

FUNGI WALK at BURNHAM BEECHES on Saturday October 7th 2023

Penny Cullington

Our large group of 26 met up in the Henry Peeke car park on a fine warm sunny morning and Derek and I were very glad of expert Geoffrey Kibby's assistance and enthusiasm to help us cope. In fact as we assembled our first excitement of the morning was collected from wood in the surrounding area. A small rather damaged LBJ was handed first to me then to Geoffrey, both of us commenting on the free pink gills (ie making this a species of *Pluteus* (Shield)) but then noticing its distinct bluish stem base. This rang a bell instantly with Geoffrey who had included *Pluteus cyanopus* in his 'Mushrooms & Toadstools' vol 2 with the comment 'Widespread in Europe but rare, not yet recorded in Britain but should be here.' He hopes to be able to confirm his ID with microscopy and is drying the material which will be sequenced, thus verifying the species as new to Britain. What a start! Sadly we have no photo to share so really need to find this special little mushroom again – there's a challenge!

We planned to proceed to the Mire – always an interesting area for fungi - then continue round the lakes etc depending on how much we were finding. To our surprise, considering how poor collecting has been recently, we didn't reach the Mire for approaching two hours and by the time we'd worked our way across it was already after 12.30! Our list grew steadily as we wandered amongst the mix of Pine, Oak, Birch and Beech before getting anywhere near the boardwalk and there was plenty to keep us occupied and entertained. The genus *Amanita* has been in somewhat short supply recently but today we found six different species in this area – mostly common things, represented by singletons or doubletons, but with two exceptions. Firstly *Amanita porphyria* (Grey Veiled Amanita) which is uncommon and tends to occur under Pine though is not restricted to that host – we have one or two records under Beech also – and we've not recorded it here since 2006. Today we found quite a few specimens enabling us to get familiar with its dingy colours with a hint of grey-violet in both in cap and stem.

Right: *Amanita porphyria* under the Pines. (cs)



Secondly a small peachy-orange capped *Amanita* was handed to Geoffrey who instantly recognised it as the rare *Amanita subnudipes* (no common name). This is one of the Grisette Amanitas, ie having no stem ring and a flimsy fragile volva - sometimes coloured, sometimes not. The occasional and more familiar Grisette member which has a cap this colour is the beautiful *A. crocea* which grows under Birch, and I discovered that originally today's species was described as *A. crocea* var. *subnudipes* on account of its similarity to the type but its lack of the distinctive orange fleecy 'belts' on the stem of that species (hence the epithet *subnudipes* – almost bare stem). Now raised to a species in its own right, it apparently occurs under Oak, Chestnut and Pine – here it was under Oak – and Geoffrey's vol 2 comments on just one previous British record from Hampshire. So here was another exciting find.

Left: *Amanita subnudipes* – a significant find today. (cw)



Very common in this area dominated by Pine was the small *Gymnopilus penetrans* (Common Rustgill) which grows on fallen wood, predominantly conifer but is also not uncommon on deciduous wood. One of many mushrooms having palish tan brown smooth caps (eg *Gymnopus dryophilus*, also some common *Lactarius* species) the clue to its identity lies in its gill colour, yellow at first then rusty as its spores mature - well described by its common name. Today several people were confused by it though by the end of the morning most were getting the hang of it.

Right: two images of *Gymnopilus penetrans*. Above: taken today (LS) and below taken at nearby Stoke Common last year showing its similarity to *Lactarius* with gills still at the yellow stage. (PC)



Talking of *Lactarius* and *Gymnopus* look-alikes, when a stunning example of a Zygomycete 'Pin Mould' was found, I mistakenly assumed it was on *Lactarius subdulcis* which had just been identified nearby. *Spinellus fusiger* (Bonnet Mould) is not that unusual to find growing on the caps of the genus *Mycena* – hence its common name. I'd never seen it on any other genus but today was convinced it must be this species though Derek wisely questioned the host fungus at the time. At home when I looked it up I discovered it grows on many different Bonnets 'but also on other agarics such as *Rhodocollybia butyracea* and *Gymnopus dryophilus*'. The light then dawned when I looked again at Linda's photos: this surely was on *G. dryophilus* and not on *Lactarius* as I'd thought! It is interesting to observe that when on Bonnets this fungus covers the cap surface as well as the underneath (see images online to compare), but here on a different genus having a different cap texture it is clearly confined to its underside. Comparing today's find with images on line, this was certainly amongst the most impressive of examples.



Above: *Spinellus fusiger* found most unusually invading *Gymnopus dryophilus*. (LS)

Not far from the *Spinellus* spot a nice pale blue-green specimen of *Clitocybe odora* (Aniseed Funnel) was found in the litter. It was so pale that at first it fooled me but once I twigged what it might be the beautiful sweet smell was all the confirmation needed.

Right: *Clitocybe odora* (LS)



Also in this area *Thelephora terrestris* (Earthfan) was found, not a mushroom but still a Basidiomycete ie one of the 'spore-droppers'. Not at all rare, it favours heathy areas often with conifer but we do not record it that often. Here it was amongst woody litter. Its common name describes its shape and habit well.

Right: *Thelephora terrestris* (cw)



Having Geoffrey with us today enabled us to put names to all the Boletes we found – both Derek and I find the *Xerocomus* / *-ellus* species particularly baffling as many of you are aware! The genus *Suillus* is less confusing, however, and we were not surprised to find good numbers of the Pine associate *Suillus bovinus* (Bovine Bolete) here. What was particularly pleasing today was that the red-capped *Gomphidius roseus* (Rosy Spike) was found in several places alongside it. The relationship which exists between these two entirely unrelated mushrooms is well established though not fully understood; they

often grow in close proximity though apparently are not reliant on one another – both can also occur separately. A similar relationship occurs between the charismatic Birch associate *Amanita muscaria* (Fly Agaric) and *Chalciporus piperatus* (Peppery Bolete). It follows that if you find one of these four species it's always worth having a close look around for its partner.



Left: *Suillus bovinus* with its partner *Gomphidius roseus* (cs)

We've been aware for several years here that our collections of the common *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* (False Chanterelle) are not all the same species. Today we found an incredibly pale specimen, entirely lacking in orange – so much so that at first glance I mistook it for a species of *Clitocybe* (Funnel). This we've recorded as *H. macrospora* in the belief that DNA sequencing will confirm it though the science is as yet not entirely settled with regard to this genus.

Right: *Hygrophoropsis macrospora* found amongst the Pines, hopefully to be confirmed with sequencing (LS). Below: *Inocybe stellatospora* found under Pine. (LS)



Also under Pine was a small cluster of *Inocybe stellatospora* (Woolly Fibrecap). Though the genus as a whole is one of the trickiest to identify to species, this particular member is quite an easy one, in fact both Geoffrey and I were fairly confident in the field that it was one of just two similar

species, both of which have the same distinctive nobbly spores but can be separated by the shape of their microscopic cells found on the gill. Both species are similarly scaly-woolly on both cap and stem, in fact this collection has the woolliest stems I've seen!



Before we move on to species found in the Mire I'd like to include a photo of *Tubaria conspersa* (Felted Twiglet), a species I personally tend to confuse with the very common *T. furfuracea* (Scurfy Twiglet). It was not until I saw this photo that I realised that a clear difference was visible here and that this collection was not *T. furfuracea* as named at first today in the field. The white floccose veil covers the entire cap and the stem whereas in *T. furfuracea* this white scurfy coating is much less apparent and more or less confined to the cap edge.

Left: *Tubaria conspersa* with white flakes of 'veil' on both cap and stem. (LS)

On entering the Mire we immediately found good numbers of a tan brown mushroom amongst the moss which was recognised as one of three similar species of *Hypholoma* (Brownie), best separated by their spore sizes. Geoffrey later confirmed this was *Hypholoma ericaeum* (no common name) and not apparently recorded here since the 1960's.

Right: *Hypholoma ericaeum* in the Mire today. (LS)



Back to Boletes again. Three species of *Leccinum* were found in the Mire, two of which were rare and new to the site. *Leccinum schistophilum* (Bog Bolete) is very similar to the common *L. scabrum*, differing in its blue green markings at the stem base – a feature always missing in the commoner species. Both associate with Birch but *L. scabrum* favours dry area whereas today's species favours wet acidic sites, hence its appearance here. (No image, sorry.) Also found were *L. aurantiacum* (Orange Bolete) and the very similar but rare *L. albstipitatum* (no common name). Both

share a foxy orange cap but differ in their stem markings and host association. *L. aurantiacum* grows most often under Oak though also under other deciduous trees and has rich orange brown scabers (flecks) all over the stem contrasting with the pale background. *L. albstipitatum* grows only under Aspen and has pale stem scabers showing little contrast. It was good to have Geoffrey with us here because he knows this genus well, it being one of his favourites together with *Russula* and *Cortinarius*.

Left: *Leccinum albstipitatum* (SE). For comparison of the stem markings the inset shows the distinct foxy scabers of our young specimen of *L. aurantiacum* (LS).



As this report is in danger of becoming somewhat lengthy I'm going to conclude my ramblings but will add more photos below with short notes. With a group of this size it's inevitable that some of the things we found were not seen by everyone, furthermore a few people stayed on into the afternoon and added even

more to the list - now around 130 species, by far our largest total this season and also completely unexpected. Thank you all for coming, thank you for your extra identifications and wonderful photos too, and a big thank you to Geoffrey for his invaluable contribution today. We had a really fun time! For more detail of what we found see the separate complete species list.

Photographers

BW = Barry Webb, CS = Claudi Soler, CW = Claire Williams, DJS = Derek Schafer, LS = Linda Seward,
PC = Penny Cullington, SE = Sarah Ebdon, SP = Stephen Plummer.



Left & above: *Coprinopsis* sp., an undescribed species of Inkcap found today by Derek on dung – this is a species new to science. (DJS)

Above right: *Lachnum apalum* (Rush Disco), these tiny furry cups found by Barry in the Mire. (BW)

Right: *Incrucipulum ciliare*, the tiny furry discs (related to *Lachnum* above) were found (and identified) by Stephen

Plummer on an Oak leaf. We have only one previous county record, from this site last year. (SP)



Left below & inset: *Chlorophyllum rhacodes* (Shaggy Parasol) which shows nicely how the scales are formed as the cuticle of the young cap – smooth at first – cracks and splits as it expands. Note also the diagnostic orange staining where scratched. (LS)

Right below: the tiny *Hydropus* sp. found on rotting Pine, another undescribed species first found here several years ago by Barry and now proven with DNA sequencing to be new to science – awaiting naming and official publication. (BW)





Above left: *Calocera cornea* (Small Stagshorn) with some tiny grey *Mollisia* sp. discs at the bottom (LS); above right: *Mycena haematopus* (Burgundydrop Bonnet) (BW)



Left: the tiny and very rare *Mycena dasypus* growing on Sphagnum in the Mire, for several years thought to be new to science but eventually matched with sequencing to a single collection held at RBG Kew. (BW)

Right: the common *Mycena galopus* (Milking Bonnet) on woody debris. Note the diagnostic tiny white droplets seen here on the caps and often revealed if the stem is broken. (BW)

Below: *Lycoperdon perlatum* (Common Puffball) just emerging. Note how the loosely attached spines and warts are already to be seen in the litter beneath. (LS)





Left: *Cordyceps militaris* (Orange Caterpillarclub) found by Claire in the afternoon. This fungus is growing on a (now dead) pupa well beneath the surface. (CW)



Right: The stunning primrose yellow *Russula claroflava* (Yellow Swamp Brittlepill) found near Birch in the Mire. (LS)

Below: two Slime Moulds found by Barry. Left: the tiny *Arcyria cinerea* (no common name) found on rotten wood. Right: the even tinier and exquisite *Cribraria persoonii*, each one less than 2mm tall. (BW)



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..... and finally (LS)

