

Joint BFG / Frieth Natural History Society Foray at Mousells Wood  
September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013

Report by Penny Cullington

This was our first foray of the 2013 autumn season, with a turnout of 14 (a good number for us!) – about half and half BFG and FNHS members. After a suitably hot summer and also a reasonable amount of recent rain, conditions were about perfect for fungal fruiting though things generally seem to be moving disappointingly slowly so far in this part of the world. As we set off along the often very productive road verge to the wood entrance, it was soon apparent that we were not going to be treated to the amazing display of eye-catching fruitbodies experienced in previous years. Once in the wood proper, the list grew slowly but with no stunning *Cortinarius* (Webcap) species to wow us, no *Amanitas* at all and very few *Inocybe* (Fibre-cap) and *Russula* (Brittle-gill) species – all four genera usually very well represented here. However, everyone searched hard and there were some nice finds as we continued, with a good showing of *Ramaria stricta*, many specimens of *Parasola conopilus* – a species recently moved from the genus *Psathyrella*, and even more specimens of *Mycena crocata* (Saffron Bonnet) with caps confusingly in a range of colours but the distinctive orange juice much on display.

Roger Kemp found an immature pinkish cream *Russula* early on which (knowing this site) I suspected might be a rare member of the Xerampelina group found under Beech; sure enough, when I rubbed the stem with a Ferrous Sulphate crystal it turned green instead of the normal dirty rust colour, confirming this as *R. faginea*. I was thrilled later when we found two more perfect specimens, the largest about 10 cms across – a real photo opportunity as I've never had the chance to get a shot of more than one specimen at a time before. The small specimen at the bottom and collected 10 minutes earlier shows the crystal staining on the stem having turned almost black. The smell of crab or fish typical of this group of the genus was not strongly in evidence but was detected by several forayers once the specimen was rubbed.



*Russula faginea* growing under Beech at Mousells Wood.



A striking white and decidedly slimy species caused interest and also difficulty amongst forayers in naming the genus. This was *Hygrophorus discoxanthus* (Yellowing Woodwax), one of several very similar white members of the genus found under Beech. At home a drop of the chemical KOH on the cap turned instantly yellow then dark rust, confirming its identity. This species has very little smell whereas one of the similar species is said to smell of mandarins, and another of goat moth caterpillars! However, neither react to KOH in this way.

*Hygrophorus discoxanthus* in Beech litter at Mousells Wood

Alan Gudge found two pristine specimens of *Lepiota aspera* (Freckled Dapperling), often in evidence here, and Nick Standing collected several specimens of the somewhat nondescript and often overlooked genus *Simocybe*, these being *S. sumptuosa* – perhaps rather a grand name for a little brown job! Early on two specimens of a white Funnelcap provided a useful talking point, being the deadly poisonous *Clitocybe phyllophila* (Frosty Funnel) and easily confused the very similar and edible *Clitopilus prunulus* (The Miller). We also found the deadly poisonous yet innoquous-looking species, *Galerina autumnalis* (Funeral Bell), bringing home the point that collecting fungi to eat can be a dangerous pastime. Amongst the non-gilled fungi of note were *Clavariadelphus pistillaris* (Giant Club), *Geastrum triplex* (Collared Earthstar) and *Lycoperdon echinatum* (Spiny Puffball) – all known here from previous forays.

The final list came to a very respectable 77 species, of which 10 were new to the site. (See the complete list of species for more details.) Just at the end Claudi Soler produced two specimens of an *Inocybe* (Fibre-cap) which I thought might be interesting and new to the site. Not so: at home this proved to be *I. flocculosa* (Fleecy Fibre-cap) – quite a common species, but as I don't often include photos of this my favourite genus, here it is below.



*Inocybe flocculosa* growing under Beech at Mousells Wood.