

Wild Things fungus foray at Burton Bushes 7th November 2022

What a magical foray this turned out to be. We could hardly move without spotting, or standing on, fabulous fungi. There were woodrotters like the majestic Ganodermas, huge bracket fungi eating away at the heartwood of old oaks and beeches, or the tiny but weird fingers of Stagshorn on dead branches. There were plenty of mycorrhizal fungi too, like Cloudy Funnels, trooping around the trunks of trees sharing their root systems, food supplies, and quite possibly, if modern research turns out to be right, communication and defence systems. Mycology is such an exciting study as there is still so much we don't know in this hidden wood-wide web.

Sixteen of us turned out, an excellent showing for a dodgy day in November, but the weather held. Even novices in the group were soon getting their eye in, bringing us fungi to identify. Phil led the way. He comes here regularly dog-walking, so knows where the most delectable fungi can be found. Mervin did most of the ID, explaining highlights as we wandered, such as the Bleeding Bracket, which exudes 'bloody' spores when rubbed.

No-one rose to my challenge to taste the juice of the Oakbug Milkcap, one of the most fun ways to ID milkcaps. This one was mild, just getting slightly acrid after a few seconds. However, Doreen did innocently pick up a Stinkhorn for us, which, thankfully, had lost most (but not all) of its noxious smell, as the insects had obviously had their fill.

I showed the group the Champion Smut, a fiendish smut fungus that hijacks the DNA of Campions and turns their reproductive organs into spore producers, easily recognisable on the flowers by its dark brown colour. We were also lucky enough to find a tiny slime mould, which had just entered its reproductive, spore-producing phase, and looked like a crust of snowflakes. This is the only time these extraordinary single-celled organs, belonging to the kingdom of Protista, neither flora nor fungi, become visible. I identified it by photographs only, as by the time I got my sample home it had turned into an amorphous, almost clear gel, before disappearing altogether.



Fungi list by Mervin Nethercoat; report by Helen Kitson; photos from Mervin Nethercoat, Paul Sears and Helen Kitson.

Left: Bleeding Oak Crust

Opposite clockwise: Small Mycenae on moss and on branch; Buttercap in leaf litter; Sulphur Tuft.



Page 3 clockwise: *Ganoderma applanatum* (Artist's Bracket); Glistening Inkcaps on a fallen trunk; Mervin shows the group a Clouded Funnel.

Page 4: tiny *Mycaenae* and a Shaggy Parasol (top) and a Wood Blewit.

Page 5: Red Cracking Bolete; Phil takes a closer look at a branch.

Page 7: Coral Slime Mould (*Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*) and Lighthouse Galls (*Hartigiola annulipes*) on a Beech leaf







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List compiled by Mervin Nethercoat

Basidiomycetes

Russula ochroleuca	Ochre Brittlegill
R. fragilis	
Lactarius quietus	Oakbug Milkcap
L.	
Mycena archangeliana	Angel's Bonnet
M. galericulata	Common Bonnet
M. Filopes	Iodine Bonnet
M. inclinata	Clustered Bonnet
M. pos pseudocorticola	(tiny, on mossy bark)
Clitocybe nebularis	Clouded Funnel
Armillaria mellea	Honey Fungus
Laccaria laccata	The Deceiver
Marasmius hudsonii	Holly Cap
Collybia butyracea	Butter Cap
Macrolepiota rhacodes	Shaggy Parasol
Amanita muscaria	Fly Agaric
Lepista nuda	Wood Blewit
Hypholoma fasciculare	Sulphur Tuft
Coprinellus micaceus	Glistening Inkcap
Panaeolus sp	
Crepidotus variabilis	Variable Oysterling (pos C cesatii)
Boletus chrysenteron	Red Cracking Bolete
Laetiporus sulphureus	Chicken of the Woods (Very much past its sell-by date!)
Ganoderma australe	Southern Bracket
G. applanatum	Artist's Bracket
Stereum hirsutum	Hairy Curtain Crust
S. gausapatum	Bleeding Oak Crust
Trametes versicolor	Turkeytail
Schizopora paradoxa	Split Porecrust
Phallus impudicus	Stinkhorn
Auricularia auricula-judae	Jelly Ear
Microbotryum violaceum	Campion Anther Smut
Exidia thuretiana	White Brain

Ascomycetes

Xylaria hypoxylon	Stag's Horn or Candle Snuff
Daldinia concentrica	King Alfred's Cakes
Nectria cinnabarina	Coral Spot
Mollisia cinerea	Common Grey Disco

