FUNGI WALK at GREEN ACRES Chiltern Park November 11th 2026

Penny Cullington

Today's group of 15 met up for BFG's first visit to this site and were joined by two of the wardens for the morning. Jesper and I were already aware of the site's potential from previous personal experience and were hoping for a varied range of species in this mixed woodland with plenty of conifer. The rain just about stopped as we started out and kept off for the duration and we enjoyed a very pleasant and rewarding morning. Owing to the scarcity of previous records here it is not surprising that well over half of the 120 species on our list are marked new to the site though nothing very startling or unusual turned up. Nevertheless it was a delight to many of us just to see good numbers of some common things, something we've been deprived of for much of this rather disappointing autumn season. It seems that the Chilterns have been particularly badly affected by our hot dry summer, other areas of the UK faring much better, however.

Inevitably I was handed a good selection of the genus *Mycena* (Bonnet) as we traversed though when checked later they mostly turned out to be either *M. filopes* (Iodine Bonnet) or *M. vitilis* (Snapping Bonnet) – both very common so no surprise there. However it was good to see one or two species not so regularly on our lists, one of these being ***M. flavescens*** (no English name) which is - to me - indistinguishable in the field from many others and unhelpfully it very rarely shows the faint yellow gill edge when young and for which it was named. Under the scope one is alerted to its hedgehog-like cells which are bigger than in other species, then a nibble of a piece of cap (disgusting and rather bitter) confirms it! No photo to share, sorry, which is often the way with these look-alike Bonnets. Two more we can share, however, are ***M. inclinata*** (Clustered Bonnet) showing its typically fluted cap and lower stem turning yellow then orange – it also has a distinctive smell variously described but to me like that of lupins. We also saw several collections of ***M. metata*** (no English name) - one I was hoping for today as it favours conifer litter. It tends to have a prominent umbo and has a pinkish tint to both cap and gills.





Above left: *Mycena inclinata* (CVS), and right: *Mycena metata* (MT)

Two *Mycena* look-alikes I was expecting to see amongst the quantities of conifer litter here were quite common. Both are found on fallen cones. ***Strobilurus esculentus*** (Sprucecone Cap) is however, often on well rotted remains of cones with the substrate not apparent, adding to the possible confusion with *Mycena*. The yellow stem with flat brown cap together with rather shallow gills are the clues to look for, and a scope will reveal further clear differences. The smaller ***Baeospora myosura*** (Conifercone Cap) usually occurs on visible cones of both Pine and Spruce, and has gills which are not only shallow but much more crowded than in *Mycena*. (No photo of today's *Strobilurus* so I've included a library photo of mine.)





Above left: *Strobilurus esculentus*, and right with insert: *Baeospora myosura* (PC)

We often affectionately refer to the many different small brown mushrooms collectively as LBJs (Little Brown Jobs), and today one of these was identified as ***Pholiotina aporos*** (no English name) - a close relative of genus *Conocybe* (Conecap). Though somewhat mycenoid at first glance it has several revealing features which, however, eliminate that genus. It has rusty brown gills (and spores) – not white as in *Mycena*, and more significantly a ring on the stem singling it out as *Pholiotina* rather than *Conocybe*. After that it's recourse to a scope to separate it from others in the genus, this undertaken by Claudi later.



Right: *Pholiotina aporos* (MT)

Continuing the LBJ theme, several collections of *Inocybe* (Fibrecap) were made though none were safely nameable in the field. In fact even with microscopic study members of this tricky genus often remain unidentified unless sent for molecular sequencing. Here we share a typically brown capped example of this genus which I suspect is ***I. tigrina***, also a stunning lilaceous collection which a few years ago we'd have confidently named ***I. lilacina.*** However now with several new and extremely similar members of this species complex described it is no longer possible to name them reliably.





Above left: *Inocybe* cf. *tigrina*, and right: *Inocybe* cf. *lilacina* (MT)

Yet a further LBJ genus, though with generally larger fruitbodies than in both *Pholiotina* and *Inocybe*, is *Hebeloma* (Poisonpie). Today we have three on the list, all of which took study at home to identify following a complicated key and needing skilled microscopy. We sadly have no photo of the rarest of these (often the way) but two nice collections were made which demonstrate the genus quite well. One helpful feature to separate the genus from others is its sticky cap which after rain as here

becomes notably slimy. Another clue is its smell, typically of radish – though some members smell of cocoa, others of burnt sugar! Today, ***H. leucosarx*** (Pale Poisonpie) had a deceptively brown cap, and the closely related ***H. velutipes*** (Birch Poisonpie) was apparently under Willow(!) though no doubt Birch was not far away. Such are the challenges of mycology …….





Above left: *Hebeloma leucosarx*, and right: *Hebeloma velutipes* (MT)

As well as the common *Lepiota cristata* (Stinking Dapperling), today we saw two other interesting members of this genus: an attractive collection of the unusual ***L. subincarnata*** (Fatal Dapperling) together with a singleton of ***L. magnispora*** (Yellowfoot Dapperling) though the most salient feature of that particular species – sadly not visible here - is in fact its remarkably large spores reminiscent of the sideview silhouette of a penguin!





Above left: *Lepiota magnispora* (MT), and right: *Lepiota subincarnata* (JLa)

We have more to share but I'll end off here and thank everyone for coming. Thanks also to the wardens who led us round, to Jesper and Claudi for their expertise both in the field and at home afterwards, and last but not least to the photographers, especially Mario who was kept busy throughout the morning. For more detail of what we found see the separate species list.

Photographers

BW = Barry Webb; CVS = Claudi Soler; JLa = Jesper Launder; MT = Mario Tortelli; PC = Penny Cullington;

Right: Sarah's find of the day: the miniscule *Rutstroemia petiolorum* on the petiole of a Beech leaf which by lucky chance happened to land on her binoculars hanging round her neck! (BW)







Above left: the small and delicate grassland species *Cystoderma amianthinum* (Earthy Domecap, related to genus *Lepiota*) found in the grassy ride towards the end (PC), and right *Psathyrella bipellis* (Maroon Brittlestem) – not that common but one of the few members of this genus one can name in the field (JLa).





Above left: the attractive bracket *Chondrostereum purpureum* (Silverleaf Fungus) found on a deciduous stump (PC), and right the tiny ascomycete *Trichoderma pulvinatum* growing on the underside of an old Birch Polypore – a nice example of a fungus on a fungus (JLa).



Don't be deceived by the size of this excellent photo of a species which was only about 2 mm across at most! Spotted on a Spruce cone by Gill, the tiny ascomycete *Sphaerobolus stellatus* (Shooting Star) does what it says on the tin and is capable of firing its spores up to 6 metres away – what a little power house! (BW)





Above: two stages in the development of the slime mould *Tubifera ferruginosa* (Raspberry Slime) both seen today and which favours rotting fallen conifer. The early brightly coloured and eye-catching orange to pink stage soon starts to dry off as it expands becoming more tubular, turning first buff then dark brown as it mature (BW).





Above: two stages of the slime mould *Leocarpus fragilis* also both seen today fruiting on twigs and vegetation. The early mustard coloured stage literally moves around searching for nutrients, then settles down and dries off forming these attractive 'bunches of grapes' before splitting open to release its spores (BW)

Below: the minute slime mould Cribraria argillacea with its 'cage-like' outer surface just beginning to form (BW)



..... and finally, on parade: the delectable *Physarum album* complete with nodding heads. Another reminder: these amazing organisms are at most a few mm tall! (BW)

