

FUNGAL FRIENDS

THE FUNGUS GROUP OF CHESHIRE AND CLWYD

Coprinus domesticus



By DW Higginson-Tranter 2006

SEASON 2007

Fungal Friends is a member of The Association of British Fungus Groups and encourages anyone with an interest in mycology to take part.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first Fungal Friends' Newsletter. Let's hope many more will follow over the coming years. At this early stage membership is at the grand total of 15 and the 2007 season I feel has been somewhat successful.

As you may be aware the purpose of the group is to bring together like-minded people to contribute to the appreciation and conservation of fungi as well as to open up these fascinating life-forms to a wider audience, particularly families and children. If we can do this and increase and share our knowledge on the way then as far as I'm concerned 'the job's a good un'.

Fungal Friends is supported by The Association of British Fungus Groups and if members also join the ABFG this will entitle our group to additional support. They have already provided:-

-  Encyclopaedia of Fungi of Britain and Europe
-  A basic set of stains and reagents to help identify fungi
-  CD with details of fungus records in Cheshire
-  CD to help with phonetics and translations of Latin names
-  Illuminated hand lens

If we achieve 15 fully paid up members to both groups this will result in a donation to Fungal Friends of a good quality compound microscope from the ABFG. As you can imagine this will help solve a lot of those 'in the field' puzzles and increase our knowledge dramatically. With this addition extra workshops and meetings could be arranged to explore the microscopic side of fungi. Mmmm worth a thought isn't it?

If your interest is just on a casual basis you are still a valuable and appreciated member of Fungal Friends but please bear in mind that the ABFG does an exceptional job nationwide and is the main reason Fungal Friends exists. ABFG headman Michael Jordan has been a wonderful source of encouragement and advice so I feel we should reciprocate as much as we can to improve fungal conservation and the groups involved.

So here is the first newsletter, I hope you enjoy it. All contributions from members for future issues are welcome, be it a small anecdote or a lengthy identification process, please send it in. The more the better and here's to a fungal future.

Fungalpunk Dave

THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT – A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

The year started off in fine style with mild winter conditions that produced some nice surprises. It seemed as though the season from 2006 had extended right the way through January to March 2007 and there was plenty to go at for the keen of eye.

Early species on the annual list were located on the first day of the year at Mere Sands Wood in Rufford, a site that is quite exceptional during the autumnal months. Velvet Shank (*Flammulina velutipes*), Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) and Olive Oysterling (*Panellus serotinus*) were the highs of a list of 23 species. Who said fungi were only found in autumn?



Velvet Shank (*Flammulina velutipes*) – one of those species likely to be found on the coldest winter day

On the 2nd of the month a birding walk around Marbury Country Park near Northwich resulted in the finding of Speckled Rustgill (*Gymnopolis penetrans*), an aged Clouded Agaric (*Clitocybe nebularis*), a nice patch of Blueleg Brownie (*Psilocybe cyanescens*) growing on woodchip and a patch of Elder Whitewash (*Hyphodontia sambuci*) on an Elder tree.

Chorlton Water Park produced some nice specimens on the 3rd of January with Tripe Fungus (*Auricularia mesenterica*), Redlead Roundhead (*Stropharia aurantiaca*) on its usual substrate of woodchip and a Wood Blewit (*Lepista nuda*) which was in perfect condition.

On the 4th at Worsborough Country Park in Barnsley we located an abundance of *Phellinus ulminarius* as well as a few bog standard species.

A trip to Etherow CP on the 5th rewarded us with Common Earthstar (*Geastrum triplex*), Pleated Inkcap (*Coprinus plicatilis*) and the ever reliable Lumpy Bracket (*Trametes gibbosa*) on its usual Beech stump.

A search around Dunham Massey on the 7th of January was equally successful with 21 species identified. Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*), Scarlet Caterpillar Fungus (*Cordyceps militaris*), Split-Gill (*Schizophyllum commune*), Olive Oysterling (*Panellus serotinus*) and Winter Polypore (*Polyporus brumalis*) were definite quality and made me wonder whether or not Dunham Massey would be worth adding to the foray list later in the year.

Back to work on the 8th of January and whilst walking home Common Ink Cap (*Coprinus atramentarius*) was located as well as *Gloeophyllum sepiarium* growing on a park bench.

During the next few months various additions to the yearly total were made with, from a personal standing, the following being rather noteworthy:-

Scarlet Elfcup (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*) at Leighton Moss on the 24th February
Palamino Cup (*Peziza repanda*) at Gait Barrows NR on the 7th April
Pinecone Cap (*Strobilurus tenacellus*) at Mere Sands Wood on the 9th April

The early summer flush of species came as expected with June being particularly notable. A wander around the New Forest in Hampshire produced a stunning Egghead Mottlegill (*Paneolus semiovatus*) and a nice patch of Orange Peel Fungus (*Aleuria aurantiaca*). A trip to Delamere Forest on the 16th didn't result in the sighting of White-Faced Darter (*Lencorchinia dubia*) – a species long overdue to our dragonfly list but as way of recompense we located several Blushers (*Amanita rubescens*) and 126 Stinkhorns (*Phallus impudicus*) in various stages of growth.

A quick mooch in the grounds of local patch Abney Hall on the 24th produced Peeling Oysterling (*Crepidotus mollis*), Collared Parachute (*Marasmius rotula*), Deer Shield (*Pluteus cervinus*) and Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus cornucopiae*). There are a few good areas that seem to always come up trumps early on in summer and year after year Abney Hall always tops up the annual list. With an abundance of recently felled trees the site can only get better.

July continued the early fruiting run, with walking to and from work resulting in the discovery of Weeping Widow (*Lacrymaria lacrymabunda*), Trooping Crumble Cap (*Coprinus disseminatus*), Red Cracking Bolete (*Boletus chrysenteron*) and *Paneolus ater* in the Cheadle Heath area. In Hazel Grove I came up with numerous Deceivers (*Laccaria laccata*) and some roadside specimens of Hare's Foot Inkcap (*Coprinus lagopus*) growing on woodchip.

After a day in Cardiff on the 7th of July and coming up with Blackening Waxcap (*Hygrocybe nigrescens*) at Howardian NR we headed to Bentley Woods in Wiltshire and the next day came up with several Amethyst Deceivers (*Laccaria amethystea*) and a couple of Plums and Custard (*Tricholomopsis rutilans*).



Plums and Custard (*Tricholomopsis rutilans*) – just one of those species one never tires of finding

A mothing excursion to Wastwater in Cumbria resulted in Bay Bolete (*Boletus badius*) and False Chanterelle (*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*) being found beside the youth hostel on the 15th with 3 stonking specimens of The Prince (*Agaricus augustus*) found on a roadside when leaving on the 16th.

The other highs of July were Split Fibrecap (*Inocybe rimosa* var. *rimosa*) found on beech mast along the A6 in Stockport on the 17th, a cluster of Jelly Babies (*Leotia lubrica*) at Etherow CP on the 23rd and Elfin Saddle (*Helvella lacunosa*) at Mere Sands Wood in Lancashire on the 28th. Grey Puffball (*Bovista plumbea*) was also found on the 28th at nearby Formby Sands.

And so what I deem to be the fungal season proper from August to early November was upon us. This is the time to get those ID books out for good and to really brush up those ID skills which so easily corrode with other distractions. The first part of August saw us down south in Dorset at our usual destination - Portland Bill Lighthouse - which gave us the opportunity to seek out some new fungal areas. Arne RSPB on the 5th of the month gave us a nice patch of White Saddle (*Helvella crispa*) and some excellent Parasitic Boletes (*Boletus parasiticus*) growing on some earthballs (*Scleroderma citrinum*). Despite the rainy weather throughout the summer we had 10 days full sun which dried up the ground no end and kept the fungal numbers low with nothing else of significance to report.

A trip to Tatton Park on the 16th had plenty of brackets to identify with an excellent Beefsteak Fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*) on Oak and a toothed bracket which was later identified by Michael Jordan as Tooth Tier (*Hericium cirrhatum*). A real rare find this one and one to look out for on return visits.

It is usually at this point we head for Errwood Reservoir in Derbyshire which is again one of those spots that delivers several specimens earlier than elsewhere. Located in the Goyt Valley and a very scenic walk indeed this years crop on the 27th was a poor show but Yellow Swamp Brittlegill (*Russula claroflava*), Larch Bolete (*Suillus grevillei*), Tawny Grisette (*Amanita fulva*); and Aniseed Toadstool (*Clitocybe odora*) were nice to catch up with and add to the ever increasing yearly list. Dark Fieldcap (*Agrocybe erebia*) was a good addition to the days finds and once again M. Jordan was called upon to confirm identification.

Rather than waste a day getting flustered by the lack of specimens on show I find that a quiet day is best used to ponder over the ID features of the more common fungi and hopefully gain one or two extra pointers. It really is amazing how often after years of looking at the same species you come up with something new to take into consideration. The rest of August was a quiet affair with the main highlight a cluster of Oak Mazegills (*Daedalea quercina*) on a fallen log at Hebden Bridge on the 29th.

So September was upon us and with the first Fungal Friends walks just around the corner a weekend at Styal on the 8th and Mere Sands Wood on the 9th was taken to have one last minute brush up on the fading and ever-lacking knowledge. Styal proved helpful with numerous common species as well as Porcelain Fungus (*Oudemansiella mucida*), Inkstain Bolete (*Boletus pulverulentus*) and Scaly Earthball (*Scleroderma verrucosum*) topping up a decent days' find. Mere Sands Wood had its usual suspects with Ear Pick Fungus (*Auriscalpium vulgare*) the choice find of the day.

And at last to the 17th with the first ever official Fungal Friends Foray at Etherow CP with an open invite to the public to join in the hunt. With approximately 20 attendants and Ken Burgess kindly sharing his expertise the day was a success all round. The weather stayed kind and the end total of 50 species kept all entertained.

ETHEROW CP

17th September 2007

Trametes gibbosa; *Ganoderma australe*; *Bjerkandera adusta*; *Laccaria laccata*; *Russula fragilis*; *Meripilus giganteus*; *Laccaria tortilis*; *Scleroderma verrucosum*; *Exidia nucleata*; *Russula ochroleuca*; *Rhodotus palmatus*; *Coprinus micaceus*; *Agrocybe erebia*; *Psathyrella candolleana*; *Scleroderma citrinum*; *Heterobasidion annosum*; *Trochila ilicina*; *Rickenella fibula*; *Amanita rubescens*; *Schizoporo paradoxa*; *Coriolus versicolour*; *Phallus impudicus*; *Calocera pallido-spathulata*; *Hypholoma fasciculare*; *Piptoporus betulinus*; *Rhytisma acerinum*; *Cudoniella acicularis*; *Daedaleopsis confragosa*; *Amanita fulva*; *Tricholoma fulvum*; *Paxillus involutus*; *Leccinum varicolour*; *Collybia confluens*; *Clitopilus prunulus*; *Lactarius pubescens*; *Lactarius quietus*; *Lycoperdon pyriforme*; *Boletus badius*; *Amanita muscaria*; *Xylaria polymorpha*; *Hypomyces chrysosperma*; *Pluteus cervinus*; *Geastrum triplex*; *Boletus porosporus*; *Boletus rubellus*; *Coprinus lagopus*; *Inocybe margaritispora*; *Entoloma politum*; *Russula atropurpurea*; *Boletus luridus*

The next outing also had Ken strutting his stuff with another success at Chadkirk Chapel. A grand turn-out with a few new faces joining the fungal flock. Despite a slowish start the list picked up as soon as the main wooded areas were reached. Another 20+ crowd had plenty to mull over and again the weather stayed fine.

CHADKIRK CHAPEL

22nd September 2007

Mycena galericulata; *Hypholoma fasciculare*; *Rhytisma acerinum*; *Ganoderma australe*; *Xylaria hypoxylon*; *Daedaleopsis confragosa*; *Stereum hirsutum*; *Nectria cinnabarina*; *Trochila ilicina*; *Schizoporo paradoxa*; *Peniophora quercina*; *Hypomyces chrysosperma*; *Boletus cisalpinus*; *Coprinus micaceus*; *Pholiota squarrosa*; *Hypoxylon fragiforme*; *Auricularia auricula-judae*; *Mycena inclinata*; *Coriolus versicolour*; *Laccaria amethystea*; *Coprinus lagopus*; *Mycena galopus*; *Ascocoryne sarcoides*; *Neobulgaria pura*; *Scleroderma citrinum*; *Scleroderma verrucosum*; *Galerina mutabilis*; *Russula ochroleuca*; *Russula vesca*; *Russula nigricans*; *Collybia confluens*; *Xylaria carpophila*; *Pleurotus dryinus*; *Bjerkandera adusta*; *Trametes gibbosa*; *Daldinia concentrica*; *Armillaria gallica*; *Helvella crispa*; *Coprinus comatus*; *Lycoperdon pyriforme*; *Ascocoryne cylichnium*

In between the walk at Chadkirk and the next one at Dunham Massey myself and family decided a trip to Ainsdale Sands on the 29th September would be worth taking to see if the fungal season had got underway at this variably fruiting spot. It was a great decision with Leafy Brain (*Tremella foliacea*), Mealy Frosted Funnel (*Clitocybe ditopus*), *Hebeloma collariatum*, *Inocybe impexa*, Primrose Brittlegill (*Russula sardonia*), Bloody Brittlegill (*Russula sanguinea*) and *Russula persicina* all choice finds. Michael Jordan's help was called upon again with *Hebeloma collariatum* identified and tagged as quite a rare find.

Back to the foray programme and an outing to National Trust property Dunham Massey was attended well with another 20 people enjoying the grounds offerings.

DUNHAM MASSEY

6th October 2007

Oudemansiella mucida; *Stropharia aurantiaca*; *Psathyrella candolleana*; *Collybia dryophila*; *Exidia truncata*; *Polyporus varius*; *Ganoderma adspersum*; *Ganoderma applanatum*; *Armillaria lutea*; *Trametes gibbosa*; *Gymnopolis junonius*; *Peniophora quercina*; *Hygrocybe reidii*; *Scleroderma verrucosum*; *Merulius tremellosus*; *Nectria cinnabarina*; *Laccaria laccata*; *Boletus chrysenteron*; *Meripilus giganteus*; *Mycena galericulata*; *Rhytisma acerinum*; *Coprinus leiocephalus*; *Daldinia concentrica*; *Coriolus versicolour*; *Laccaria amethystea*; *Ciboria batschiana*; *Cortinarius flexipes*; *Clavulinopsis helvola*; *Lactarius quietus*; *Amanita rubescens*; *Lycoperdon perlatum*; *Boletus pruinatus*; *Coprinus micaceus*; *Bjerkandera adusta*; *Russula ochroleuca*; *Stereum hirsutum*; *Hypoxylon fragiforme*; *Scleroderma citrinum*; *Pholiota squarrosa*; *Russula nigricans*; *Polyporus badius*; *Clitocybe clavipes*; *Coprinus lagopus*; *Russula atropurpurea*; *Lactarius subdulcis*; *Pluteus cervinus*; *Diatrype disciformis*; *Lycoperdon pyriforme*; *Russula cyanoxantha*; *Russula fragilis*; *Grifola frondosa*; *Hypholoma fasciculare*; *Mycena galopus* Var. *nigra*; *Fistulina hepatica*; *Russula subfoetans*; *Inocybe geophylla* var. *lilacina*; *Mycena arcangeliana*; *Psathyrella obtusata*; *Panaeolus acuminatus*; *Inocybe napipes*; *Entoloma conferendum*; *Laccaria proxima*; *Russula amoenolens*; *Russula aurora*; *Boletus cisalpinus*; *Psathyrella piluliformis*

As part of the Annual Waxcap Watch things were a bit scarce in the *Hygrocybe* department but all in all the day was a good one with a nice selection of species to ponder over. Tony Carter's assistance from the NWFG was more than warmly appreciated and his eagle 'golfing' eye did the business adding a few choice specimens to the list.

A week later the group headed to Chadkirk Chapel for the second walk of the season. Having had a good turn-out on the first foray due to the warden's outstanding publicity efforts I hoped for more of the same. Imagine my despair when the car park just got fuller and fuller and when called to attention I had 54 expectant fungi hunters facing me. A feeble attempt at delaying tactics to see if Ken Burgess would turn-up and perhaps accept my invite to split the group fell short and off I set with the knowledge hungry public in tow.

CHADKIRK CHAPEL

13th October 2007

Rhytisma acerinum; Coprinus plicatilis; Russula mairei; Oudemansiella radicata; Phallus impudicus; Laccaria amethystea; Lactarius blennius; Nectria cinnabarina; Laccaria laccata; Lycoperdon pyriforme; Boletus chrysenteron; Stereum hirsutum; Coriolus versicolour; Ustulina deusta; Ganoderma australe; Armillaria mellea; Clitocybe nebularis; Xylaria hypoxylon; Russula ochroleuca; Collybia butyracea; Auricularia auricular-judae; Pholiota squarrosa; Lycoperdon pyriforme; Laccaria laccata; Hypholoma fasciculare; Lepiota rhacodes; Trametes gibbosa; Bjerkandera adusta; Hypomyces chrysosperma; Lepista flaccida; Hypoxylon fragiforme; Pluteus cervinus; Merulius tremellosus; Clitocybe odora; Galerina mutabilis; Ascocoryne sarcoides; Neobulgaria pura; Scleroderma citrinum; Mycena acicula; Russula foetens

Not a bad list all in all and with kind assistance from John Taylor of The Northwest Fungus Group (and now Fungal Friends) I think between us we did the best we could. When reaching the woodland and restricted to a tiny pathway the explanation of species and their ID details had to be repeated several times and it was difficult to make progress. Perhaps a booking limitation for next year would be advised or maybe as John Taylor suggested to set out a white sheet and have a central point where people can bring their finds to display and discuss. It's worth a thought as a crowd of this size with one leader can only fail to meet everyone's needs.

With almost no time to draw breath and mull over the days finds the next day saw the second walk of the year at Etherow CP which was conducted with 30 people in attendance and all treated to the park at its best.

Coprinus atramentarius; Coprinus comatus; Scutellinia scutellata; Ganoderma australe; Trametes gibbosa; Armillaria mellea; Rhytisma acerinum; Bjerkandera adusta; Daedaleopsis confragosa; Cortinarius hemitrichus; Piptoporus betulinus; Xylaria polymorpha; Collybia butyracea; Xylaria hypoxylon; Nectria cinnabarina; Lactarius blennius; Leotia lubrica; Laccaria amethystea; Lactarius glyciosmus; Clavulina cristata; Clavulina cinerea; Hypholoma fasciculare; Clitocybe nebularis; Helvella lacunosa; Scleroderma verrucosum; Hebeloma crustuliniforme; Coprinus plicatilis; Mycena inclinata; Coriolus versicolour; Coprinus lagopus; Mycena galopus; Calocera pallido-spathulata; Pluteus cervinus; Russula ochroleuca; Calocera cornea; Collybia maculata; Heterobasidion annosum; Gymnopolis penetrans; Paxillus involutus; Peziza badia; Boletus chrysenteron; Amanita muscaria; Hypomyces chrysosperma; Scleroderma citrinum; Mycena pura; Coprinus micaceus; Galerina mutabilis; Auricularia auricular-judae; Dacrymyces stillatus; Tyromyces caesius; Crepidotus variabilis; Crepidotus mollis; Pholiota squarrosa; Amanita crocea; Amanita rubescens; Suillus grevillei; Inocybe geophylla; Inocybe geophylla var. lilacina; Bolbitius vitellinus; Exidia nucleata; Flammulina velutipes; Collybia confluens; Xylaria longipes; Daldinia concentrica; Hyphodontia sambucii; Cordyceps militaris; Lycoperdon pyriforme; Russula atropurpurea; Trochila ilicina; Stereum rugosum; Calocera viscosa; Leccinum scabrum; Tricholoma fulvum; Lactarius pubescens; Clitopilus prunulus; Coprinus disseminatus; Lactarius torminosus; Clavariadelphus junceus; Boletus piperatus; Clitocybe infundibuliformis; Cystolepiota aspera; Auricularia mesenterica; Nectria peziza; Lycogala epidendron

With a break in the Fungal Friends calendar we decided to head down south again and join the Hampshire Fungus Group for a days foraging at Rufus Stone in the New Forest. Details of this great day on page 20.

Moore NR was added to the foraging calendar at the last minute and was a spot I had visited and always wondered what the mushroom season would throw up. With consistent good attendances we headed to the location with high hopes both of turn-out and species in fruit. I say high hopes but when foraging at a new site, especially when leading the walk, there is always the sprinkling of apprehension regarding how many species I will be unable to identify in the field thus resulting in a slight disappointment for all concerned. Such are the hazards of fungal hunts! Well only 2 people turned up for this one as well as the Warden so we headed off and made the best of it.

Piptoporus betulinus; *Daedaleopsis confragosa*; *Coriolus versicolour*; *Armillaria mellea*; *Stropharia pseudocyanea*; *Stropharia aeruginosa*; *Ascocoryne sarcoides*; *Auricularia auricular-judae*; *Mycena galericulata*; *Hypoxylon multifforme*; *Clitocybe nebularis*; *Amanita muscaria*; *Russula fragilis*; *Russula ochroleuca*; *Cordyceps militaris*; *Cystoderma amianthium*; *Amanita rubescens*; *Hygrocybe psittacina*; *Stereum hirsutum*; *Diatrype disciformis*; *Armillaria gallica*; *Dacrymyces stillatus*; *Clitocybe fragrans*; *Laccaria proxima*; *Mycena oortiana*; *Trametes gibbosa*; *Tyromyces caesius*; *Hygrocybe nigrescens*; *Calvatia excipuliformis*; *Lepiota procera*; *Scleroderma verrucosum*; *Inocybe geophylla*; *Coprinus comatus*; *Lepista flaccida*; *Pleurotus ostreatus*; *Nectria cinnabarina*; *Lycoperdon perlatum*; *Lepiota rhacodes*; *Bisporella citrina*; *Xylaria polymorpha*; *Daldinia concentrica*; *Crepidotus variabilis*; *Exidia nucleata*; *Flammulina velutipes*; *Coprinus atramentarius*; *Laccaria laccata*; *Coprinus micaceus*; *Rickenella fibula*; *Calocera pallido-spathulata*; *Hypholoma fasciculare*; *Rhytisma acerinum*; *Collybia confluens*; *Collybia butyracea*; *Scleroderma citrinum*; *Collybia maculata*; *Lactarius quietus*; *Lactarius glyciosmus*; *Clavulinopsis helvola*; *Anthracobia melaloma*; *Entoloma sericeum*; *Mycena epipterygia*; *Skeletocutis amorphia*

To be honest it was a good day and the list proves that there was plenty to keep us occupied during the 4 hours in the field. Several species were collected and sent to M. Jordan which were later identified and added to the end total which in retrospect wasn't half bad at all.

And so to the last official Fungal Friends walk of the year and in the dropping of a spore the season was nearly over. Tatton Park was chosen as the last outing due to its ability to produce late fruiting waxcaps by the handful and also some quite distinct grassland species.

TATTON PARK

3rd November 2007

Rhytisma acerinum; *Mycena galericulata*; *Lactarius quietus*; *Grifola frondosa*; *Russula atropurpurea*; *Scleroderma citrinum*; *Laccaria amethystea*; *Dacrymyces stillatus*; *Phaeolus schweinitzii*; *Hirschioporus abietinus*; *Tyromyces caesius*; *Stereum hirsutum*; *Hypholoma fasciculare*; *Bjerkandera adusta*; *Coriolus versicolour*; *Psilocybe semilanceata*; *Tubaria furfuracea*; *Bolbitius vittelinus*; *Mycena galopus* var *Nigra*; *Laccaria laccata*; *Xylaria hypoxylon*; *Lactarius subumbonatus*; *Trametes stiptica*; *Crepidotus mollis*; *Calocera cornea*; *Collybia butyracea*; *Ganoderma adspersum*; *Merulius tremellosus*; *Scleroderma verrucosum*; *Mycena arcangeliana*; *Lepista flaccida*; *Datronia mollis*; *Trametes gibbosa*; *Schizopora paradoxa*; *Meripilus giganteus*; *Gymnopolis penetrans*; *Collybia confluens*; *Psathyrella piluliformis*; *Russula vesca*; *Russula ochroleuca*; *Entoloma conferendum*; *Hygrocybe pratensis*; *Gymnopolis junonius*; *Nectria cinnabarina*; *Armillaria ostoya*; *Coprinus micaceus*; *Chondostereum purpureum*; *Boletus badius*; *Clitocybe fragrans*; *Piptoporus betulinus*; *Clitocybe metachroa*; *Rickenella fibula*; *Mycena olivaceamarginata*; *Auricularia auricular-judae*; *Lactarius rufus*; *Stropharia semiglobata*; *Hygrocybe vitellina*; *Hygrocybe chlorophana*; *Hygrocybe quieta*; *Clavulinopsis helvola*; *Clavulinopsis luteo-alba*; *Hygrocybe reidii*; *Hygrocybe coccinea*; *Cystoderma amianthium*; *Amanita rubescens*; *Hygrocybe unguinosus*; *Russula amoenolens*; *Mycena pura*; *Pleurotus ostreatus*; *Stropharia aeruginosa*; *Cordyceps militaris*; *Daedaleopsis confragosa*; *Hypoxylon fragiforme*; *Tremella foliocea*; *Lycoperdon perlatum*; *Pluteus cervinus*; *Pholiota squarrosa*; *Calocera pallido-spathulata*; *Fistulina hepatica*; *Ischnoderma benzoinum*; *Mycena epipterygia*; *Hygrophorus hypothejus*; *Psathyrella corrugis*; *Ossicaulis lignatilis*; *Clitocybe dicolor*

With only 7 members in attendance it was still a successful day with Ken's waxcap knowledge being put to the test. Several exciting waxcap species were found as well as some pleasing bracket specimens. A few 'magic mushroom' hunters were noted and this species was indeed plentiful.

Well that was it and the only other trip of note was a family visit to Mere Sands Wood on the 17th November with Herald of Winter (*Hygrophorus hypothejus*), some wonderful Wood Blewits (*Lepista nuda*) and some Olive Oysterling (*Panellus serotinus*) being notable.

Overall I feel the year was a success and I hope the days were as rewarding to all members who joined the group and to the visiting public as they were to myself and family.

Numbers in retrospect were low, especially Milkcaps and Russula's but the variety was as good as ever with some nice rare finds adding spice to a final annual list of 314 species.

With mild winters and wetter summers the seasons only look set to be more disjointed in future years which I am sure will result in a longer foraging season and more species to mull over. A nice prospect indeed.

Fungalpunk Dave

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

No 1 – Amanita Muscaria



What more familiar fungus is there than the Fly Agaric? Steeped in folklore and one with more parental warnings than it deserves this stunning species is worthy of further scrutiny.

IDENTIFICATION

Cap - 8-20cm in diameter. Bright reddish-orange and covered with white warty remnants of the universal veil. Starting spherical in shape gradually becoming more flattened with age, eventually bowl shaped. Colour tends to fade with rain and warts can be washed off. **Stipe** - White, evenly thick with bulbous base, which is covered in shaggy remains of volval bag. Annulus is comb-like and occasionally with yellowish tint. **Gills** - white, crowded and free. **Flesh** - White with pleasant taste, may be tinged yellow-red beneath cap cuticle. **Spores** - White, broadly ovate. **Habitat** - Preference for growing beneath birch and spruce on acid soils. **Season** - Common. Late summer to autumn. **Edibility** – Poisonous.

SOME FASCINATING TALES

- ✿ It has been used since medieval times by being broken up into milk to stupefy flies.
- ✿ It was formerly used in this country and Sweden to deter bugs hence the name Bug Agaric.
- ✿ Vikings sought its aid to go berserk before going into battle.
- ✿ Allegedly in the days of prohibition in the U.S.A. it was found to be more effective and less expensive than boot-leg liquor.
- ✿ It is used in homeopathic practice under the names Agaric, Agar or Aga. The dried cap powdered or a tincture made of the fresh fungus.
- ✿ It is said to aid remedy against chilblain, chorea, bunions and certain types of cataract.
- ✿ Evidence points to a number of minor cults and some widespread religions that have centred upon ritualistic use of the Fly Agaric to induce priestly hallucinations.
- ✿ Inebriation results if you drink the urine of someone who has eaten a Fly Agaric which has given rise to the term 'getting pissed' now linked with the effects of alcohol.
- ✿ Some authors have promoted Fly Agaric as soma, worshipped by the Aryans people and central to their scriptures, the Rig-Veda, more than 3,000 years before the birth of Christ.
- ✿ Some forms of Fly Agaric are tinged with yellow such as the regalis variety found in Nordic countries, whose cap is browner.
- ✿ Laplanders feed their reindeers large quantities of Fly Agaric and bottle the resulting animal's urine. They use this to get drunk on out of the mushrooms growing season.

LOCATION LOWDOWN

No 1 – Etherow Country Park

Contact:

George Street; Compstall; Stockport; SK6 5JD

Tel No: 0161 427 6937

Amenities:

A cafeteria and toilets are located next to the visitor centre within the car park (Pay and Display). Motorised wheelchairs are available free of charge by booking in advance.

Opening and Closing Times:

The car park is open at all times along with access to all park areas. The visitor centre is open 2pm-4pm on Wednesdays, 10am to 4pm on Thursdays to Sundays, and is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Area Description:

Established in 1968 and with over a quarter of a million visitors annually, Etherow Country Park is a hidden gem of natural beauty. The park was once part of the estate of George Andrews who built Compstall village, its local mill, church and school. But despite its industrial history both the Keg Woodland and Ernocroft Wood have survived to become areas of natural interest. In fact in 1969 the wetlands of Keg Pool and Marsh were officially recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and continue to flourish under the fine management of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. In the year 2000 the Keg Woodland, Ernocroft Wood and Keg Pool and Marsh were all designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) establishing Etherow Country Park as a major wildlife haven.

With a mixture of water (still and running) and woodland habitats (coniferous and deciduous) Etherow offers a wonderful array of habitats.

Compstall SSSI supports rare plants and animals that are of national importance with the area being very sensitive to disturbance. Permits for access to this area may be obtained from the Visitor Centre free of charge.

Best times to visit:

If sticking to the main area that covers from the main car park to the Weir it is suggested early mornings (especially at weekends) to avoid the main crowds. If planning to venture into the Keg Woodland or Ernocroft Wood then anytime can be productive as regards wildlife and is usually free from many visitors.

Key Flora:

Good variety of flowers with Star of Bethlehem, Pink Purslane, Moschatel, Yellow Pimpernel, Great Burnet, Bugle, Yellow Archangel and Wood Sage being the highlights. A nice array of coniferous and deciduous trees and in autumn there is usually a good supply of fungi to be found including Earthstars, numerous Russula species and a nice variety of Boletes.

Key Fauna:

A superb spot for woodland birds with all 3 woodpeckers possible. Summer visitors include Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and Wood Warbler. Stock Doves, Dipper and Mandarin are all possible with the occasional escapee waterfowl an added extra.

A good selection of butterflies and dragonflies are present during summer with the meadows in Keg Wood abundant in other insect life.

In the field - **SETTING OUT**

The big decision to make when going on a fungal foray is where to go?

Even after several years of mushroom hunting I still find myself asking these questions albeit for different reasons. It can be quite a daunting decision to make if days out are limited due to other commitments, so the chance to see some fruiting fungi must be maximised to its full potential.

For me a site with a variety of habitats is best for a good all round selection of specimens but sometimes this can be overwhelming with so much to go at and only so many hours of daylight available. One option, if the area is expansive, is to obtain a local map and section off certain areas and pay several visits to the site and deal with one area at a time. A tad frustrating for the list keeper, and as mentioned those short of spare time, but a methodical approach will keep you keener of eye and hone those LBJ spotting and identifying skills. A more intense scanning of a small area rather than a casual perusal of a larger site can result in some exciting and potentially overlooked finds.

Another way to decide where to go is to keep notes during the summer of new places visited and what one could expect to find. With practice a fairly accurate predictive picture can be drawn in advance of a foray with a resulting smug satisfaction had when species anticipated are species seen.

List keeping is another way that helps to make up ones mind as to where, and when, to go. By looking back through past lists one can hazard a guess as to what will be in fruit, at what times, at what location. Obviously weather is a big determining factor here but you would be surprised how lists can aid hitting the right spot at the right time. It is quite amazing how sites, within a short distance of each other, can be good and bad at the same time.

Finally the most glaring option is to join a group. Fungal Friends has hopefully gone some way to solving the decision making process for you but on days when the group isn't out and about there are public mushroom walks going on all over the Cheshire and Flintshire areas (and beyond for the more willing) and all are usually welcoming of extra forayers.

With an incessant thirst to try out new areas for seeking fungal specimens we decided early in the year to book a brief trip down south and see what fungal forays were taking place, with the hope of joining one and picking up some new species and choice ID tips. After much scanning of the Internet and following a recommendation from Friends member Pauline Greenhalgh on the warm and friendly nature of the Hampshire Fungus Group, e-mails and a telephone call followed and all was sorted for us to join the HFG on a trip to Rufus Stone and Canterton in the New Forest.

A mouth watering prospect indeed as Pauline had retold tales of finds from a few years ago when she and her husband joined the group and were left with hanging jaws at the day's end due to the sheer diversity of species and enthusiastic nature of the group.

The day in question soon came and we arrived at the destination with no difficulty whatsoever and the watery sunshine filtering through the autumnal canopy really helped to set the scene as we downed a cup of coffee and awaited our hosts. A brief scan around the immediate vicinity provided a little taster of things to come with a few familiar specimens on show and a couple of unfamiliar head-scratchers more than obvious.

The group arrived in good time and rather than the usual uncomfortable introductions felt by outsiders gate-crashing an established set-up, from the word go we were welcomed and catered for in grand style. Each and every find was proffered for our examination and the amount of quality species just grew and grew. The first memorable find for us personally was *Tricholoma sulphureum* var. *sulphureum* with its bright yellow cap and distinctive smell of coal gas. Next, several stonking specimens of Coral Tooth (*Hericium corraloides*) dripping from the upright remains of a Beech tree. Absolutely fantastic and already at this point one striking feature of the group was that it seemed each member had their own area of speciality as well as a few all-rounders. Everyone chipped in with ideas and appointed list keeper for the walk, Stuart Skeates, never seemed to stop scribbling away on his electronic device as more and more finds were passed on to be logged. Poor fellar!

Green Wood Cup (*Chlorociboria aeruginascens*) and Porcelain Fungus (*Oudemansiella mucida*) were simply everywhere and these are species we have

never seen in such abundance before and when viewed in such numbers a whole new appreciation of them seems to arise from within. Glorious tufts of *O. mucida* cascaded down various beech limbs with size and shade variation adding to the appeal.

The dinner break still produced the odd gem with *Hydropus floccipes* located on a mossy bole on, yet again Beech. Wood Hedgehog (*Hydnum repandum*) was also found around the lunching area and I was left wondering what on earth the day's final tally would be.

The species just kept on coming after dinner with some solid finds. *Lentinellus ursinus* was uncovered on a fallen Beech log a substrate on which was found Wrinkled Peach (*Rhodotus Palmatus*) which normally grows on Elm. A nice cluster of Burgundydrop Bonnet (*Mycena haematopus*) was photographed and Cinnamon Porecrust (*Phellinus ferreus*) was particularly interesting.



Lentinellus ursinus was a cracking find and goes to show even towards the days end there can still be surprises in store for the keen of eye.

A truly absorbing day indeed and the finale came in the car park when my wife, Gillian, offered forth a white encrusting species she had just picked up whilst pottering at the rear of the group with our daughter Katie. Delight all round was had as the species was named as Fragrant Toothcrust (*Mycoacia nothofagi*) an uncommon indicator of Beech wood. Now that's how to end a cracking days mushrooming.

The final count was 142 species with just a wonderful all round selection. We added a bounty of new species to our personal lists and just as importantly came away with some very useful ID pointers to put into practice in the future.

The sharing of knowledge with such charming people is what made the day and one of the best ways to improve one's own fungal know how is to get out there with more experienced forayers. The HFG wouldn't be a bad way to start.

The ABFG by Michael Jordan

For anyone who is not familiar with the name, The Association of British Fungus Groups was set up in 1996 as a voluntary non-profit making organisation to support and further the interests of people wanting to discover more about and help conserve our precious stocks of fungi.

Since that time the ABFG has grown to become the largest field mycology organisation in the UK whilst still being run by volunteers on behalf of the amateur field community and it is now a registered UK conservation and education charity. So why is there any need to have an 'umbrella' body like the ABFG and why should anyone bother to support it with their membership subscriptions? Surely just being a member of a local group is enough!

Well, there are many reasons. Firstly there is a range of central functions that a local group cannot manage on its own, very often on grounds of cost. A good example is insurance. In order for a group to foray it must now carry Public Liability Insurance cover. But this is very expensive to obtain and far beyond the pockets of individual groups. Then there is communication. A local group may be able to print off its own excellent newsletter but can't afford to publish a regular full colour magazine, nor perhaps does it have the range of contacts or depth of mycological experience to cover the wide range of topics that will be of interest and learning value to field enthusiasts. Again this is a service to its members that the ABFG can and does perform very well. The quarterly member's magazine, the Forayer, is now the most widely read UK field mycology publication with its focus very much on 'hands-on' learning. It is written for, and also written by field enthusiasts.

The Association is firmly committed to the support of new and growing local groups. A budget is raised each year to provide microscopes, books, workshops and other facilities to groups that would otherwise struggle to raise the funds. We supply strictly at cost CDs, lenses and a range of chemicals and reagents used in identification of fungi and not generally available from elsewhere. These goods are all made up, packed and posted by volunteers to keep cost to a minimum.

A team of volunteers regularly gives up its time to provide identifications of more difficult fungi for members and member groups. In order to do this successfully, an extensive reference library is needed and the ABFG has built just such a library of information. It also runs a very extensive web site and puts on educational displays at shows around the country. This year we are running four residential courses in

different UK locations for beginners and people wanting to climb the fungus learning curve.

One of our most exciting developments in 2007 has been the ABFG national fungus records database. Technologically this is far ahead of its rivals and now gives unprecedented facilities for people wanting to study and evaluate fungus records for conservation projects.

The volunteers do all of this with great enthusiasm, but none of it, of course runs entirely on air and determination. The Association needs to raise money to fund everything that it can't complete by dint of hard work alone and it does this essentially by two means. One is the running of forays, talks and workshops by ABFG volunteers in conjunction with sponsoring partners like the National Trust. The second and most vital source of income comes from the support of our members. We've grown from a little band of less than 100 supporters to nearly 600. But as we have grown in numbers so the extent of work that we do and the responsibility that we take for the welfare of fungi in the UK has also grown and we cannot afford to stand still. There is so much more that needs to be done! This is why your support is so important. The cost is modest. We always aim to keep the annual subscription down and this year it is still only £17.50 for an individual or £22 for a family.

By deciding to join the ABFG as well as supporting your local group you are giving us the gift of far more than you may imagine from the mere cost of the sub and in return you are gaining a splendid magazine, free identification services and contributing to your group's insurance cover. You may be helping it towards a grant of books and equipment. But above all you are helping us as a charity to make a real difference to the vital conservation of fungi in the British Isles.

Please give your support. This is the best time of year to join since membership runs from January to December. There's a simple application form to print off from the website at www.abfg.org.

Thank you

Your 2008 Dairy Dates

13 th Sept	Chadkirk Chapel	1.30pm – meet in main car park
14 th Sept	Etherow CP	10.30am – meet at visitor centre
1 st Oct	Chadkirk Chapel	10.00am – meet in main car park
11 th Oct	Marbury CP	10.30am – meet outside Rangers office
12 th Oct	Moore NR	11.00am – main car parking area
19 th Oct	Etherow CP	10.30am – meet at visitor centre

More dates will be added so keep checking the Fungal Friends link at
www.fungalpunknature.co.uk

DON'T FORGET – STOUT WALKING BOOTS AND A PACKED LUNCH ARE ALWAYS RECOMMENDED AS YOUR LEADER MAY GET CARRIED AWAY!

MEMBERS NOTICES

Membership renewal will be required each year on the 1st of October and will still be the usual annual fee of £5 per person over the age of 18. Persons under this age can join the group absolutely free of charge.

Enclosed with this newsletter are 20 flyers advertising the group so it would be much appreciated if you could pass these on to potential new members or place them in an appropriate place to push the group even further. If you require any more than the enclosed amount do not hesitate to contact me on the numbers and e-mail addresses below.

I hope you have enjoyed this 1st annual newsletter and feedback would be most welcome as would contributions to the next one, be it photo's, personal anecdotes, ID features or just a few questions that we may be able to answer.

D W Higginson-Tranter – 0161 286 1427

E-mail – fungalpunk@hotmail.co.uk or mothman2005@hotmail.co.uk

www.fungalpunknature.co.uk

Acknowledgements

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Michael Jordan for his invaluable help and assistance in aiding the identification process.

All members for supporting the cause and contributing to some memorable days.