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**Vagn Alstrup (4 February 1944-18 August 2015)**

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## Vagn Alstrup (4 February 1944–18 August 2015)

During the initial phases of his career, Vagn studied Arctic lichens, and published numerous papers on Greenland lichens. From the 1990s onwards he passionately focused his studies on lichenicolous fungi, becoming a highly respected scholar with numerous international contacts through his description of a large number of new species, particularly from Polar Regions. He maintained contact with east European lichenologists at this time, particularly in Poland, with whom he made several contributions to local knowledge, such as on lichens from the Tatra Mountains and on lichenicolous fungi. He also organized a very successful joint Nordic-Russian lichen meeting in the Komi Republic.

Throughout his scientific life he was always interested in Danish lichens and how to manage and protect habitats and environments to ensure their future. He was responsible for red-listing lichens for Denmark and instrumental in publishing new knowledge on Danish lichens, for example in the *Journal of the Nordic Lichen Society*. He was also the managing editor of *Graphis Scripta* during its first eight years (1986–1993), the journal he founded in 1986, probably inspired by earlier issues of *The Lichenologist* which served as a forum for the British Lichen Society, as well as reporting on changes and additions to the British Lichen Flora. He chose the name *Graphis Scripta* a suitable name of a rather common corticolous lichen for a journal which concentrated on publishing new lichen records from countries within the Nordic Lichen Society (NLS). The NLS had been founded in 1975 to provide members with biennial field meetings in the different Nordic countries, but it took 11 years until someone brought up the idea of a regional journal to publish records and other matters related to those countries. The first issue included five articles of which two were authored by Alstrup and another coauthored with Söchting on lichens from northern Sweden and northern Norway. A report from the NLS meeting in Norway 1985, the sixth meeting and excursion, was included – the first having taken place in Enaforsholm Jämtland in 1975 – the second in Hordaland Norway 1978 – the third in Jutland Denmark in 1979 - the fourth in Kuusamo Finland 1981 – the fifth in Öland 1983.

Vagn edited, and contributed articles to, six volumes of *Graphis Scripta* – he published 51 articles in the journal between 1986 and 2014. In all, he authored 122 papers mainly on the lichens of Denmark and Greenland, but also on other countries including Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Faeroes Islands, Germany, Poland, Greece, Tanzania, Kenya and Iran. He and his friend of many years, Ulrik Söchting, coauthored two checklists of lichens from Denmark in 1989 and 2002. Vagn also published extensively on lichenicolous fungi, as well as a contribution on Danish epiphytic microlichens in 2001. Before his untimely death he was working on a book about Danish epilithic lichens on Neolithic monuments, stone fences and churchyard walls. He carefully collected vouchers to document his work, as reflected in the impressive number of his specimens in the Danish National Lichen Herbarium (C), which are now being digitalized.

For many decades Vagn was a dynamic organizer of the different groups of enthusiastic amateurs studying lichens on excursions, camps and travels, as well as holding regular meetings in the laboratory. He also encouraged and assisted Danish naturalists through Internet identification of their lichens. He was always working on projects, fuelled by his own intensive interest in lichens and their protection, and in the dissemination of lichenology in general, often at his own expense. In his early career, he was based in the Department of Ecological Botany at the University of Copenhagen, but later became attached to the Botanical Museum in Copenhagen. Most recently he worked from his home. However, he and his wife Janeth spent part of the year

tending their farm in Tanzania. On several occasions he received lichenologists there, resulting in three publications on Tanzanian lichens and lichenicolous fungi. Tragically he died there having been fatally shot during an armed burglary.



**Figure 1.** Vagn Alstrup at the NLF-excursion in Kuusamo 1981.

Vagn was the latest President of the Nordic Lichen Society, participating in its field meeting in Norway shortly before he died. His legacy will above all rest upon his numerous contributions and reports on the lichen flora from Denmark and other Nordic countries, as well as the founder of *Graphis Scripta*. He was always helpful, and his professionalism, positive approach and good humour were always appreciated by both younger and older lichenologists; he invariably enjoyed the social life associated with lichenological events. Whilst we will greatly regret the many unfulfilled projects he was about to launch, we will miss him most of all as a colleague and friend.

*Ulrik Søchting and Ingvar Kärnefelt*