

## FUNGI WALK at WHIPSNADE ZOO on WEDNESDAY October 11<sup>th</sup> 2017

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This was a joint foray for Herts and Beds Fungi Group with Bucks Fungi Group and two from the Beds Invertebrate Group also present. A total of nineteen people assembled at the entrance to the zoo on a morning with patchy rain and at times rather windy. We were accompanied by Tyrone Capel, Cassandra Coveney and Mariee Vincent from the zoo staff during the morning and they gave us access to areas not normally open to the public. We are very grateful to them and to the Zoo authorities for their support. In the afternoon we covered mainly grassy areas before eventually finishing in the butterfly house. The day proved extremely productive and with some excellent finds. Forayers and the zoo staff are all keen that we repeat this event next year and we will definitely do so.

The list of species recorded on the day currently totals 164, one of the longest ever day foray lists for Beds though we have several times exceeded 200 spp in the day in Herts. The list includes a remarkable 6 New County Records (these are indicated in the comments field). I was back there the following day with some of the flora group when among a host of interesting plant records the best was probably *Polypodium cambricum* (Southern Polypody Fern) in the hippo enclosure. I also added a further eleven fungi - mostly microfungi. I have incorporated these in the main list but in blue so they stand out clearly. The Beds Invertebrate Group excursion to the zoo on 5 Sept focused mainly on the SSSI grassland followed by the butterfly house. An additional six species found then but not on our foray are appended to the list in red.

I am also attaching some images of some of the species found on the foray (see below).

The butterfly house produced some interesting finds as always. I have had other good fungi in here previously, including *Lepiota xanthophylla* in February and apart from the various synanthropic species that were present on this occasion that I was able to identify I still have two puzzles (see later).

Other species that I photographed for which images are below are:

*Gymnopus inodorus* (=Collybia = Micromphale) (NCR) which I have I think seen just once previously. I don't think it is generally known as a synanthropic species but then neither is *Gymnopus (Collybia) dryophila* which was definitely also in there. I have dried the material which as indicated below appeared to be infected with a Hyphomycete.

*Hohenbuehelia petalooides* - butterfly house (image as taken on the BIG excursion in September)

*Leucocoprinus birnbaumii* - butterfly house

*Clitocybe houghtonii* - Owl Wood NCR though several records for Herts

*Puccinia chaerophylli* - on *Myrrhis odorata* near wild boar. A surprising NCR not least as we had it again on *Anthriscus sylvestris* on the Marston Vale foray!

*Apiospora montagnei* — on old bamboo stem, near tigers, NCR

Two species from the butterfly house as yet remain unidentified

1. A possible Hyphomycete on the gills of *Micromphale inodora*. Macroscopically this looks very distinctive (reminiscent of lines of teeth). It does not obviously match any of the species recorded as growing on Collybioids

2, a white, stipitate poroid which rings no bells with me and which has completely defeated me (2 images below). It steadfastly refuses to yield any spores but I have dried it. I resorted to searching on-line looking for possible matches and the best look alike that I came up with was *Abortiporus fractipes* (=Loweomyces). This is not on the UK list however and it is not even entirely clear what is the correct genus.

I have sent the images of these two to Geoffrey Kibby in case he has seen anything like them, especially in the houses at Kew but I still await a reply. I can then send him on the material if he expresses any interest. Hopefully we will ultimately get identifications for these two species, in which case I will let you know.

We were also able to show those present some of the exotic invertebrate fauna in the butterfly house so I have also attached a few images of these as follows:

*Subulina octona* - a snail, (shell c 12mm) known in the UK only as a synanthropic species at Whipsnade and a couple of other UK sites. Although we have found shells previously this was the first live one I have seen here, collected by Dave Guntrip

*Zonitoides arboreus* - small snail (shell c 4mm) also entirely synanthropic and with few UK sites. Although it has been found here previously these were the first that I had seen, again collected by Dave Guntrip. (A species found here earlier in the year by Dave has now been determined as *Afropunctum seminum* which is new to the UK, albeit synanthropic)

*Anchiphilosia pilosa* - woodlouse species which was new to the western palearctic when we found it here in January. Although abundant here this remains the only known UK site.

Best wishes to all and thanks