

FUNGI WALK at RUSHBEDS WOOD on Saturday November 20th 2021

Penny Cullington

This sadly was our last outing of the autumn, hastily arranged to take advantage of the abnormally late-fruiting season and extending our normal autumn activities by a couple of weeks. We were a group of 13 today and enjoyed the final morning of this extraordinarily mild calm spell before the north wind blew in with a vengeance the following day. I was leading on my own today with the usual snail's progress and frantic scribbling for the first part of the morning, though as we turned the corner at the end of the old tramway things started to slow down and there was less to find in the grassy rides offering attendees fewer chances to drift off piste. Nevertheless we found a good number of species, amassing a list of 93 - remarkable for this late in November - with 21 new for the site.

Before we set off I'd taken with me *Rhodocybe gemina* (Tan Pinkgill) to show those who were not familiar with it, having found it the day before at Bradenham Churchyard. An unusual and substantial Tricholomoid mushroom, it is one which often turns up on the tramway path here and we know from Finds that whenever something turns up in one place it's often to be found elsewhere. This proved again to be the case here and a few large specimens were soon spotted though they were well past their best. I took home a piece to check the spores just to make quite sure the determination was correct.

Right, rather old specimens of *Rhodocybe gemina* found in the tramway path today. (NF)



It was a surprise to some to find several Waxcaps, known principally as grassland species, in the woodland today. *Cuphophyllus virgineus* (Snowy Waxcap) seemed to be everywhere, both in grassy glades and litter, and in one woodland spot off the tramway we found three other species almost beckoning with their brightness amongst the thick layer of fallen leaves. Checking our records, all had been found here before but only on a few occasions though it is by no means unusual in some years for the commoner Waxcaps – also *Clavulinopsis* species (Clubs) – to turn up in wooded areas.



Above, three of today's woodland Waxcaps: L to R, *Hygrocybe chlorophana* (NF), *Gliophorus psittacinus* (BW), *Hygrocybe conica* (NF).

Finding soil inhabiting woodland fungi this late in the season can often be a challenge once the majority of the leaves are down – only those larger species remain easily visible. So as well as the *Rhodocybe* already mentioned, a large ring of *Infundibulicybe geotropa* (Trooping Funnel) was not difficult to spot, also a sizeable singleton *Echinoderma asperum* (Freckled Dapperling – previously in the genus *Lepiota*) was found. We do have a good many smaller species on the list, however, though many of these were inhabiting fallen wood - often an accessible and rewarding substrate to explore for fungi. One such was *Henningsomyces candidus* (White Tubelet) spotted on some old dead deciduous wood by one of our growing

number of sharp-eyed attendees. Aptly described today as ‘like tiny organ pipes’ by another attendee, this minuscule species is not an Ascomycete as one might assume but is a Basidiomycete (like mushrooms, brackets and the like). It is not rare but is easily missed and possibly misidentified unless viewed with a handlens when its delicate beauty is revealed.

Left, *Henningsomyces candidus*, each tiny tube no more than 1mm high x 0.4mm wide. (BW)



My containers suitable for collecting Bonnets and similar species were soon full to bursting as usual, though one Bonnet we saw in good numbers could thankfully be named in the field. *Mycena galericulata* (Common Bonnet) certainly lived up to its name today and I was constantly checking for the distinctive cross ridges seen in between the gills. On finding drab coloured Bonnets - both big and small – which are rooting firmly into fallen deciduous wood, the first check one should make in the field is to choose the largest cap, spread its gills open and look for these telltale ridges with a handlens. If they're there, job done!



Above, *Mycena galericulata* on fallen wood (NF)

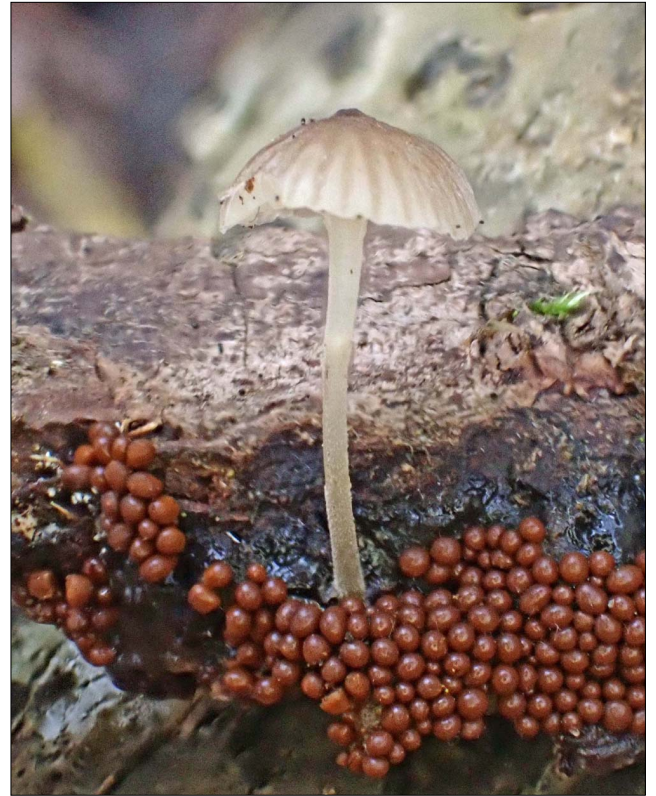
I was kept busy at home working on the many tiny specimens I was handed, particularly focussing on those I knew had been photoed. Herewith a few to share with you – all found on wood, some relatively common, others less so.

Right, two species of *Hemimycena*. Nearest: *H. mairei* (Fanvault Bonnet) previously known only from Derek's Whitchurch gardens! Note the strongly decurrent gills and cream cap. Far right: *H. tortuosa* (Dewdrop Bonnet) common and often with droplets adhering to the cap surface as seen here. (BW)





Above, *Mycena tenerrima* (Frosted Bonnet) common and also tiny like the two previous *Hemimycenas*, but with a small disc at its base and a fine coating like icing sugar on both cap and stem. (BW)
 Right, an unnamed *Mycena* and below it a swarm of the Slime Mould *Trichia persimilis*, recognised by its brown crowded sporangia, not yellow as in other members of the genus. (NF)



Left, *Crepidotus cesatii* (Roundspored Oysterling) on a small stick, the tiny shell-like caps under 1mm across here. (BW)



Above, *Bisporella sulfurina* (Sulphur Disco), smaller and more translucently bright yellow than *B. citrina*, also usually growing on old *Pyrenomyces* as seen here. (NF)

Right, *Trichoderma strictipile*, an Ascomycete with no common name (but I like Jackie's suggestion on finding it: Poppy Seed Buns, though you'd need a lot of buns to satisfy your appetite, each being only 3mm across!) I had speculatively named it cf. *Hypocrea gelatinosum* from the photo and wasn't aware of the specimen till seeing the photo. The distinctive green spots are in fact clusters of spores which are - unusually - dark green. Unbeknownst to me, Claudi worked on this collection later and informed me that there are now no less than 19 very similar green-spored species described. He sensibly sent the sample to M. Parslow at Kew who in early January came back with the name: another species new to the county. (CS)





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Above, *Dasyscyphella nivea* (no common name), one of several extremely similar hairy stalked tiny white discos which are often found in swarms on fallen bare wood. This one is distinguished in the field by the droplets adhering to its hairy outer surface. (It was also confirmed microscopically today by Joanna.) (BW)

On a dead attached deciduous branch an unusually coloured Corticioid was spotted by Claudi. This was *Vuilleminia comedens* (Waxy Crust) though determining it was not straightforward, there being two very similar species. However, on consulting Alick Henrici he discovered that the latest thinking, due to sequencing, is that both species are in fact the same! Not often DNA makes things simpler!

Right, *Vuilleminia comedens* found, photographed and determined by Claudi.

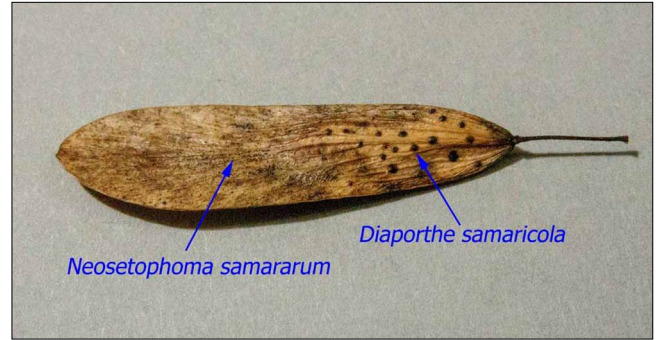


Two more Corticioid types to share with you, both from the same genus and having a lumpy rubbery furrowed gelatinous texture (described officially as 'Merulioid'). *Phlebia radiata* (Wrinkled Crust) is quite common and recognised by its orange colours; *Phlebia rufa* (no common name) is paler, more cream with a pink tinge. Both occur on a range of fallen deciduous woods though *P. radiata* is the commoner species.

Below left, *Phlebia radiata* (BW) and right, *Phlebia rufa* (CS)



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Above, two Ascomycetes found by Neil today which are found on the fallen keys of Ash – a common tree at Rushbeds, though one wonders for how long it will be so: Ash Dieback disease is prevalent here. (NF – the photo is of an earlier collection)

A couple more Corticioid species now, one with the familiar blue-green cups of *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* playing a supporting role though we saw better examples of this elsewhere today.



Above left, the unusual *Sebacina epigaea* found on woody debris, and left, *Hyphodontia arguta*, much more common, on fallen wood – neither species has a common name. (CS - who found and identified both species.)

My series of autumn reports needs a suitable climactic finish, and what better than one of Berry's remarkable Slime Mould photos?! He has just won yet another award for his undoubted skills with the camera and we are so lucky that he freely shares with us his many beautiful images. (<https://ndawards.net/winners-gallery/nd-awards-2021/non-professional/nature/category-award/>)



Above, the Slime Mould *Didymium squamulosum* on a herbaceous stem. (BW)

Thanks all for making this autumn season so memorable and enjoyable. It's been manic at times(!) but so rewarding too, and I really appreciate your support and patience. I hope you've learnt as much from our walks as I have, and we'll do it all again next year, Covid permitting! Bye

Photographers

BW = Barry Webb; CS = Claudi Soler; NF = Neil Fletcher.