

FUNGI WALK at MOUSELLS WOOD on Wednesday October 23rd, 2024

Penny Cullington

Our group of 18 (a bit oversubscribed for a midweek meeting) met up today and were able to squeeze into the lay-by opposite the wood. It was a perfect autumn morning and we had our fingers crossed that we'd see some of the special mycorrhizal species known to occur in this north facing typical piece of Chiltern Beech woodland. We've noted in the past that if we start picking up interesting fungi along the roadside verge before getting to the gate we're likely to be in for a treat. That didn't happen today! No great surprise – it's just been one of those seasons: generally disappointing but challenging probably sums it up so far. Comparing today's list with our last visit here in 2022 when admittedly we were 35 strong and with Kibby, Tortelli and Fortey as guest leaders, the differences are stark! Just one singleton common *Russula* specimen today as opposed to 17 species, 7 of which were unusual or rare; just one singleton *Amanita* as opposed to 4 species; no *Cortinarius* apart from some unidentifiable *Telamonias* as opposed to 5 species, several of which were rare *Phlegmacium*s (and that was considered a low number and a disappointment at the time); one singleton bolete – actually similar to 2022; one singleton common *Lactarius* as opposed to 6 species; etc, etc.

The site has in the past produced a number of interesting species of *Inocybe* (Fibrecap) including one new to the UK. Today we did at least find a few which I was able to name in situ and confirm later at home, and one I was pleased to both recognise and confirm was new to the site. *Inocybe muricellata* (no English name) is not at all common but was in mind because we also found it last week at Bittam's Wood West where it was new to the Dancersend Reserve (see that report for a photo and a bit more information).

We found our usual selection of *Mycena* species (Bonnet), none of which were of particular interest though it's the first time this year we've seen the miniscule *Mycena capillaris* (Beechleaf Bonnet) which turned up several times today doing exactly what it says on the tin. If you realise that the larger fruitbodies seen here were no more than 10 mm high at most, imagine how tiny the smaller ones were, seen lower left here! They make the leaf look simply enormous.



Above: *Mycena capillaris* trooping on a fallen Beech leaf (cvs)

The woodland floor was alive with the equally tiny *Marasmius setosus* (Hairy Stem Parachute) adorning the leaf litter and quite easy to spot if you know to look for it. It has the brightest white cap of all the tiny mycenoid mushrooms but gives itself away as a *Marasmius* rather than a *Mycena* once you look at the stem – white under the cap but then increasingly darker to reddish-orange towards the base. Looking with a hand lens one can see the finely hairy surface which separates it from other possible similar members of the genus. No photo was taken today but I include a superb library photo of Barry's. This is not on a twig but on a leaf petiole which puts it nicely in perspective!

Left: *Marasmius setosus* – quite common today (here from Penn Wood in 2021). (bw)



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Inkcap were also in short supply today with just a singleton button of *Coprinopsis picacea* (Magpie Inkcap) – its disgusting smell making it nameable even at this stage of development. (See the 2022 report for a superb image of this species looking its best!) Where was *Coprinellus micaceus* (Glistening Inkcap) today? Not seen. I was handed just one other Inkcap past its

sell-by date which might have been identifiable by Derek but would have been a black puddle by the time I got to look at it!

It was nice to see a pair of this uncommon puffball which we quite often find here. Very different in appearance from the usual two species with which most are now familiar, *Lycoperdon echinatum* (Spiny Puffball) favours our mature calcareous Beechwoods, but there is another puffball which is sometimes mistakenly claimed as this. *L. nigrescens* (Dusky Puffball) is quite common and also brown but its spines are usually obviously shorter and less 'hairy-looking' but on occasion the two can look pretty similar. *L. echinatum* only occurs in mature woodland, particularly under Beech, but *L. nigrescens* occurs in grassland habitats as well as woodland.

Below: for comparison, *Lycoperdon echinatum* today - left (EP); *Lycoperdon nigrescens* from Burnham Beeches - right (PC)



Another species we find here quite regularly but is always nice to come across was *Hydnum rufescens* (Terracotta Hedgehog). Its darker cap colour eliminated the more common *H. repandum* but in recent years DNA research has uncovered a species complex amongst both the paler and darker coloured *Hydnum* species, so Claudi checked the spores today, their size and shape confirming our ID.

Right: *Hydnum rufescens*. (SP)



We found four different species coral fungi today, three of them common but one was new to the site.

Ramariopsis kunzei (Ivory Coral) is at first glance mistakable for *Clavulina coralloides* (Crested Coral) – another we saw briefly today, but is much less common. Though about the same size it is more delicate, less compact with the branching more graduated rather than feathery at the top with sharp points. If in doubt, it has smaller ornamented spores in contrast to the smooth spores of the *Clavulina*. I thought another library photo might be useful here to compare the two.

Below: for comparison, *Ramariopsis kunzei* found today - left (SP); *Clavulina coralloides*, Hodgemoor Wood 2023 – right (PC)



Three separate collections of a tiny pale brown mycenoid mushroom were made, all fruiting singly on sticks, though it was clearly not a *Mycena* once examined with a hand lens. The final collection (seen here) was luckily in perfect condition showing an ochre brown cap and stem covered in tiny flocculose scales. Claudi immediately and correctly suggested the genus *Flammulaster*, and at home the microscopy confirmed it as ***Flammulaster muricatus*** (Scaly Spark). The species is not common, or if so is not often recognised or recorded, though checking in our records this is the third time we've found it here (including our 2022 visit though I'd forgotten that!)



Right: *Flammulaster muricatus* (cvs)

Two tiny mystery collections were made, one solved later, one not. The first: on a leaf was found these tiny exquisite fluffy white blobs which none of us could recall having seen before. Stephen bravely offered to have a go at tracing it, and came back with the name ***Chromelosporium ochraceum*** (no English name, though listed in Species Fungorum as *Ostracoderma ochraceum?*). It is apparently rarely recorded with under 40 FRDBI records but we do have one from Bucks recorded in 2011 by me! Needless to say I have no recollection of it! Stephen discovered that members of the genus *Chromelosporium* are the asexual state of the genus *Peziza* – amazing, and good detective work here too!



Left: *Chromelosporium ochraceum* (SJE)

I'm now wishing I'd let Stephen work his magic on our second tiny mystery which I took home but failed to get anywhere with. This was a line of miniscule white feathery filamentous fans found on a bare stick which was unfamiliar to all of us. Under the scope I found just a mass of fibres with some occasional hairlike structure at right angles to the mass, but no sign of other cells or spores to give a clue as to its identity. It may possibly be purely a strange form of fungal mycelium, but there's also a similarity (noticed on a previous BMS Facebook page) to *Tilachlidium brachiatum* though this is not backed up by my microscopy. Anyway, a sample is being sent to Asco expert Paul Cannon together with another unsolved mystery we found at Hockeridge Wood. Both samples will also be sequenced.



Right: our mystery fungus (BW)

Right at the end of our morning, as Sarah walked back to Frieth through the woodland she came across this beauty which not surprisingly stopped her in her tracks. She sent me her photo whilst still in the woods, wanting to know if I needed the material to identify it and thinking it must be a mauve *Lepiota* (Dapperling). 10 minutes later I received a further message from her suggesting the name ***Leucoagaricus ionidicolor*** which had just 'come to her' as she continued walking! Thus the mycologist's



brain! From her photo there can be little doubt that this is correct as there's nothing similar it can be, though it's odd that it appears to have no English name as yet. One of 15 species new to our site list today, this is not at all common and just our third county record. What a stunning collection!

Left: *Leucoagaricus ionidicolor* (SJE)

I'm going to end off now but will add a few more images below for your enjoyment! Thanks to all for your efforts collecting specimens and providing our list of just over 100 species. Special thanks to Claudi for co-leading and providing valuable identifications and photos; thanks also to Stephen for his valuable input and to our excellent photographers as always. For more details of what we found see the separate species list.

Photographers

BW = Barry Webb; CVS = Claudi Soler; EP = Eleanor Page;
 PC = Penny Cullington; SJE = Sarah Ebdon;
 SP = Stephen Plummer.



Three corticioid species identified by Claudi, all very different. Above left: *Tomentella bryophila*, our fourth county record. Above right: *Mycoacia nothofagi*, a toothed species. Left: *Datronia mollis* (Common Mazegill). (CVS)

On the following page, a selection of slime moulds all found today and mostly all on the same bare fallen piece of wood. (BW)

Top left: the common *Metatrachia decipiens* - very distinctive with its combination of bright orange blobs with white stems

Top right: the much rarer *Enerthenema papillatum*, simply tiny!

Below this: three different stages of development of the beautiful *Comatrachia nigra*

