

Penny Cullington

Eleven of us met up for our traditional end-of-season Christmas foray – the first time we've held it at this site. We were lucky to have a dry morning, furthermore recent frosts seemed not to have deterred the fungi because we were suitably surprised by the numbers we found: for this time of year our list of over 70 species is really not bad, but all attendees were excellent forayers.



Predictably, few sizable mushroom-types were to be found though *Clitocybe geotropa* (Trooping funnel) was still in evidence and easily recognised by the telltale nipple in the centre of the cap despite the somewhat overmature specimens – this feature helps to separate it from *C. nebularis* (Clouded agaric) which in all stages of development except the last has a quite different jizz from *C. geotropa*, but when old and soggy these two can be very similar and hard to separate.

Clitocybe geotropa with Penny's gloved hand showing not just the cap size and wintry temperature, but more importantly the diagnostic central nipple. (photo NS)

Going down in size: Toni found *Lepista nuda* (Wood blewit) – often a late season fruiter, and Greg found a single undeveloped button of an *Amanita* (which he did well to recognise as such); Derek was able to go one further and identify it as *Amanita ceciliae* (Snakeskin grisette) - a unusual species which he remembered often occurs here. Several species of waxcap turned up: although primarily a grassland genus, it is not that unusual to find them in woodland though the reasons for this are not fully understood. Surprisingly, no-one sent me a photo of the least usual of the three which was *Hygrocybe quieta* (Oily waxcap) –so named because of its smell which resembles that of *Lactarius quietus*, but nice material of *H. conica* (Blackening waxcap) got several cameras clicking.



Hygrocybe conica – one of three species of waxcap found today. (photo NF)



Meottomyces dissimulans (photos DJS)

We also found another brown species with a ringed stem, this one quite common on rotting deciduous fallen branches and usually growing clustered together: *Galerina marginata* (Funeral bell). This rusty brown species is dangerously poisonous, thus its common name.

Galerina marginata (photo NW)

We found two separate collections of an interesting though somewhat nondescript brown mushroom growing in rotting leaf litter, the cap about 3cm across and the only redeeming feature appearing to be evidence of a ring on the stem. To start with this didn't ring any bells with either Derek or me until Derek remembered a late season species (or early depending on when you find it!) which we'd met before in January 2012 in Carpenters Wood. Literally days before our foray there we'd both read an article in *Field Mycology* by Nick Legon (one of Britain's best field mycologists who has spent much time recording at Rushbeds – one of his favoured haunts) all about a probably quite common but under-recorded species which occurs in winter apparently triggered by cold damp conditions. Consequently we were on the look-out for it on the foray, and sure enough we found it – very satisfying. The name (now) is *Meottomyces dissimulans* - no common name, though it has had a variety of different names since it was first described in the 1880s due to its not really fitting satisfactorily into any genus. (In fact in our BFG database it is still down as *Phaeogalera dissimulans*). Looking back at previous county records there are two for this species from February 2000, the first from Rushbeds collected by Derek and identified by Kerry Robinson, and the next two weeks later from Dancersend this time identified by Derek who was now familiar with it. It does appear in the latest Collins Fungi Guide (Buczacki) and also in *Fungi of Switzerland* (Vol 4), but neither illustrations are very good, so it is well worth including Derek's photos here.





Still going down in size, we found good numbers of a small white-capped mycenoid agaric growing in twos and three sometimes on rotting deciduous leaves, sometimes on the twiggy litter. The stem was thin, like a horse hair, white at the top then progressively red brown lower down, a character

worth noting because it helps to separate off the genus *Marasmius* (the Parachutes) from very similar species of *Mycena* (the Bonnets) in the field. We clearly, then, had a species of *Marasmius*, and another interesting feature was that with a hand lens one could see that it had very few (only about six) very shallow gills underneath. There are, however, similar small white species belonging not only to these two genera but also to *Hemimycena*, so a microscope is always necessary to be sure of identification. Nick Standing suggested that it might be *Marasmius epiphyllus* (Leaf parachute), and later checking at home I found that he was absolutely correct – well done, Nick! Sadly though I saw several cameras clicking on it, I didn't receive a photo of it. We do, however have a photo of *Hemimycena tortuosa* (Dewdrop bonnet), one which with experience one can recognise because of the water droplets which attach to the minutely hairy surface of this species. These hairs are in fact corkscrew-shaped which is presumably why the droplets get trapped there. They are always a thrill to see when examining the cap with a microscope.

***Hemimycena tortuosa* with caps only a few mm across, and just below: the corkscrew cells found on the cap surface x 1000 (photos NS above, PC below)**

Moving on to brackets and the like now: the very common *Daedaleopsis confragosa* (Blushing bracket) was of interest because of its remarkably red fruitbodies – this colour often occurs but it is still just the same species. We also found the interesting *Hymenochaete corrugata* (Glue fungus) living up to its name and cementing two Hazel branches together. It appears to be quite a common species here due to the abundance of old Hazel coppice on site.



Above right: *Daedaleopsis confragosa* on fallen Willow – notably red fruitbodies (photo NF)

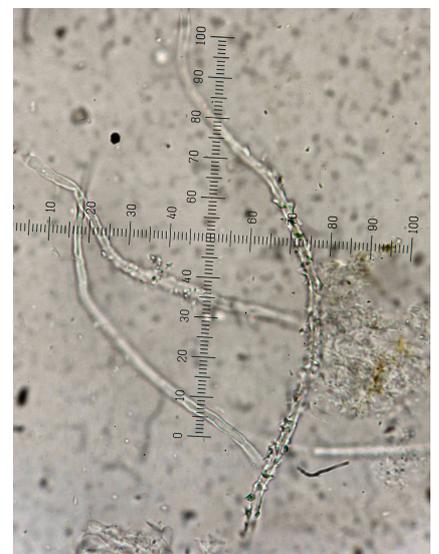
Left: *Hymenochaete corrugata* on attached Hazel branches (photo NW)

On the various piles of deciduous logs we found good number of different species: of particular note was a cluster of cream coloured brackets which were white and poroid underneath, pointing to the genus *Trametes*, but neither large and lumpy with green algi growing on it nor distinctly zoned as in the two common species of that genus (*T. gibbosa* and *T. versicolor*). Derek and I came across it separately and independently named it as *Trametes ochracea* – no common name, and though not rare it is much less common than the other species mentioned and worth including a photo of here. The yellow tints and white margin are features to note.



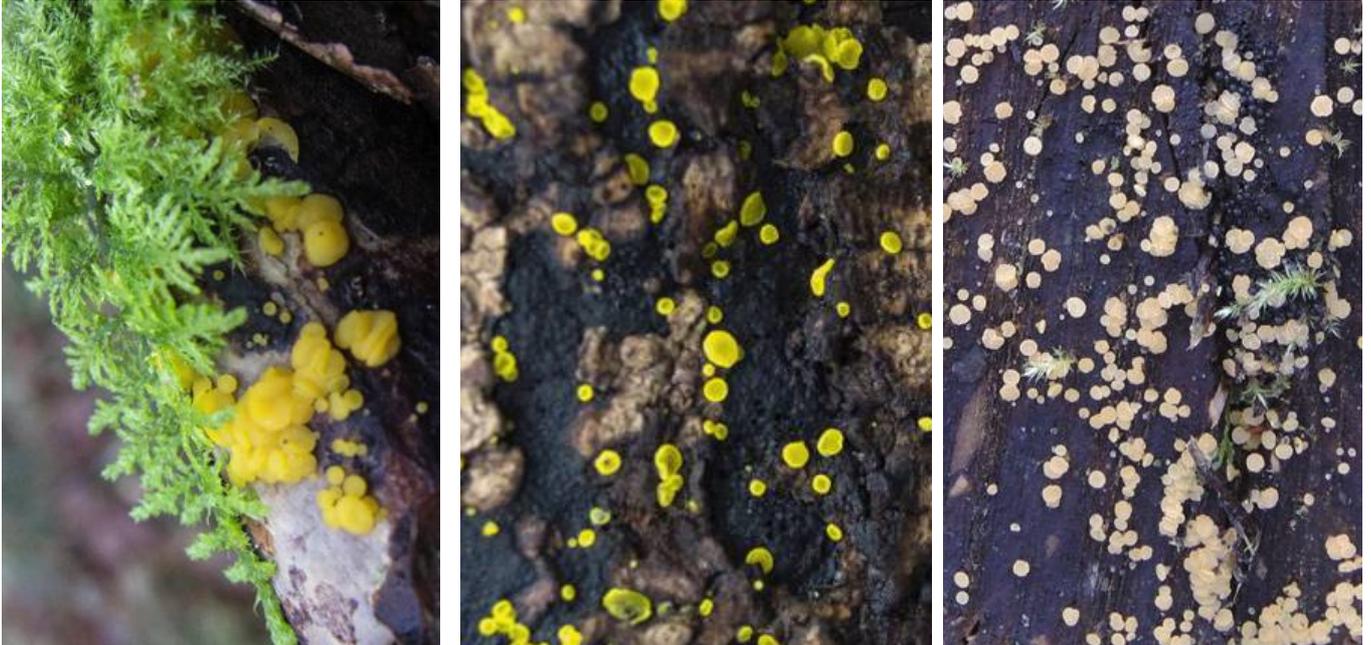
Trametes ochracea growing on the sawn off end of a deciduous log (wood not identified). (photo NF)

Before moving on to Ascomycetes (the spore-shooters), we had one really interesting find – a species which looks incredibly like a typical small Ascomycete on wood (in this case a swarm of tiny white hairy discs on deciduous bark) but recognised in the field by Derek as being one of several species which are in fact cyphelloid Basidiomycetes (the spore-droppers). He took this home to work on, and it is not only new to the site but also to the county: *Flagelloscypha minutissima*. There are 200 or so British records, however, making it not exceptionally rare but it is no doubt overlooked or at any rate often goes unidentified. It is well worth including Derek's excellent photos here, taken under his stereo equipment, as good images are few and far between.



Flagelloscypha minutissima – a cyphelloid Basidiomycete new to the county. On the right are the surface hairs magnified x 400. (photos DJS)

Now for some Ascomycetes: we found several species of *Bisporella*, little yellow discs on deciduous wood, and it's nice to be able to compare them as we have photos of all of them. *B. citrina* (Lemon disco) is the commonest and also the largest (though not more than 5mm across at most); *B. sulfurina* (Sulphur disco) is also fairly common but smaller and easily over looked but with experience the bright shiny greenish yellow of this species is recognisable in the field; *B. subpallida* is much less common and also less conspicuous, being a duller oranger yellow – these were the swarms we found on the sawn off end of a Hazel log which none of us could name (though Joanna suspected it was this species and both she and I checked it separately later).



Three species of *Bisporella* found today: left *B. citrina* (photo NF); middle *B. sulfurina* (photo NF); right *B. subpallida* (photo NS)

Two further species which we found on the sawn ends of the log piles were several fruitbodies of a largish brown cup (possibly a *Peziza* or a *Tarzetta*) and with them some fruitbodies of *Scutellinia* (Eyelash fungus). These genera are well-nigh impossible to determine with certainty unless mature spores are available, and unfortunately Derek found this was not the case. He hopes they may still develop sufficiently, in which case I will add the names to the report later, but for the moment they have to remain unidentified.



Left *Peziza/ Tarzetta* sp. (photo NW) and right *Scutellinia* sp. (photo NS), both still awaiting determination.

Rushbeds is a site where in springtime we expect to find the delightful *Sarcoscypha austriaca* (Scarlet elfcup) – it never fails to produce oohs and ahs from forayers. So when Justin found a fallen branch with a good cluster of young specimens today, he was suitably rewarded by everyone's reactions. Normally around from January to March, this charismatic fungus is probably not that unusual in December, and with this year having been the warmest on record and the seasons

becoming less and less predictable, we should probably not be surprised when fungi fruit at unusual times. The fact that we produced such a long list today surely reflects that as well.



Young fruitbodies of *Sarcoscypha austriaca* just emerging on a fallen branch today. (photo NW)

It remains for me to thank everyone for their excellent foraging today and also during the year. Your support has been much appreciated and though we've had a mixed season all events have been most enjoyable. Thank you too to all the photographers who have supplied me so promptly with brilliant images with which to enhance these reports, thus making each event so much more memorable and informative to all. Lastly a particular thank you to Joanna and Martin for hosting our lunch today – delicious, and just what was needed to warm us up after this morning's very productive foray.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

Penny



(photo NW)

Photographers: DJS = Derek Schafer, NF= Neil Fletcher; NS = Nick Standing; NW = Nick White; PC = Penny Cullington

