

Buckinghamshire Fungus Group

UK Fungus Day Display – Mushroom Magic – October 7th 2017

County Museum, Aylesbury

Penny Cullington

This annual event, held here for the third time, was our most successful if judged by the numbers of the public who attended. Collecting fresh specimens to make a good showing proved hard work this year: though the fungal fruiting season got off to an amazing start early in August in our area things seem to be slowing down quite rapidly now, particularly the showier mycorrhizal mushroom genera – the ones which tend to be especially admired in such displays. However, everyone had rallied round and once we started setting things out it soon became clear that there was going to be plenty to cover the large central table for people to admire. Once the A4 genus sheet information stands (newly designed by the BMS) were in place and all of the 100 or so species set out and labelled, we could focus on the finishing touches: information posters, leaflets and mushroom-growing kits ready for people to help themselves, a table set aside for identifying specimens brought in by the public, a good selection of books, the childrens' corner with play-do for modelling and colouring sheets to add to the huge mushroom collage covering the end wall, also badge-making.

Finally Derek's microscope and sporeprint corner, always a popular attraction, was ready with scopes linked up to a monitor and also a large TV screen showing an ever-changing loop of fungi found in the county – photos all supplied by BFG members. We just managed to find



time for a photo of all our helpers before the doors opened at 11.00.

It appeared from the constant stream of interested people that our efforts over advertising the event had been worthwhile. There was a lull at lunchtime (for which we were all very grateful) but things soon picked up again and the flow of questions, admiring oohs and aahs, specimens to add to the display, etc continued until 4.00 when it was time to pack up. Many visitors spent a good long time looking round and all the BFG membership forms quickly disappeared (though it remains to be seen whether the enthusiasm felt on the day actually produces lasting new members). The press visited and took a good number of photos, promising coverage in two local papers. The Museum's curator spent considerable time with us and afterwards told us that over 500 people had gone through the gates specifically for our event - a figure far in excess of the numbers normally experienced on an October weekend. So all in all we were well pleased with how the day had gone

and though we were worn out once everything was cleared up, the success of the occasion made it all worthwhile.

My thanks to the County Museum for hosting and supporting the event once again, and especially to Mike Palmer from the museum for designing and organising much of our publicity, also for manning the children's corner throughout the day. Thanks are also due to the BMS for supplying leaflets, booklets, mushroom spawn, our UK Fungus Day T shirts, also the funding for our A4 and A6 information stands which added so much to the finishing touches of the display table. Finally and perhaps most importantly I must thank our valiant team of BFG helpers, without whom an event of this sort would not be possible. There follow a selection of photos to give a flavour of the day and the various different activities.



