

Foray at Naphill Common on Sunday, October 23rd 2016

Penny Cullington

This foray was joint with the Friends of Naphill Common, and as is the norm at this annual meeting we had a really good turnout: over 30 attendees of which 12 were BFG members. It was fine and dry (too dry, some might say) and though some groups of fungi were only poorly represented, other made up for it with everyone finding plenty to keep them busy and entertained. In areas where the rides had been widened by clearing work the woody litter was often carpeted with sheets of various common species enabling the less experienced to become familiar with the likes of *Laccaria laccata* and *L. amethystina* (The Deceiver and the Amethyst Deceiver), also *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Sulphurtuft), *Tubaria furfuracea* (Scurfy Twiglet) and large numbers of various members of the genus *Psathyrella* (Brittlestem) which needed work at home to identify to species.



BFG members amongst the busy attendees today (TS)

Mycorrhizal fungi (those which grow in association with trees to the mutual benefit of both fungus and tree) were rather surprisingly few and far between today, with usually common genera such as *Amanita*, *Russula*, *Lactarius*, *Inocybe* and *Tricholoma* in relatively low numbers as is reflected in our over-all list for the day. None-the-less the list stands at 85 species, just short of our largest total since BFG started recording here some eight years ago. Derek and I were kept fully occupied with identifying and explaining during the morning, and as is often the way at such events found no time ourselves for taking photos with which to illustrate this report, but as you will see below there was no shortage of beautiful images taken by other members (much more skilled with the camera).



Left, Derek minutely studying a cluster of Inkcaps on a stick handed him today (TS)

The first large mushroom-type (fungus with a cap, gills and a stem) which was found was growing clustered at the base of a large Oak tree. This was *Gymnopilus junonius* (Spectacular Rustgill), though it was not yet fully developed with its rusty coloured gills still enclosed under the protective veil which eventually forms a large ring on the stem.

Right, *Gymnopilus junonius* emerging at the base of an Oak today. (JW)





At one point there was a cry of 'I've got a bleeding bracket here!' and this was certainly no exaggeration. After much deliberation I eventually recalled that the species *Abortiporus biennis* (Blushing Rosette) can at times develop these red droplets though considering the recent dry weather it was surprising to find them quite so prolific today.

Left, *Abortiporus biennis* on a old Beech stump found literally 'bleeding'. (NS)

Another fungus we found fruiting on fallen Beech today was the rather small and insignificant *Panellus stipticus* (Bitter Oysterling). These rather delicately gilled caps (each only up to 3cm across at most) grow in tight clusters often on the sawn ends of Beech logs; they have an eccentric stem (i.e. one formed on the side of the cap rather than centrally) and are slightly sticky to the touch.

Right, *Panellus stipticus* growing on a Beech log, seen here from the underside. (NS)



Another somewhat small and easily missed fungus with an eccentric stipe was noticed growing amongst the mossy debris at the pathside. This was the unusual *Arrhenia acerosa* (Moss Oysterling). We've recorded this species from just four other sites in the county. The detail visible in this excellent photo is misleading because the caps were less than 1 cm across!

Left, *Arrhenia acerosa* found today, new to the site. (NS)

A little further on we noticed a couple of newly planted Juniper saplings enclosed with wire netting. This protection did not, however, deter the impressive fungi from growing in the disturbed soil at their base. This beautiful clump of *Aleuria aurantia* (Orange Peel Fungus) was much admired by those lucky enough to see it.

Right, *Aleuria aurantia* growing in disturbed soil today. (NS)



Six different species of *Mycena* (Bonnet) were recorded, the two most common of which were to be seen on many of the fallen branches. *Mycena galericulata* (Common Bonnet) and *Mycena arcangeliana* (Angel's Bonnet) are often very similar at first glance but with experience can fairly safely be told apart in the field. The Common Bonnet roots very firmly into the wood and can get very large for this usually rather delicate genus; Angel's Bonnet attaches to the wood by a fine mesh of white mycelial chords, has a purplish stem when young and the caps rarely get above 2cm across.



Left above, *Mycena galericulata* (JW), and right above, *Mycena arcangeliana* (PC) both very common today.

Peter Davis led us round very expertly as usual and made sure to take us to see a very rare and spectacular fungus which has been found here on and off over the last few years growing on a huge old Beech tree. This year the tree had fallen into a pond, its demise no doubt brought about by another fungus, *Ganoderma australe* (Southern Bracket), which had produced several enormous brackets each well over 1 ft across. At the pond we first admired the quantities of *Oudemansiella mucida* (Porcelain Fungus) growing on an adjacent fallen Beech, and then took



Two views of the deliciously slimy *Oudemansiella mucida* growing on fallen Beech. (Left JW, right NS)

turns to admire the wonderful display of *Hericium erinaceus* (Bearded Tooth), several brackets of which were cascading both underneath and inside the hollow trunk of this massive tree. It was a privilege for all present to be able to see this beautiful and very special fungus, one which is listed under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 BAP.



Hericium erinaceus fruiting most impressively on a massive Beech tree today (JW)

It remains for me to thank all the attendees for their diligent searching which produced a good list despite the dry conditions. 18 species were new to the site, and our database shows that we have now recorded 309 species in total here. No doubt there are many more species still to be discovered, and I guess we will further lengthen the list in two weeks' time when we return here for our prestigious event with several celebrity leaders.

A big thank you too to the photographers for their excellent pictures.

For further details of what we found see the complete list of species.

NS = Nick Standing; TS = Toni Standing; JW = Justin Warhurst