

# Fungi Walk at Dancersend on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2016

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This event was joint with BBOWT and a group of over 30, of which about 12 were BFG group members, gathered at the Waterworks. Head Warden and group member Mick Jones did a grand job of leading us all round and every so often blew his whistle to summon everyone to a 'Show and Tell' session as we progressed. Despite the site being somewhat dry underfoot and Mick's fear that there was not that much about, with so many pairs of eyes searching we accumulated a list of just over 90 species and Derek and I were kept pretty busy throughout the morning.



One of our 'Show and Tell' sessions today. (JP)



Our first find of the day was a pair of Inkcaps in the field. These were checked afterwards by Derek and were *Coprinosporium lagopus* (Hares'foot Inkcap). The common name describes the shape of this species when it first emerges (as can be seen in the insert picture below together with one fruitbody fast approaching the Ink stage).



Far left, *Coprinosporium lagopus* today (NS), and near left an example of this species showing its different stages of development (PC)

*Mycena crocata* (Saffrondrop Bonnet), one which is found exclusively on fallen Beech. Its cap colour can vary from almost white (as in today's photo) to almost black but the orange juice which exudes copiously from the stem when damaged is an unmistakable feature. Another common Bonnet we found clustered on wood was *Mycena arcangeliana* (Angel's Bonnet). This species has no coloured juice in the stem to help with its identity but with experience one can recognise it from the cap colour and (when young) its contrasting purplish stem.



Right, *Mycena crocata*, the insert is of my hand marked not with blood but with the orange juice from the stem of the fungus. (JP)



Left, a cluster of *Mycena arcangeliana*. (NS)  
Both species were very common today, growing on fallen Beech.



At one of our 'Show and Tell' stops we looked at a large black lump which grows commonly on Ash – this was *Daldinia concentrica* (King Alfred's cakes – no explanation for the common name being necessary), and once broken in half the concentric rings which give rise to the Latin species name can clearly be seen.



A large specimen of *Daldinia concentrica* we found today (JP)

Two specimens of a species of *Cortinarius* (Webcap) were found and served to demonstrate the cobweb-like mesh (the cortina) under the gills which characterises this genus – one with probably over 600 species in the UK. The genus is quite easy to recognise due to the presence of the cortina but many of its individual species are virtually unfathomable to most mycologists. In the hope of solving the identity of today's collection I've sent the photo and details to field mycologist extra-ordinaire Geoffrey Kibby; otherwise it will sadly remain unnamed.



An unnamed species of *Cortinarius* found today (PC)

At one point we were treated to an amazing display with good numbers of *Amanita phalloides* (Deathcap) together with other members of this distinctive genus, several of which are extremely dangerous if eaten. The important features were able to be pointed out: the volva at the stem base, the white free gills, the ring which in many but not all species forms under the gills, also the individual smell which can often be diagnostic.



Above, a 'button' of *Amanita pantherina* just emerging, and right *Amanita phalloides* showing its diagnostic characters. Both species are deadly poisonous if consumed.



We came across several different species of *Lactarius* (Milkcap), one of several genera found today which have an important symbiotic relationship with trees. Though most species of this genus have brown caps of one shade or another, the genus itself is easy to spot if one damages the gills which then exude droplets of white latex.

*Lactarius blennius* (Beech Milkcap) showing the milklike droplets on the gills typical of the genus. (NS)



In contrast the many types of mushroom-shaped fungi with gills or pores underneath that we saw today, someone's sharp eyes spotted the tiny white stalked discs of *Hymenoscyphus fructigenus* (Nut Disco) growing as it does on the husk of a beech nut. The discs are less than 5mm across and its spores are shot out from the upper surface using a completely different mechanism of dispersal from the mushrooms where the spores drop from the gills underneath.

*Hymenoscyphus fructigenus* found on a beech nut husk. (MJ)

Despite our focus this morning on education and outreach we were pleased to be able to record a good number of fungi. In the afternoon a few of us paid a visit to Pavis Wood on the outskirts of the reserve – the first time fungi have been recorded in this particular part. This proved both interesting and worthwhile and we look forward to further research and discovery in this new area next year. Many thanks to all who attended today and particularly to Mick for leading us round. Thanks too to Mick, Nick Standing and Julie Pomfrett for providing some excellent photos for this report. For further details of what we found see the complete list.

