

BFG Foray at Penn Wood

Saturday November 1st 2014

Report by Jackie Mackenzie-Dodds

Over 50 forayers gathered at 1pm in the Penn Street Holy Trinity Church car park on this beautiful sunny and unseasonably warm day (we beat the frosts by 2 days), all excited to see each other again and repeat last year's BFG foray at this site, which has become rather a large 'Autumnal Celebration'. After a welcome and debriefing from Paul Jarczewski from the Woodland Trust at the large beech stump just opposite the church, the large group was split into 3 smaller groups, led by Derek Schafer, Penny Cullington and Richard Fortey (our celebrity leader who kindly joined us again this year). Each group forayed in a different area in the woods in order to broaden our total collection area, resulting in a total of 127 species; not bad for a year not considered particularly fruitful.

There were three finds of particular note:

Firstly, one toothed fungus collected from the bark of a beech tree (close up shown below), which caused much consternation and excitement, followed by several hours of homework by Richard and Derek. This specimen looked and smelled ('aromatic' tentatively noted in the field) like *Mycoacia nothofagi*, which was confirmed after Derek checked in Berniccia (12): "Cystidia abundantly present, cylindrical to conical..", and Martyn Ainsworth examined dried material at Kew (now accessioned there as K(M)194885.



The second was *Leucoagaricus ionicolor*, which is new to VC 24 and has only 7 other records on FRDBI. Photos below taken on Derek's microscope stage (and dried material now on its way to Kew to join *M nothofagi* above in the nation's collections):



Thirdly, Penny recorded *Scutellinia cejpji*, which was also new to the County when she recorded it in the same pile of conifer logs for the National Fungus Display a few weeks earlier.

Other finds included *Psathyrella* species: *P artemisiae* (below), *P piluliformis* (Common Stump Brittlestem) and *P corrugis* (Red Edge Brittlestem).



Several ink cap species were present including *Coprinellus micaceus* (Glistening Ink Cap) and *Coprinopsis lagopus* (Hare's Foot Ink Cap) below.

C micaceus:



C lagopus was particularly abundant carpeting the woodland floor in places (images below showing different stages from young to mature – the different forms fascinated new forayers in the group):



Another commonly found fungus included the colourful *Calocera viscosa* (Yellow Stagshorn fungus) on conifer stumps (sometimes buried), which were not obvious when it was found in mostly deciduous woodland; Paul J's knowledge of the wood's history with its previous conifer plantations confirmed this.



One of the very few quality edibles we found: small, but perfectly formed, *Boletus edulis* (Penny Bun).



The Penn Wood foray site is famous for its Waxcaps, peak fruiting time usually at the beginning of November. This year as with other fungi, it has not been particularly spectacular for these, but we did find some nice specimens, including *Hygrocybe conica* (Blackening Waxcap) left. See the full foray list for details of other Waxcaps found.



Puff balls are everywhere this year! Here is a very pretty picture of *Lycoperdon perlatum* (Common Puff Ball).



Amanitas were few and far between; a couple of good specimens of *A excelsa* var. *spissa* (left), *A muscaria* and *A citrina* var. *citrina*.

We came across a large patch of *Aleuria aurantia* (Orange Peel Fungus - below) amongst the leaf litter and wood chips



At 3pm all forayers returned to the Village Hall for well-earned tea, coffee and biscuits, and all fungal finds were laid out on the tables for all to see, the most interesting finds highlighted by Richard, Derek and Penny.



Richard's 'Show and Tell':



Derek highlighting Ink Cap species:



As is now customary after the Penn Wood foray, a big mushroom themed party was held afterwards at Jackie and Justin's house in Amersham, with 2 spectacular mushroom cakes made by Joan Warlow:



Photographs contributed by Andy Warlow, Linda Pitkin, and Nick White.