

Chadkirk Country Estate, 9th November 2014

A Day Out with Fungal Friends

This is a brief, personal account of the day, focusing on the more easily photographed (i.e. larger) fungi seen. The full list of species seen which includes far more smaller species, is available at: <http://www.fungalpunknature.co.uk/CFG/Sightings14.html>.

The estate comprises a 60 acre farm and a 16th century chapel nestled in the Goyt Valley.

There is extensive, mature beech woodland on fairly steep slopes, and most of our time was spent there. Many large specimens had been cut down, but it was not obvious why – they didn't appear to be in significantly worse condition than many of those left standing.

The first major find was an impressive clump of bearded tooth (*Hericium erinaceus*) in a hole at the base of one tall beech.



Unlike some forays a little earlier, some of the fungi found were clustered in reasonable numbers, particularly this extensive group of Sheathed Woodtuft (*Kuehneromyces mutabilis*), and Glistening Inkcap (*Coprinellus micaceus*) was found on the same log:



The Peeling Oysterling (*Crepidotus mollis*) is so named because of the cap which starts smooth and sticky gradually becomes gelatinous and elastic, allowing the cuticle to be peeled. This is a bracket-like mushroom with very short, curved stipe.

A large (about 25cm), solitary specimen was clearly visible from the path. The gills were quite strongly decurrent and the close up of the base of the stem shows it is downy and bulbous indicating the Trooping Funnel (*Clitocybe geotropa*).



Lunch was taken outside the 16th century chapel, where our leader waited patiently for the stragglers to catch up...



A short distance from the chapel, this group was found at the edge of a fallen trunk. There were confident mutterings of *Psathyrella*, only to be shot down by the statement that the name has now changed to *Parasola conopilus*.



One of the smaller fungi seen was the Brown Cup (*Rutstroemia firma*). It is particularly interesting that this starts looking as named, a brown cup, but develops more undulations and wrinkles as it ages! The older specimens could easily be mistaken for something else.



Straying into an area with many Ash trees provided quite a different environment, although not many fungi. Most obvious were King Alfred's Cakes (*Daldinia concentrica*), and some Ivy (*Hedera helix*) alluded to its scientific name.



While fungi are the focus of these walks, there are always other things to attract interest. A couple of pairs of Goosanders were seen on the river Goyt. A Great-Spotted Woodpecker was heard, not spotted, while a Dipper was well spotted! At least one robin was seen, and of course a few Mallards.

At the start of the walk, this red-berried, evergreen shrub, with long thorns was growing in the hedge. It is likely a species of *Pyracantha*, although the leaves are not obviously toothed - perhaps the Asian firethorn (*Pyracantha rogersiana*). This is from China, but has been grown in gardens and parks particularly for hedging.



The Mallow, which had deeply cut leaves is probably Musk Mallow (*Malva mochata*).

It was interesting to see a Holly tree in flower – small, white, 4-petalled clusters. None of us could recall seeing them before. Holly trees usually have either male or female flowers in May to August, but sometimes in autumn. This one had (male) stamens, but seemed out of luck as the only obvious females around were well into red berries. By the side of the brook, close together were a couple of small trees, with seemingly similar looking leaves – alternately spaced, toothed, broadly oval, slightly asymmetric and many with a distinct point. On closer inspection one had very rough leaves with small, dark buds hidden by the overlapping base of the leaf with very short or non-existent stalks. The other had much softer, clearly stalked leaves and larger, reddish buds were clearly visible. The conclusion was Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) respectively.

The weather had been kind to us throughout the day with much sunshine filtering through the sparse canopies. While the total species count may not have been as high as previous days, it felt very successful, partly because there were many examples of those seen. For me the bearded tooth was the highlight of the day, never having seen it before.

Thanks to all for an excellent day.

Mike Pettipher