

## MICROSCOPICAL EXPLORATION NINE

### VINTAGE PREPARED SLIDES FROM THE 1960s

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So, up my courage was plucked, and into the dark recesses of the under-stair closet between the middle and top floors of my three story Victorian terraced house I ventured. Having clambered over various larger items placed in that designated storage facility by my wife (luggage and large boxes of Christmas decorations), I came across what I was seeking, an old, small, black cardboard box of prepared microscope slides dating, I believe, from the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This box of slides came into my possession in the mid 1960s, as a birthday present from a family friend who was also the science master at the local technical school. As a budding scientist /microscopist, only just into my teens, I remember spending hours squinting down my 'precision' microscope, (see the picture below) at the wonders of nature visible on the numerous contents of that non-descript black box.



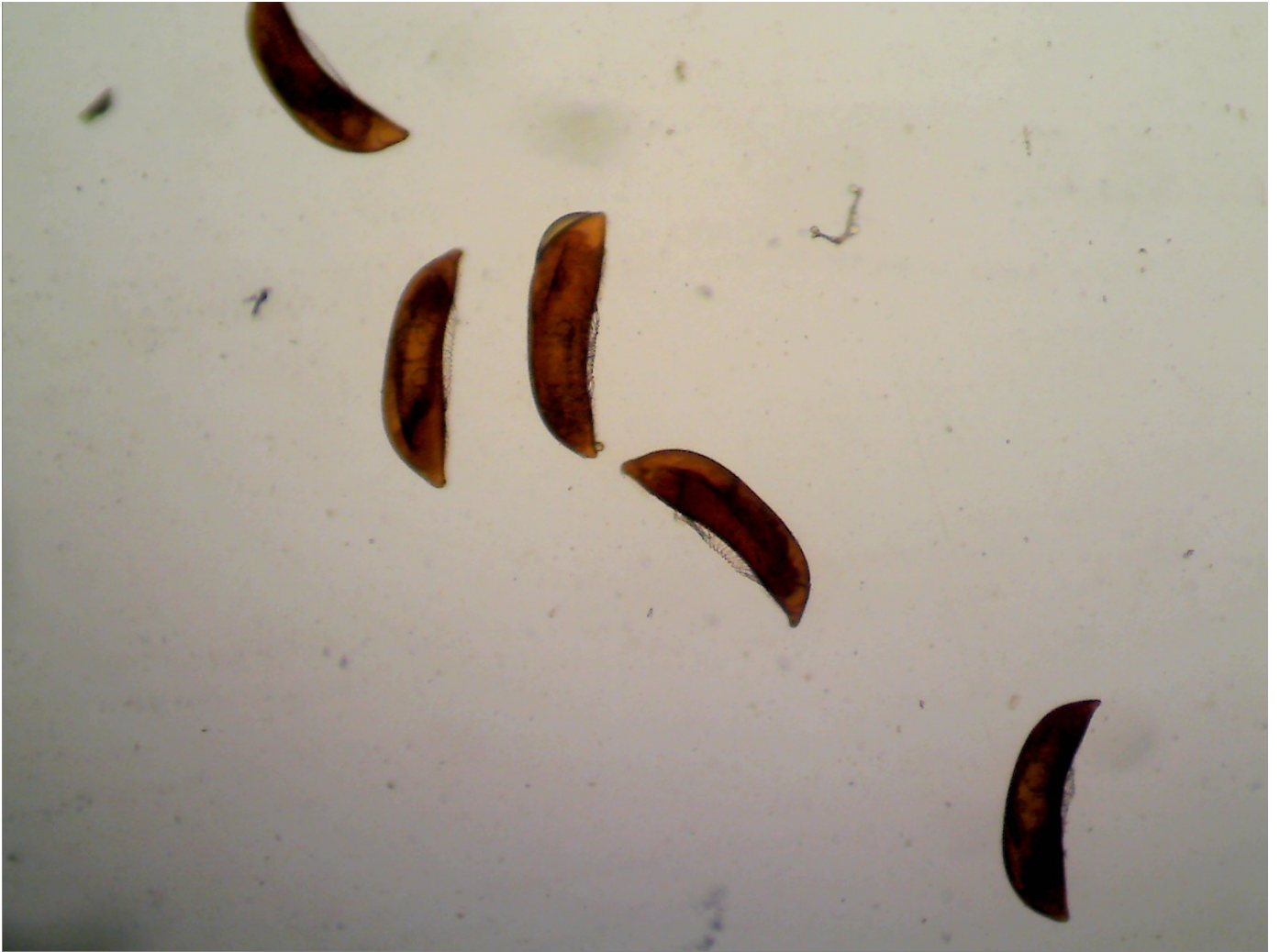
1960s precision junior microscope

My microscope, similar to that in the picture, had a 10x-15x zoom eyepiece and x4, x10 and x40 objectives, but it soon became apparent to me that the x40 lens was, to all intents and purposes, unusable, and that the functional magnifications were between 40 and 150 times, using the other two objectives. Only when I progressed to higher education and then to a career in industrial

research and development, where I had access to research grade microscopes did I realise how relatively appalling were the images afforded me by my little 'precision' instrument. Still, my enthusiasm for microscopy, as a hobby and in my career remained un-dampened, and now, in retirement, although the microscope pictured above is long gone, my fascination with the hobby remains. Also, I still have the black box of prepared slides, images of some of which, I present below. The slides were viewed using either my Vickers M10A microscope dating from 1985 or my modern Swift SW380T microscope. I used a Brunel Eyecam Plus digital eyepiece camera and MycoCam5 image capture software to record all the images.



**Acarus ( a mite)**



Anopheles mosquito ova



**Anopheles mosquito larva**



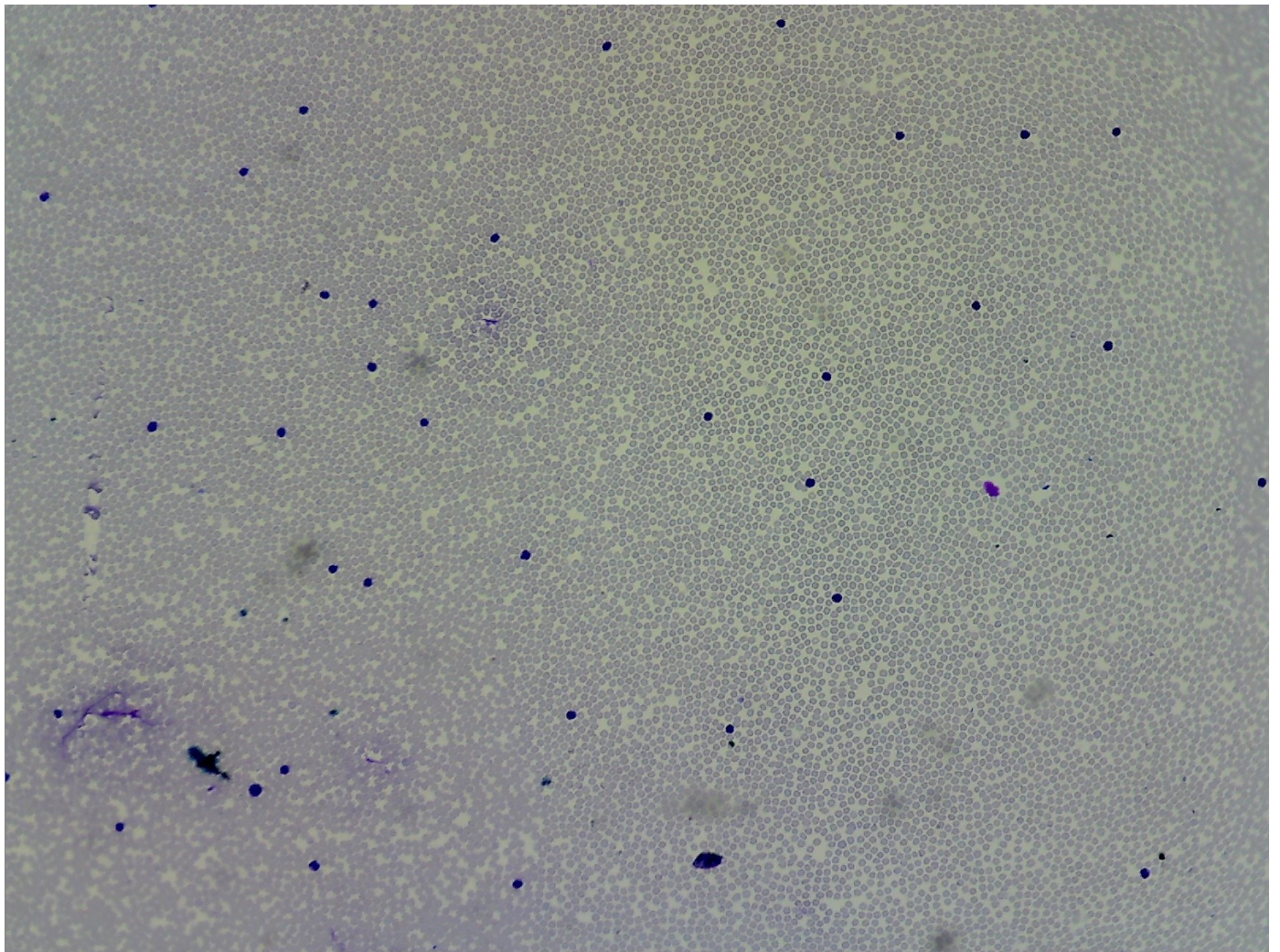
**Anopheles mosquito pupa**



***Pediculus humanus capitis* (Head louse)**

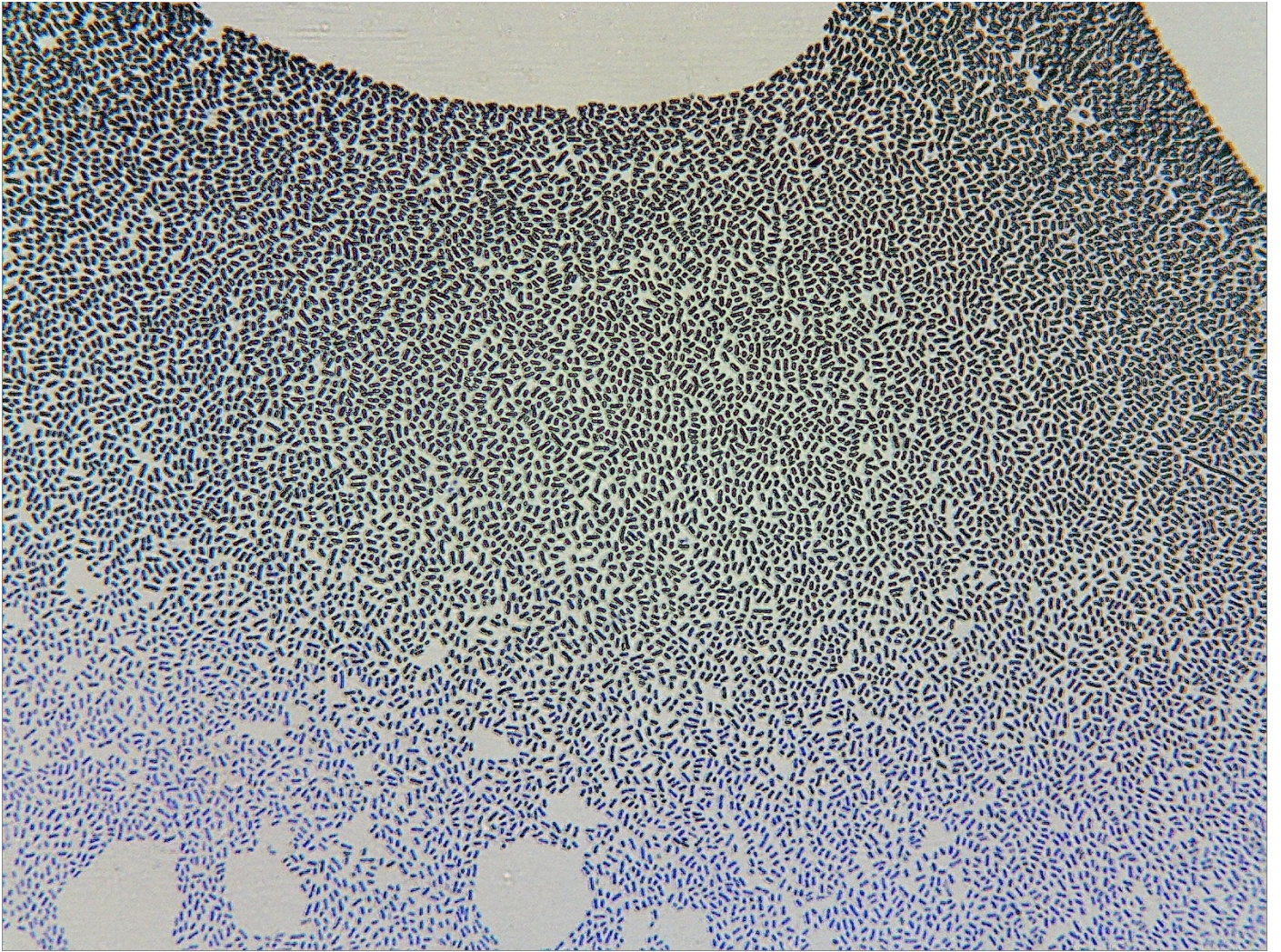


***Pulex irritans* ( flea, female)**

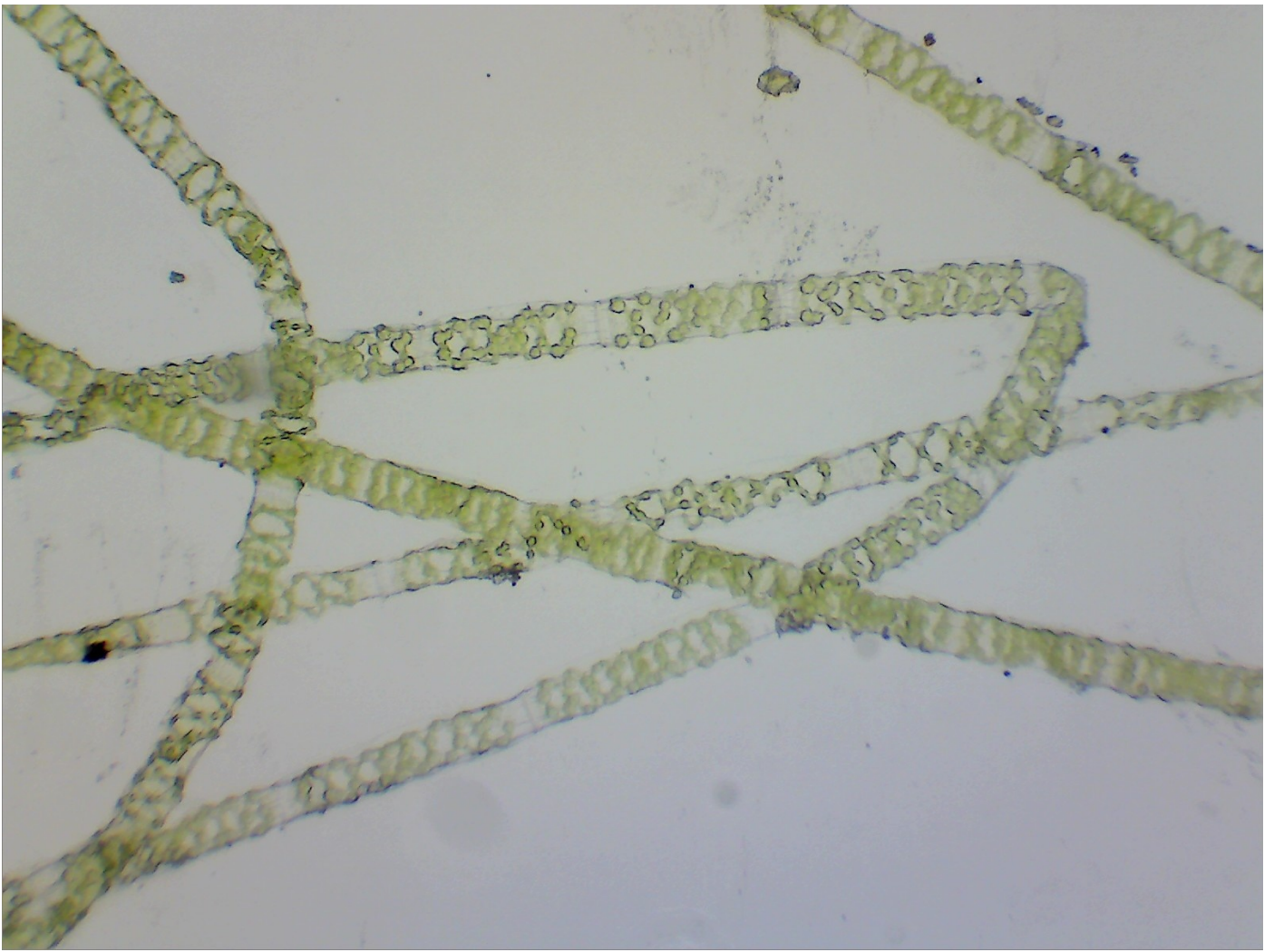


***Plasmodium malariae* in blood**

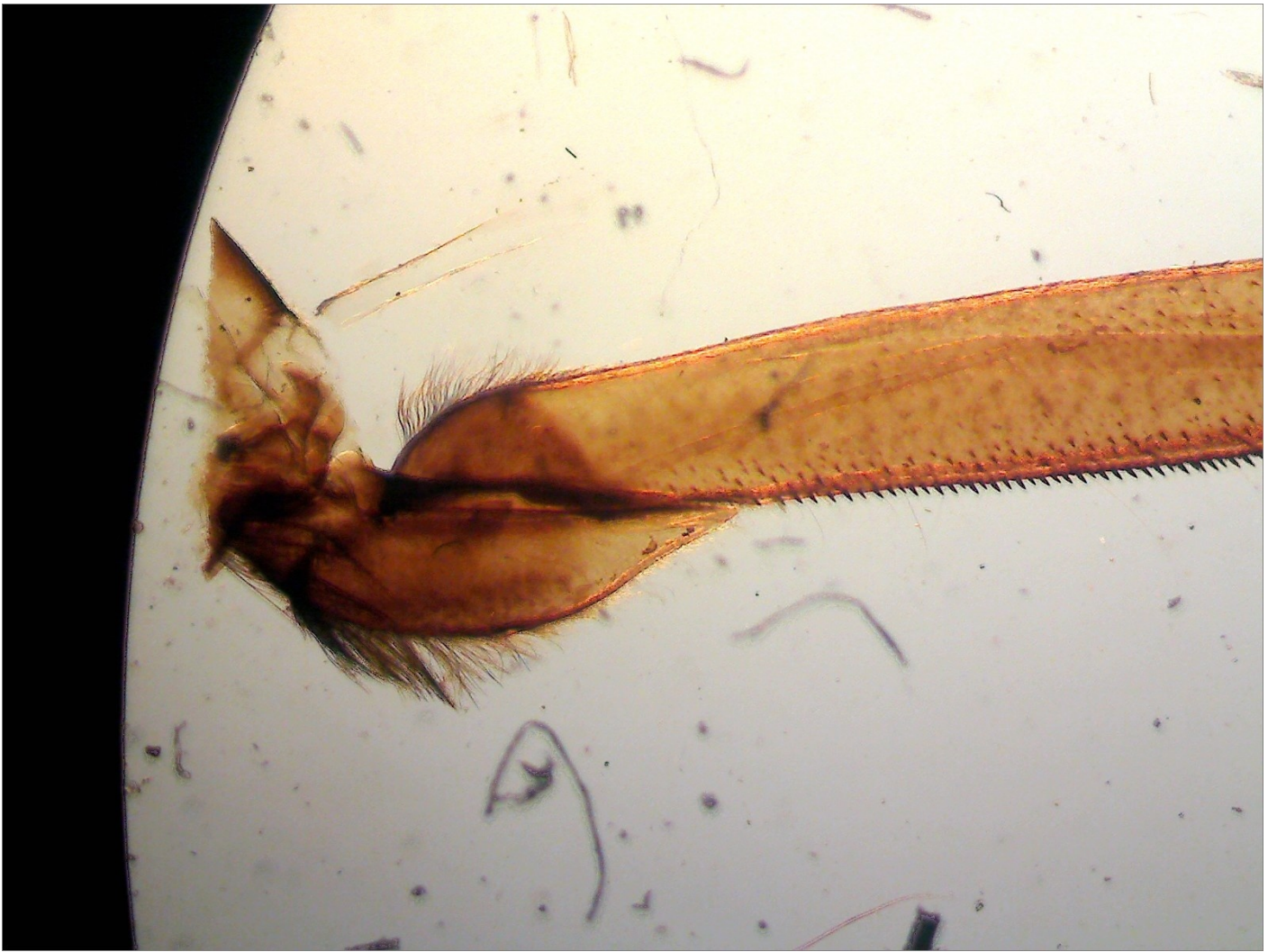




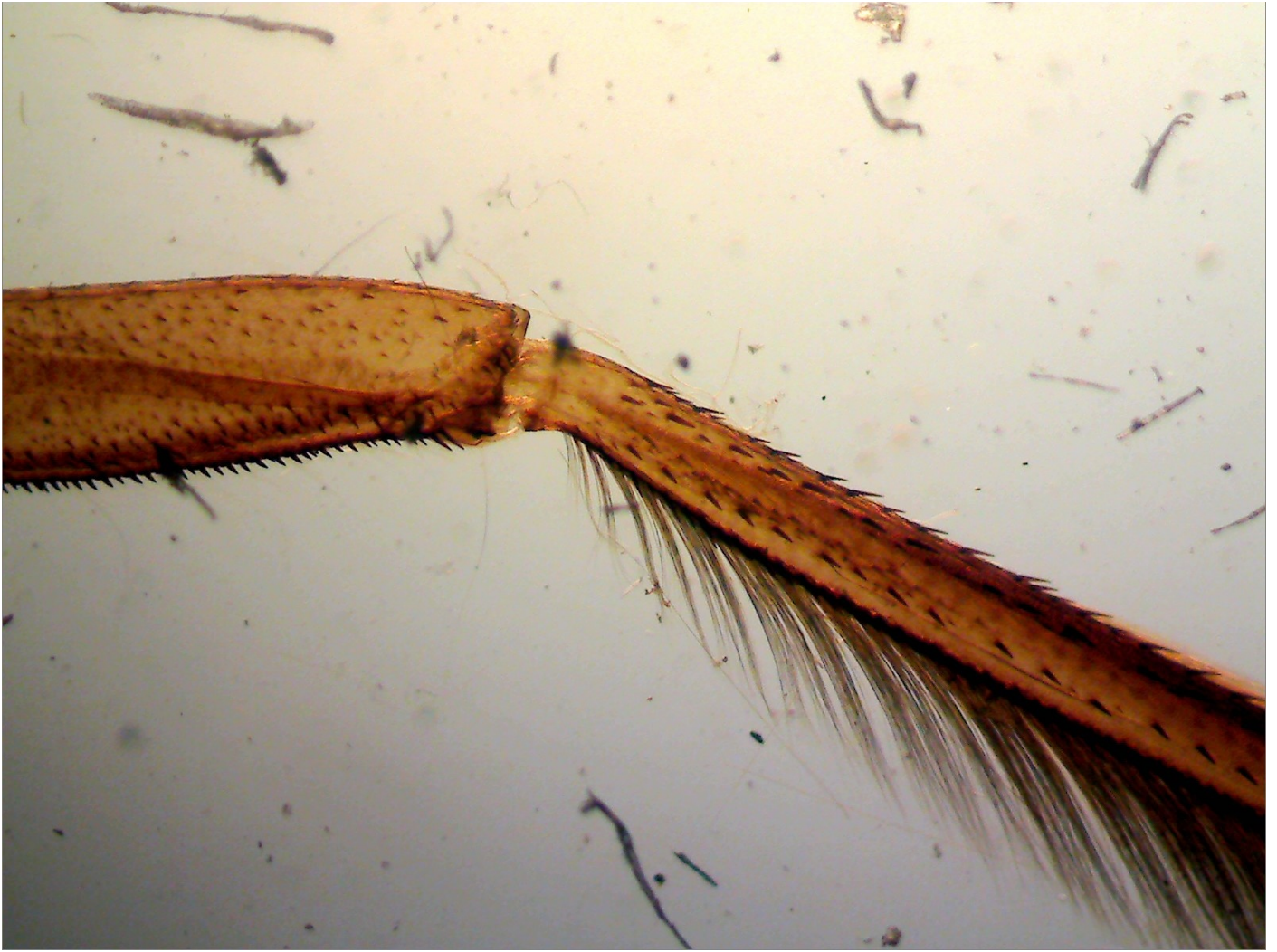
***Klebsiella pneumoniae***



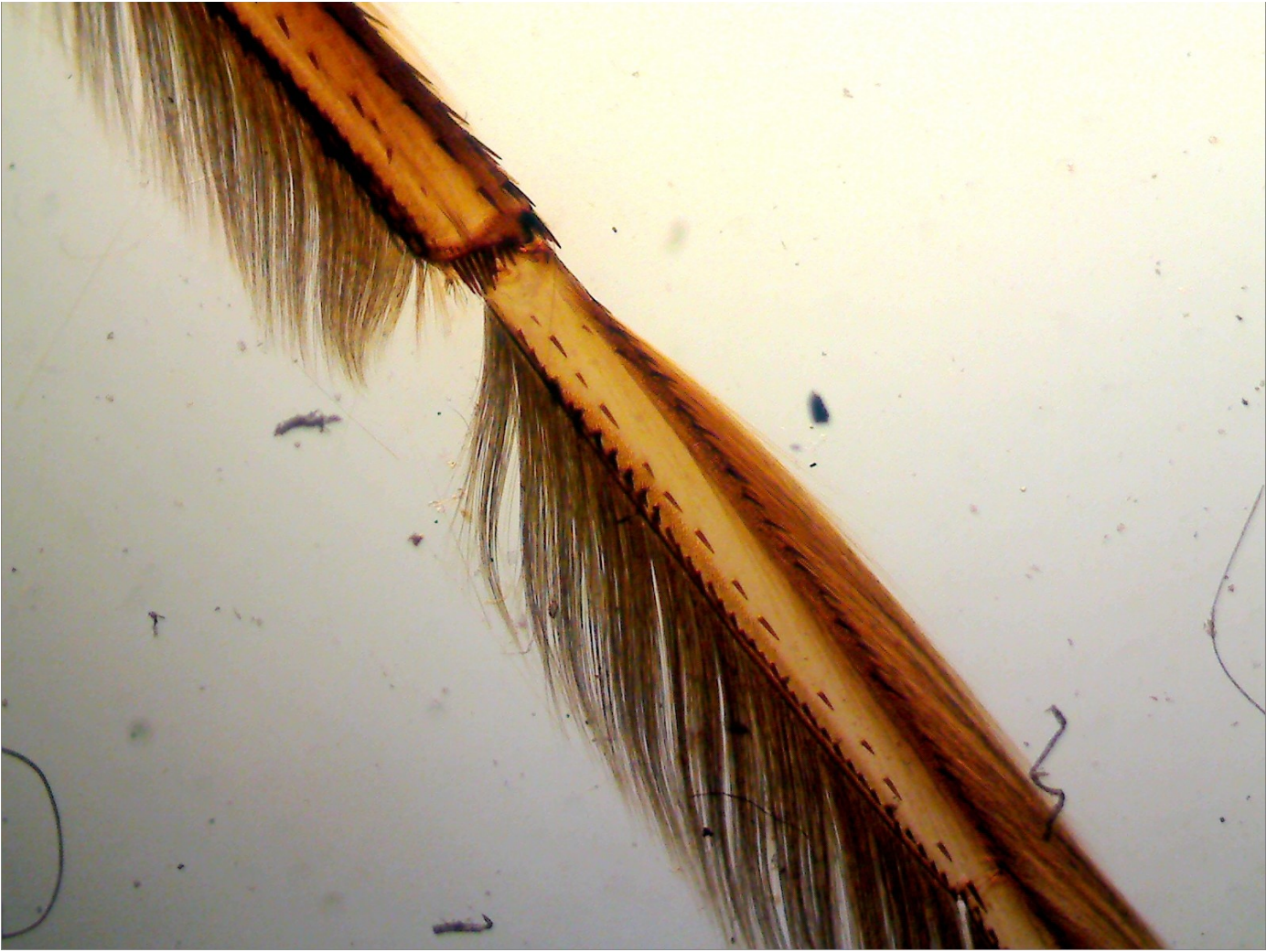
**Spirogyra**



**Water Boatman (oar leg part 1)**



**Water Boatman (oar leg part 2)**



**Water Boatman (oar leg part 3)**

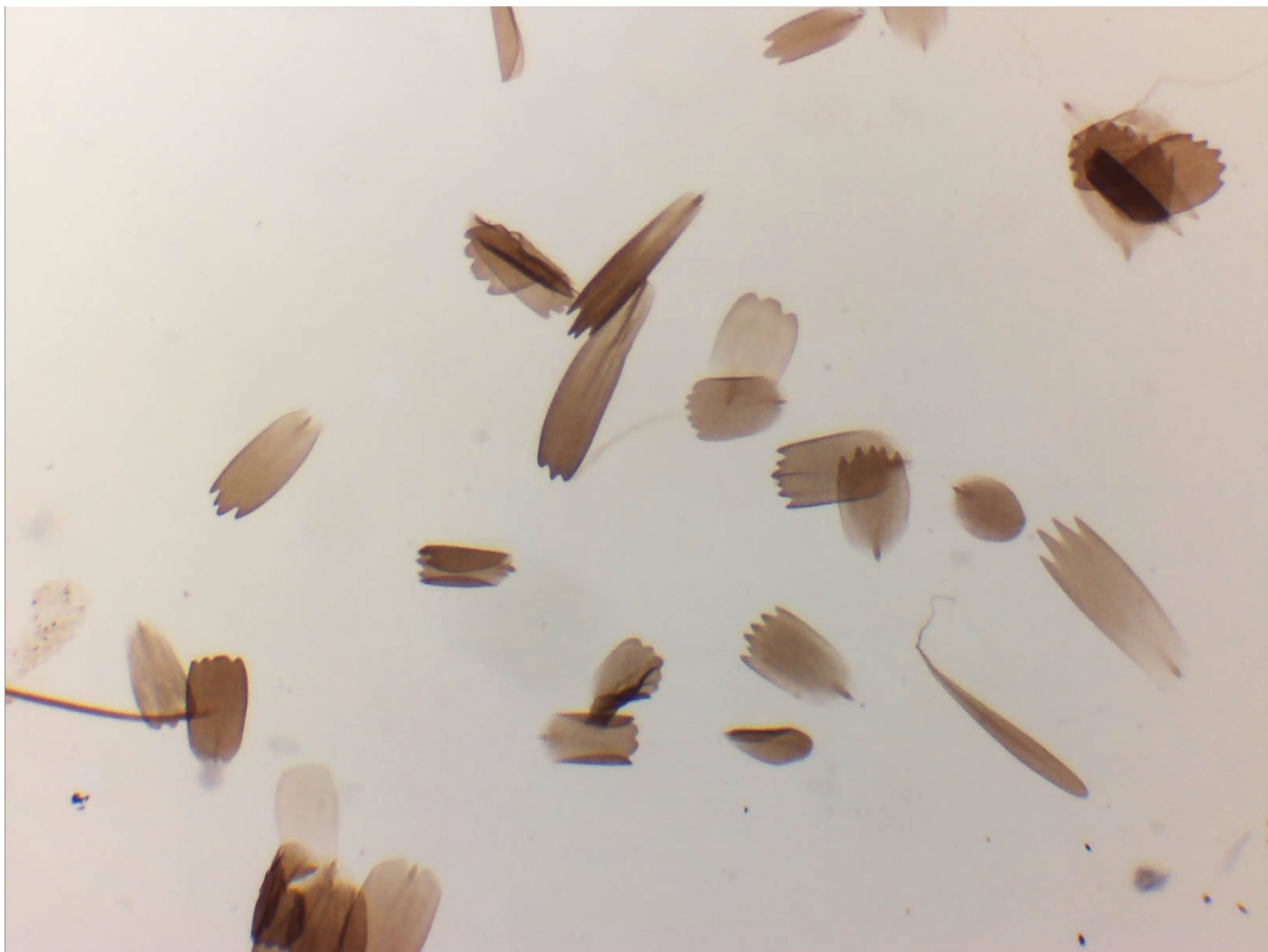


**Water Boatman (oar leg part 4)**

Each of the above images of the water boatman leg shows a portion of the slide using the x4 objective, moving along the leg from top to tip.



**Hydra fusca (stained)**



### **Strewn moth wing scales (various species)**

The slides from which the above images were taken were all labelled either, T Gerrard & Co. Biologists, Ltd. 46-48 Pentonville Road London N.1., or Flatters & Garnett Ltd. 309 Oxford Rd. MANCHESTER.

At this point, as in my previous Microscopical Explorations, I would normally end the article with my usual catch phrase **'Ave a go yersel'!** , but this time that would not be appropriate, dear reader, as you do not have my non-descript black box of prepared slides from the previous century. However, that said, please feel free to re-visit your own collection of prepared slides, whatever their age, and to enjoy the excellent hobby that is amateur microscopy. Any comments would be most welcome.

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