

## FUNGI WALK at SALDEN WOOD on Sunday October 28<sup>th</sup>

Penny Cullington

Nine of us met up on a cold and slightly damp morning; we were looking forward to exploring member Bob Simpson's privately owned wood which was new territory for the group. This is a large piece of mixed woodland comprising mainly Ash, Field Maple and Hawthorn with a few mature Oaks, also some Aspen and the occasional Pine. We soon realised we'd not be finding any of the larger mycorrhizal agarics associated with Beech and Birch and often in evidence further south in the county, but it was apparent straight away that the woodland floor was alive with plenty of 'smaller stuff' to keep us busy. We were soon picking up tiny *Mycena*-like collections growing on fallen wood, thin twigs, leaf petioles and the like, some white, some not. Examining their stems and gills was necessary to split them into either Mycenoid (Bonnetts) or Marasmioid (Parachutes) genera, but clearly microscopic work was going to be needed to name them to species.

Two species were extremely common everywhere, the first being clearly Mycenoid with a brown cap and rooting into the plentiful fallen wood: this was *Mycena galericulata* (Common Bonnet, here really living up to its name). The tell-tale interveining between the gills, also its tendency for the gills to turn pink when older, were characters clearly on show today. By the last



hour or so we'd mostly started to recognise it and had desisted from making endless collections, but it served as a very useful exercise to improve our recognition of this common but somewhat variable species.

Left, one of the many collections of *Mycena galericulata* today, the right hand specimen showing extremely pink gills possibly suggesting the genus *Entoloma*, but not so. (PC)

The second most common species was tiny with a white cap, very few gills and a stem which clearly indicated not *Mycena* but *Marasmius* or the closely related *Marasmiellus*. Everyone kept picking up tiny clusters of this growing amongst the litter on little twigs or leaf petioles, some with caps no bigger than pinheads, the larger caps no more than 5 or 6 mm across. The stems of *Marasmius* species tend to be thin and hairlike, white only at the top then increasingly darker red to brown or black at the base, as was the case with our collections. I later keyed it out to *Marasmius epiphyllus* (Leaf Parachute) and when reading that it occurs on the leaf petioles of particularly Ash and Poplar as well as other deciduous twigs it made sense why we were finding quite so much of it here.

Another fairly common mushroom growing on the plentiful fallen wood was the extremely poisonous though innocuous-looking *Galerina marginata* (Funeral Bell) – two photos included to show it in different stages of development.



Above and right, *Galerina marginata*. Note (right) how the small ring on the stem is still protecting the undeveloped gills, also the paler immature gills here, whereas (left) the gills are darker as the spores mature. (PC)

Continuing the theme of species growing on wood, several examples of the genus *Crepidotus* (Oysterling) were found. When Derek and I are both present this is a genus which I usually hand to him to work on, but today one specimen caught my eye and I took home to look at.



This was *Crepidotus caspari* (previously *lundellii* and without a common name), not rare but not as often recorded as some of the other species which are fairly frequently on our lists. (I was pleased to find that Derek also identified a couple of his collections from today as this species also.)

Left, a pristine specimen of *Crepidotus caspari* showing the characteristic shape and lack of stem found in this genus. (PC)

It was nice to see a cluster of an unusual species of *Pluteus* (Shield) just emerging on fallen Field Maple. Many of the genus need a microscope to be sure of their identity but this is one with a unique character: it has a distinctly yellow stem and in this particular case the cap was tending to yellow as well. I checked the microscopic features at home to confirm that this was *Pluteus romellii* (Goldleaf Shield), again not rare but one we've not recorded in the county for the last three years.

Right, *Pluteus romellii* found today on fallen Field Maple (PC)



Bob had worked out a route which covered various things he wanted us to see, one being a large clump of a species of *Pholiota* growing inside a large Ash tree which had divided almost at ground level into four trunks. Ten days previously he'd sent me photos of this collection when in pristine condition but today with the fruiting bodies looking faded and past their best we were unconvinced that this was what he'd thought was *Pholiota squarrosa* (Shaggy Scalycap). Derek

therefore took a cap back to check but could only make it that species despite the fact that the scales were somewhat flattened. However, checking back to Bob's earlier photos (included here) we'd have had no doubt in naming it as that had we seen it ten days earlier with those upturned dry scales!

Left and below, *Pholiota squarrosa* as it was ten days earlier. (BS)



There follow a few more photos of things we found – nothing very startling or rare but possibly useful as identification guides and memory prompts to some.

We managed to record over 50 species to give Bob a start on a fungus list for his wood. See the separate list for more details of what we found and were able to identify. Many thanks to all who attended and especially to Bob for inviting us and leading us round. We hope to come again next year!



Above a specimen of *Xerula radicata* (Rooting Shank) well collected by Mick thus with its long 'root' still in tact, and right showing the typical moist and wrinkled cap which helps to distinguish it from other somewhat similar brown-capped species. Normally a very common woodland species, it has been seldom seen this autumn in our area. (PC)



Left, an impressive clump of *Psathyrella multipedata* (Clustered Brittlestem) growing in Bob's lawn. Each individual fruiting body looks much like many others in this large and tricky genus – we found several other species today, some of which were named and are on the overall list. Almost all members of the genus need microscopic work to identify to species, but this is one of the easiest to name being the only species which occurs so tightly clustered and also occurring in grass rather than woodland litter. (PC)

Below, *Bulgaria inquinans* (Black Bulgar /Bachelor's Buttons) growing on an Oak log in Bob's garden (BS)



..... and below again, two for the price of one growing together on the sawn-off top of an Aspen stump, both with purple colours: the larger flattish patches are *Chondrostereum purpureum* (Silverleaf Fungus) a pathogen which causes rot and sometimes death to many members of the Rosaceae family. The smaller little curly deep purple blobs are *Ascocoryne sarcoides* (Purple Jellydisc), a species more often found on fallen Beech. (BS)



Last but not least, two superb specimens of *Geastrum triplex* (Collared Earthstar) which were growing in Bob's garden under an enormous Field Maple. It's always a delight to see this species and especially as here when one can admire how the fruitbody opens out to reveal the 'puffball'-like structure within the star. (PC)



