members stepped up to lead forays in Calabogie and at the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre. The group hosted two workshops at the Fletcher Resource Centre: first, an

introductory talk and review of participants' mystery mushrooms, and secondly, a seminar on arctic fungi.

Joan and Ian continued to anchor and organize more fungal events in 2020. There was a dinner-and-movie night, a lichen walk at Dewberry Trail in January, and two joint lectures for the OFNC and the RA Canoe Camping Club on fungal themes. Joan, Ian and a third member authored one of them, on Poisonous Mushrooms. In March 2020, Ian created a new online forum for OFNC's fungi fans: [Forum.mycott.org](http://Forum.mycott.org).

There were no forays during the COVID-19 lockdown in spring 2020. However, the forum could meet every few weeks for an evening of Shroom Zoom. During the cautious months of summer and early fall, the group remained active with six small socially-distanced walks and monthly chats on various fungal themes. Three members offered digital presentations to the OFNC membership: an Introduction to Fungi, a talk on Molds, and a talk on Ergot and Choke Disease Fungi.

Joan and Ian have enabled the fungal enthusiasts of OFNC to find and teach each other as they explore the fungal kingdom. With planning meetings, follow-up, encouragement, and communication tools, they have fostered the emergence of an active and growing community of shroomers. We're glad they did.

*Prepared by Lynn Ovenden*