FUNGI WALK at Homefield Wood Marlow on November 4th, 2025

Report by Jackie Mackenzie-Dodds, edited by Sarah-Jayne Ebdon and Jesper Launder.

14 BFG members met up on a beautiful sunny and mild autumn morning at Homefield Wood, Marlow, another new site this year for us, and we were welcomed by BBOWT Warden Phillip Pratt, who has dedicated many years to helping maintain the SSSI habitat for rare species found there, particularly orchids in early summer. Whilst we weren't there for orchids, and indeed were not expecting to see them, there is keen interest in orchids amongst our members and there was various chatter about them throughout the morning as many of us had visited the site to enjoy them previously. Kitty Pickering was particularly keen and was absolutely delighted to stumble across a patch of ***Epipactis purpurea*** (Violet Helleborine) and recognised them even though they had gone to seed. They are one of our latest flowering orchids, extending to September. Orchids and fungi - what a venue!

Image above cc Sarah-Jayne Ebdon

Violet Helleborine, *Epipactis purpurea* gone to seed: Images above cc SJE

We were keen to head into the woodlands first, and we were immediately greeted by a huge number of fungal species, realising very quickly that our small group would have to work fast and hard to identify and record all of them! This report only mentions a few of the highlights - see Species List for full details.

We quickly found most of our familiar favourites and there were lots of oohs and aahs over particularly colourful and exuberant fruitings of ***Chlorociboria aeruginascens*** (Green Elfcup), a fairytale scene of ***Coprinellus disseminatus*** (Fairy Inkcaps) found by Justin W, plus ***Calycina citrina*** and ***Calycina claroflava*** (Lemon and Sulphur Disco respectively, former pictured below):


Calycina citrina left, *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* right: images cc Lynn Day

Then we were rewarded by three absolutely stunning specimens of ***Craterellus cornucopioides*** (Horn of Plenty)***, Coprinopsis picacea*** (Magpie Inkcap), and ***Fomitopsis pinicola*** (Red-belted Bracket), images below:

Craterellus cornucopioides image above cc Jesper Launder

Images above: Coprinopsis picacea left and *Fomitopsis pinicola* right, cc Bob Simpson

Sarah-J's collecting box quickly filled with *Mycena* spp (14 species in total) keeping her busy with microscopy the next day, and we assembled a satisfying comparative collection of some of the more common 'pink' *Mycena* spp. to show the group in the woods: ***Mycena rosea*** (Rosy Bonnet) with a pale stem, ***Mycena pura*** (Lilac Bonnet) with a purplish stem, the darker coloured ***Mycena diosma*** (no accepted English name), all of which confuse people very easily, especially beginners. No photos of these species collected on our walk unfortunately.

We amassed an impressive collection of *Lactarius* spp, 10 species in total including a pristine specimen of ***Lactarius deliciosus*** (Saffron Milk Cap pictured below left) found by Kitty, plus ***Lactarius tabidus*** (Birch Milkcap) and ***Lactarius azonites*** (no English name) which performed impeccably for the group exuding milk from broken gills which then turned yellow and pink respectively when applied to handkerchiefs.

Lactarius deliciosus image cc Jesper Launder.

Hygrophorus unicolor image cc Jesper Launder

We were treated to four different *Hygrophorous* (Woodwax) spp. This genus often has diagnostic reactions to KOH solution when applied to their caps and/or stipes, and the woodwax specimens we found today confirmed this for us: ***H. cossus*** (Goat Moth Wax Cap) and ***H. unicolor*** (Twotone Woodwax, pictured above right) did not react with KOH, but the cap and stipe turned a striking deep yellow for ***H. discoxanthus*** (Yellowing Woodwax***),*** and for ***H. eburneus*** (Ivory Woodwax) the base of the stipe turned a rusty colour, but the cap did not. The woodwaxes are often characterised by having some degree of greasy or viscid cap – this latter species is so incredibly mucousy it has given rise to its rather revolting US common name of Cowboy's Handkerchief. Meanwhile we have the British Mycological Society's more reserved description with its Recommended English Name of Ivory Woodwax! Interestingly both *H. cossus* and *H. eburneus* are said to smell of the Goat Moth caterpillar – a particularly niche observation!

We continued to 'revel in textures' and opportunities for macro photography (lots of people playing with new cameras!) enjoying the exquisite detail in specimens of ***Ceriporia* purpurea** (Blushing Waxpore) *and* ***Leucogryphana mollusca,*** a soft waxy resupinate bolete with no English name, both pictured below:

Ceriporia purpurea image cc Sarah-Jayne Ebdon

Leucogryphana mollusca image cc Jesper Launder

We were very pleased to find two specimens of often overlooked *Hypomyces* species, two brightly coloured Polypore Mould species: Sarah-J found ***Hypomyces aurantius*** (Orange Polypore Mould) growing on a *Daedaleopsis confragosa* bracket fungus which she took home for further investigation, and Jesper found a fascinating and beautiful bright pink/red specimen of ***Hypomyces rosellus*** (Pink Polypore Mould) on rotten wood, where the species it was parasitising wasn't evident (Sarah-J suggests the relatively insubstantial *Physisporinus sanguinolentus* which is described as a host for this species in Ellis and Ellis' *Microfungi on Miscellaneous Substrates*), but it entertained the many macro photographers for quite a while!

Hypomyces rosellus image cc Jesper Launder

We were missing a number of our core 'Slime Mould Squad' members, Barry Webb in particular, so many Myxomycetes may well have been overlooked on our visit. However Bob did an amazing job at bringing us an array of different logs and presented us with, amongst many other things, the absolutely spectacular displays of two colourful immature slime mould species: a bright yellow ***Ceratiomyxa porioides*** (Honeycomb Slime Mould) and a bright orange ***Hemitrichia* cf *decipiens,*** both in crowd pleasing abundance where the plasmodium had spread over large patches on rotten logs. Specimens were collected for ID confirmation by microscopy and curation of mature fruiting bodies.

Ceratiomyxa porioides (faded from its original bright yellow) image cc Jackie Mackenzie-Dodds

Hemitrichia cf *decipiens* image cc Jackie Mackenzie-Dodds

Hemitrichia cf *decipiens* detail, image cc Yen Hoe

We finally visited the main orchid grassland area at the end of the walk, as Phillip told us he'd seen some interesting grassland fungal species recently. By then we only had time for a very quick look but Jesper found some nice Snowy Waxcaps ***Cuphophyllus virgineus***.

Stephen and Sarah-J both took home separate collections of a tiny ascomycete with each fruitbody measuring no more than 0.2mm across, which was a challenge for our photographers as much as for our identifiers. They felt that they were likely the same species and after a bit of discussion and independent microscopy sessions they both arrived at the same conclusion that this was a fungus called ***Hyalopeziza millepunctata***.

Hyalopeziza millepunctata image cc Yen Hoe

In summary we loved this new site, we only saw a small fraction of the area this time, but we found an amazing number of species including some really stunning specimens. We'd like to say a huge thank you to Phillip for hosting us and everyone who came along and supported us – we couldn't have done it without all of you helping us with identifications, data collection and brilliant photographs – thank you!