

FUNGI WALK at NAPHILL COMMON on Sunday October 10th 2021

Penny Cullington

This was our first walk since introducing our new booking system and we were again a group of 30 today comprising 20 or so members plus some Friends of Naphill Common. We were a good healthy mix of established and new members and the weather was fine and warm. It had become apparent in the last week or so that the rain in recent weeks has triggered some sites into fungal action but this is still somewhat patchy and unpredictable; unfortunately Naphill Common was definitely not firing on all cylinders today and many common things were either completely absent or represented by singletons.

Mycorrhizal genera were particularly hard to come by: one Bolete, just two species of *Amanita*, one of *Inocybe* and four of *Russula* mostly represented by only one fruitbody, no *Cortinarius*, *Lactarius* or *Tricholoma*. Nevertheless our list of around 70 species includes 11 which appear to be new to the site, surprisingly a few of these being extremely common and no doubt just missed off previous lists.

Right, today's only two specimens of the common *Amanita rubescens* but at least serving to show the typical white veil patches on the cap, the skirtlike ring on the stem and the swollen volva at the stem base where the pink staining is just beginning to show. (NF)



I was handed various specimens of *Mycena* (Bonnet) which always need checking at home to identify to species, but one which is usually recognisable in the field was found by several people today, this was *Mycena haematopus* (Burgundydrop Bonnet). It occurs on fallen deciduous wood, often in tight clusters, and the smoky pink brown cap and stem make it quite distinctive. If in doubt, if you collect one it bleeds dark brown-red liquid from the stem base, hence its common name. The species is common but not as common as another fallen wood inhabiting Bonnet which also produces coloured liquid, this time bright orange saffron. *Mycena crocata* (Saffrondrop Bonnet) is, however, surprisingly entirely missing from our list today.



Left, two examples of *Mycena haematopus* found today, the conical caps about 1.5 cms across. (NF)

Below, *Coprinopsis echinospora*, a rare Inkcap. (RC)

Few Inkcaps were found but one was interesting and new to the site. It was on a bare Oak trunk and clearly had veil on the cap though well mature, and at home later Derek found the distinctive ornamented spores of *Coprinopsis echinospora*, a rare species with only 50 or so national records and very few previous county records.





At one stage I was handed an LBJ (Little Brown Job) which I was somewhat surprised to see appearing in woodland. This was the quite common grassland species *Cystoderma amianthinum* (Earthy Powdercap), quite closely related to the genus *Lepiota* (a genus also having white free gills and often a ring on the stem). I then remembered the existence of the much rarer *C. jasonis* which occurs in woodland though usually with conifers, and wondered if this might be it. Sadly not so. The spores and other microscopic details confirmed it as *C. amianthinum* and though regularly found in grassland I discovered it can occur in woodland as well.



Left, two views of *Cystoderma amianthinum*, normally found in grassland so not surprisingly new to this woodland site today. (NF)

On a pile of deciduous logs we found good numbers of a small white bracketlike species but one which has rather distinctive fanlike gills, making it unmistakable once you turn it over. This was *Schizophyllum commune* (Splitgill), a species which in some years is extremely common but in others hardly appears. It has the dubious distinction of occasionally causing disease in humans, affecting the nose.



Right, *Schizophyllum commune* found on a log pile. (PC)



On mossy fallen Beech there were a few clusters of a common Ascomycete just developing. This was *Neobulgaria pura* (Beech Jellydisc), sometimes found in large numbers on this substrate together with other Beech inhabiting species.

Left, a young pale pink cluster of *Neobulgaria pura* found on Beech. (NF)

Near the Dew Pond there was a large fallen Beech trunk liberally decorated with brackets belonging to the common species *Trametes gibbosa* (Lumpy Bracket – a rather unflattering name!) Related to the much smaller and quite colourful *T. versicolor* (Turkeytail), this species is white both above and below though often covered in green algae as seen here, and the pore surface below is quite

mazelike. The whole fruitbody is tough and leathery making it hard to remove from its substrate, usually fallen Oak or Beech.

Right, an impressive collection of *Trametes gibbosa* fruiting on a fallen mossy Beech trunk, with one removed to show the porous undersurface. (PC)



A visit to Naphill Common would not be complete without the

chance to see one of our rarest brackets and known to fruit here. Luckily today there were just one or two specimens which had not been destroyed by slugs. Belonging to a group of brackets described as ‘toothed’ (in place of gills or pores), the beautiful and impressive *Hericium erinaceus* has various common names (Bearded Tooth and Lion’s Mane amongst them) and forms great hanging white cascades. We were privileged to see it today.



Left, a small specimen of *Hericium erinaceus* on fallen Beech. (NF)

We were without Barry Webb today but still found a few Slime Moulds which I carefully collected to take home in the hope that they would mature enough to identify. One of these, *Arcyria denudata*, was clearly immature when found but still displaying its coral red colour and by the following morning had turned into tiny pink fluffy loofahs. The elators (the ‘fluff’ which supports the round spores) are beautiful under a scope – like a miniature railway track, and worth including here.

Below, the Slime Mould *Arcyria denudata*, left immature (NF), centre mature (PC), and right the elators and spores x 400. (PC)



Right at the end of the morning as we walked back there was a large rotting woodchip pile - always a good source of fungi – which gave us our final interesting mushroom species. Derek informed us that *Agrocybe rivulosa* (Wrinkled Fieldcap) was first described in 2003 from the Netherlands and made its way to Britain a few years later where first recorded in Derbyshire (when brought in by an attendee at a British Mycological Society foray week who’d found it in her

garden on woodchip but couldn't identify it). Since then it has spread all over the country and is now quite common occurring wherever woodchip is found – one of several species which have followed this same pattern.



Left, *Agrocybe rivulosa*, new to the site today and found on a large woodchip pile made up entirely of wood from the Common. (NF)

Thank you to all for attending and contributing to today's list which I know the Friends of Naphill Common will be grateful for. Thank you also the FoNC for hosting and leading us round so patiently today. Thank you also to those who sent me photos to share with everyone. For more details of what we found see the complete list which includes the common names.

Photographers

NF = Neil Fletcher; PC = Penny Cullington; RC = Rosemary Clarke