

FUNGI WALK at COMMON WOOD Tylers Green on Saturday October 17th 2026

Penny Cullington

Our group of 15 met up on another beautiful autumn morning and once a few parking issues had been sorted out we were ready for the off. This was only BFG's second visit here, the first back in 2005 almost to the day when records show we found 78 species though I suspect there'd have been a mere handful of attendees present at most (no report in those days!). It was clear straight way that a decent amount of rain must have fallen here compared to other areas visited recently, and we were delighted to find that the damp grassy path edges actually had some fungi! The first ten minutes were pretty manic and had me glued to the spot trying to keep up with the incoming names, but eventually we moved away from the cars and set off up the main ride. This is a sizeable wood and at the pace we were going there was no way we were going to cover very much of it. Luckily, though Paul and I hadn't been here since our Amersham days 15 years ago consequently much had changed in appearance, we knew the layout well enough to choose a manageable route to get us back in reasonable time (though we didn't leave till 1.30 even so).

This wood holds a good mix of trees including Larch and Douglas Fir and this is reflected in our varied and surprisingly long list of 118 species. I recalled finding good numbers of *Russula* (Brittlelegill) species here so it was nice that we found eleven today – actually a pretty modest haul for what should be the height of the season in a 'good' year but far more than we've seen elsewhere so far this autumn. The most notable *Russula* was one similar to the very common *R. nigricans* (Blackening Brittlelegill) of which we saw several examples displaying its very crumbly and widely spaced gills with flesh turning first reddish before blackening – an easy species to recognise. There are, however, several closely related but much less common species which are very similar in appearance but for their crowded gills which are far less crumbly, and when one of these was handed in I noticed straight off that it was turning directly black with no reddening, a feature shared by just two of this group. At home I checked out the difference between them which involved not only microscopic examination but also tasting the gills which I found matched exactly the description for *R. albonigra* (Menthol Brittlelegill), the name I'd suggested in the field. The Latin epithet refers to its characteristic colour change whilst the English name to its unusual refreshing minty taste – the possible alternative *R. anthracina* having a strongly bitter taste. The species is not at all common in S. England and our only previous county record back in 2004 is dubious to say the least and I doubt if microcharacters or taste would have been checked, so I reckon today's find is probably new to the county. Sadly no photo was taken in the heat of the moment – often the way.

Another *Russula* which we can share, however, is one of the many common red-capped species which are easily confused. This one luckily stands out from the crowd with its markedly firm flesh in both cap and stem, a feature which becomes apparent once collected and handled. *Russula rosea* (Rosy Brittlelegill) can also sport its cap colour on the stem (as seen in one of our specimens here) but sometimes can have an entirely cream cap – it is not unusual to come across other colour forms of many in this genus which doesn't make our job any easier! It favours Beech and was originally named *R. lepida* and for many authorities this name should be re-adopted for reasons I won't go into here.



Above: *Russula rosea* (= *lepida*) PC

Boletes were in short supply today but one which we often used to find here and grows in association with Larch was found by several of us at various stages of development. *Suillus grevillei* (Larch Bolete) has a sticky to slimy cap and is one of few to have a ring on the stem which initially

completely encloses the yellow pores beneath but then breaks loose as the cap expands, eventually just leaving a rusty band on the stem. We puzzled over one immature specimen which remarkably had absolutely no sign of ring at all, but by process of elimination there was nothing else it could be – just a freak of nature! (See the left hand specimen of the two immature examples in the R.H. photo together with the normal example to its right.)

Right and far right: *Suillus grevillei* showing both mature and immature specimens (AP & PC)



Growing in a large nettle patch were two species of note, both easily

recognisable for different reasons. Firstly the distinctive and conical caps of *Coprinopsis picacea* (Magpie Inkcap) were spotted, then on closer inspection of this patch the equally distinctive blue-green caps of *Clitocybe odora* (Aniseed Funnel) were discovered. Both species are notable for their smells as well as their visual features, the first being simply disgusting (not to be recommended!) but the second really sweet and strongly of aniseed. Amongst this group of Funnels there were several which could easily have been mistaken for a separate species due to their complete lack of blue-green – in fact when Sarah shared her photo below (which includes one of the pale examples) with a colleague later they were unconvinced that this could possibly be the same species. However, with its distinctive smell

just as obvious in the faded specimens plus our experience of having come across entirely faded caps before, we have no doubts at all.

Left : *Coprinopsis picacea* (EP), and below: *Clitocybe odora* (SJE)



Several other Inkcap we collected defied our skills at identification later despite our best effort, but one which we recognised in the field turned up early on. In the Beech litter was *Coprinellus impatiens* (Impatient Inkcap), not at all rare but a nice find and with very distinctive cap marking reminiscent of piano keys.

Right: the cap detail of *Coprinellus impatiens* (SJE)



We were handed a couple of specimens of an unusual *Gymnopus* (Toughshank) which we guessed might be *G. fuscopurpureus*, the cap of which reportedly turns green with a drop of KOH. This we tested on the spot but with little green reaction, so doubt remained. Then a little further on a decent sized collection presenting a photo opportunity and Jesper took material home to work on, concluding that this could only be the very similar and equally unusual ***Gymnopus obscurioides*** (Dark Toughshank) now moved to genus *Collybiopsis*, as are several other Toughshanks just to add to the confusion!

Right: *Collybiopsis* (= *Gymnopus*) *obscurioides* (JLa)



Near the nettle patch the tiny ***Cyathus striatus*** (Fluted Bird's Nest) was found and much admired. It's always a delight to come across this delectable little species which here appeared to be growing on an acorn though it normally forms colonies on woody deciduous debris. Note the protective lid still in place on one fruitbody but gone from the other to reveal the so-called 'eggs' in the nest which are in fact

packets of seeds which when mature are dispersed by as little as a raindrop.

Left and below: *Cyathus striatus* (BW)



collection of ***Otidea onotica*** (Hare's Ear), not rare but always nice to find. It favours soil amongst deciduous litter and can get quite large, up to 10 cm tall but here was about half that height. The genus is told in the field from the similar genus *Peziza* by having a cleft down one side rather than forming a complete cup. This particular species is the commonest and often develops pink spots which in fact can be seen in places here.

Left: *Otidea onotica* (SJE)

Time to end off though, as seems to have become the norm for these reports, I'll add more images at the bottom. This is clearly a site worth exploring further and in a good year



(which so far this one certainly isn't!) would provide a far more impressive list and I know is full of more goodies! The length of today's list is as usual down to the diligence and experience of those who attended, so thank you everyone for your valued contributions which will enable us to provide the site owners with much needed information about what fungi are to be found here. Jesper and I were defeated by quite a few collections which have been dried for sequencing, so the list will quite possibly grow and there may well be some rarities to add anon.

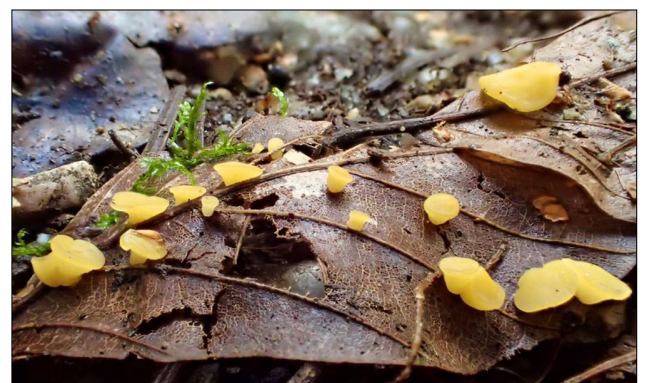
Photographers

AP = Alison Peace; AS = Akhil Seth; BW = Barry Webb; EP = Emily Peace;
JLa – Jesper Launder; PA = Paul Allen; PC = Penny Cullington; SJE = Sarah Ebdon.



Above: two common species of *Marasmius* found on deciduous litter though both are often tiny with caps considerably less than 1 cm across. Left: *M. rotula* (Collared Parachute) showing the 'cogwheel'-like collar to which the gills attach rather than to the stem itself (BW). Right: *M. setosus* (Hairystem Parachute) now moved to genus *Rhizomarasmius*, here found on a fallen Willow leaf and showing its typical finely furry stem which is always white above but distinctly darker below. (SJE)

Below left: The slime mould *Didymium nigripes* found on leaf litter by Barry and only a few mm tall at most (BW); and right the equally tiny cups of *Hymenoscyphus epiphyllus*, also found by Barry and identified by Sarah (SJE). Neither species have English names





Above left: the first truffle for the site, *Elaphomyces granulatus* (False Truffle) found by Jesper under Beech (SJE), and right: *Ripartites metrodii*, uncommon and with no English name, found and identified by Jesper (JLa).

Below: two distinctive *Mycena* species, both very common in Beech woods:

Left, *Mycena crocata* (Saffrondrop Bonnet (PA), and right, *Mycena rosea* (Rosy Bonnet) (AP)



A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered in a forest, likely participating in a field study or nature walk. They are surrounded by trees and fallen leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. One person is holding a small object, possibly a specimen, and another is using a tool, possibly a shovel or trowel, to dig in the ground. A basket is visible on the ground.