

FUNGI WALK at BURNHAM BEECHES on Wednesday October 7th 2026

Penny Cullington

We were a smaller group than usual for this popular walk, having been requested to keep the numbers down this time for ecological reasons, and met up near the café plus guest leader Mario Tortelli and Conservation Officer for the Beeches Angus Wilkinson. The weather had turned with summer seemingly having changed to winter overnight, so a full wetwear tog was required though the rain, much needed, had cleared off by the end of the morning. We chose a route following alongside the aptly named Nile (a little stream!) towards the area named Egypt, intending to return along the opposite bank thus sticking to the dampest areas, but as usual time ran out. Foraging in the rain - too recent to produce results for today - at what is considered peak season for fungi when it's been dry for months added insult to injury, but spirits were not daunted and as usual we ended up with a respectable if not impressive list of around 80 species which may grow with further research.

The first nice find was made as we headed off Halse Drive. In some pathside vegetation a cap was spotted. "That might be a *Lepiota* of sorts" I guessed before it was collected, and so it proved. One look at the underside and striking gill colour produced instant Oohs and Ahs! This was ***Melanophyllum haematospermum*** (Redspored Dapperling) – the English name being a literal translation of the Latin epithet. This is the only red-gilled mushroom (there's also a much rarer green-gilled member of this genus!) and one which favours woody litter and damp vegetation but is uncommon though we do quite often turn it up here.

Right: the stunning *Melanophyllum haematospermum* (SJE)



I've often observed that when one member of this particular mushroom family is found, often others are nearby; so I was not surprised when two more Dapperlings were promptly handed in. The first, small delicate and pure white, I at first mistook for a *Hemimycena* (Bonnet), but noticing the reddish tint to the lower stem I realised this was ***Cystolepiota seminuda*** (Bearded Dapperling). It's not that common but seems to favour nettle patches as here, and the typical frilly veil remnants were visible both on its granular cap surface and around the margin. Almost simultaneously we were shown a much larger but related species which also featured in last week's Pullingshill report: ***Echinoderma asperum*** (Freckled Dapperling) sports pyramidal warts all over the cap and a skirtlike ring on the stem, and like many Dapperlings it is very poisonous.

Below left: the tiny *Cystolepiota seminuda* (CW), and right: the third Dapperling found within a minute, *Echinoderma asperum* (JW).



As we progressed and checked the fallen wood which abounds here the many examples of the interesting *Fomitopsis pinicola* (Red Belted Bracket) kept cropping up not on Pine as one might guess but perhaps surprisingly on both fallen Beech and Birch. It was only 7 years ago when this species was first recorded in the north of the county, since when it has spread at a remarkable rate and is now quite common in our area. Though often reported on fallen Pine it now seems just as happy on Beech or Birch and we are gradually getting more familiar with its somewhat varied appearance depending on age and maturity. Justin's photo is of a mature bracket on Birch with its rusty red 'belt' showing nicely but we have plenty more images of this bracket in Members' Finds in all its different guises.

Right: *Fomitopsis pinicola* (JW)

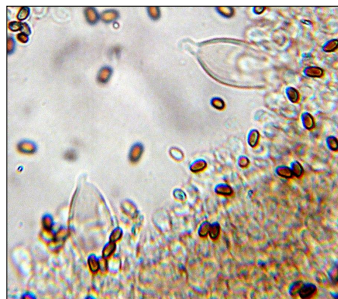


Sarah and I got very excited at one point when we were handed a somewhat soggy example of a small 'Pleurotoid' mushroom (ie one shaped like an Oyster Mushroom with decurrent gills and off-centre stem.) From its appearance we both wondered if this might belong to the rare genus *Hohenbuehelia*, but hopes were dashed when checked at home and the microcharacters led us separately to *Crepidotus applanatus* (Flat Oysterling). Normally whitish to cream, this mature collection had faded to buff (as quoted in Kibby vol. 4) and had fooled us both. Shame!

Left: *Crepidotus applanatus* (CW)



On one large fallen Beech trunk was spotted a large tightly packed colony of LBJs which on closer inspection I suspected might be one of two members of genus *Micromphale* (now moved to *Gymnopus*), both of which have strong smells (of garlic and overcooked cabbage!). A quick sniff produced no such smell, but was this because it was wet and smells weren't very apparent or was I barking up the wrong tree? I was! At home I found small brown spores instead of white, also cystidia on the gill face (flat surface) with a strange rostrum (nose) which rang a bell with me. This then keyed out to *Psathyrella laevissima* (Slender Stump Brittlemat). No wonder there'd been no smell of garlic or anything else!



Left: *Psathyrella laevissima* (LS) with insert showing the small brown spores and rostrate cystidia x 400 (PC)



Several genera of mycorrhizal mushrooms (normally in evidence here in October) were conspicuous by their complete absence today: no *Tricholoma*, *Inocybe*, *Cortinarius*, *Lactarius*, and extremely few *Amanita* or *Russula*, though one bright red *Russula* might yet prove to be an exciting find – time will tell. A few examples of Boletes turned up and one which had us all amused owing to its extremely suggestive shape was ***Leccinum aurantiacum*** (Orange Bolete) - need I say more!



Left: *Leccinum aurantiacum* with cap yet to expand (with apologies from Linda and myself for indulging in a little naughtiness! (LS)

It was interesting to see not only some green stained wood today caused by the cup fungus ***Chlorociboria aeruginascens*** (Green Elfcup) but eventually a nice example of the cups themselves – the first for this season.



Right: *Chlorociboria aeruginascens* (LS)

Whilst on the bridge over the Nile and before starting to head back we admired a beautiful display of ***Mucidula mucida*** (Porcelain Fungus) on fallen Beech with some really slimy fully expanded examples. This is a common species in the Chilterns, being host specific to Beech, and has been on each list so far this season but only with small undeveloped caps. Today even with poor light when viewed from below it was living up to its English name with almost transparent cap. Here we also saw a good example of ***Chlorophyllum rhacodes*** (Shaggy Parasol) complete with movable ring and orange staining where scratched.



Far left: *Mucidula mucida* and near left: *Chlorophyllum rhacodes* (LS).

Heading back toward the road we spotted a fresh and pristine though small ***Sparassis crispa*** (Wood Cauliflower) in the centre of a Pine stump. We commented that it was unusual to find this species actually on wood like this rather than at the base of a conifer.



Right: *Sparassis crispa* (CW)



Walking back over the more open area near the road we picked up a few more bits of interest worth sharing. Firstly several specimens of a small pink Inkcap were spotted on cow dung. This was familiar to me and is quite common here: ***Coprinopsis pseudonivea*** (Aromatic Inkcap) is found exclusively on cow dung, as is its relative and better known *C. nivea* which is pure white. It differs from that species in its pink veil, though this becomes less obvious as it matures, and reportedly its yeasty smell (though I've not tested this out!)

Left: *Coprinopsis pseudonivea* (MT)

We don't that often record ***Gymnopus***

erythropus (Redleg Toughshank) but found a good clump of it amongst moss and litter. Similar to the much more common *G. dryophilus*, it differs in its shiny smooth red stem.

Right: *Gymnopus erythropus* (LS)



Continuing the red theme, we came across a photogenic trio of ***Mycena haematopus*** (Burgundydrop Bonnet) which quite often has a frilly cap margin as seen here, though its most notable feature is the dark reddish juice which exudes from the damaged stem.

Left: *Mycena haematopus* (JW)

Despite the less than ideal conditions we had a good morning, and I'm grateful to all the photographers because I took no snaps in the field myself, trusting entirely to their help in providing what was needed for this report. Thank you all for coming, and my apologies to those members we were not able to accommodate here today.

Photographers

CW= Claire Williams; JW = Justin Warhurst; LS = Linda Seward; MT = Mario Tortelli; PC = Penny Cullington; SJE = Sarah Ebdon.

Our group this morning
undaunted by the rain.
(LS)

