

Witney U3A Nature Group

Fungi at Singe Wood

Wednesday 29th October 2025

October is a great time of year to look for fungi and eight members of the Nature Group visited Singe Wood near Hailey to practice their Fungi ID skills.

It is believed that in this remnant of the ancient Wychwood Forest, the soils have been largely undisturbed since the 12th Century. In the Spring the floor is carpeted with Bluebells, one of the markers of ancient woodland. The site, which is owned by the Wychwood Forest Trust, is a mixture of birch, oak, beech and coppiced hazel with bramble undergrowth and can be accessed via public rights of way and permissive paths.

Once it was established that the level of skill and experience among the group was negligible we set out to find as many types of fungi as we could armed with a check list of fungi features to record, measure and photograph.



We found examples of delicate *Mycena* bonnet mushrooms and Milkcaps growing in leaf litter and on dead wood. Bracket fungi and jelly fungi on living and dead trees.

Most of the photographs below were taken on the group visit, but some were taken a few days earlier on a reconnaissance visit to the site. Thank you to Janice, Mo, Janet and Isobel for their photographs.

WHAT WE FOUND

JELLY FUNGI



The left hand image is of **Jelly Ear (*Auricularia auricula-Judae*)** – you can see how it got its name. The slightly pinker fungi in the right hand image is **Purple Jelly Disc (*Ascocoryne sarcoides*)**. Both these are reported to be common.

MILKCAPS (LACTARIA)



This Milkcap is quite common in the leaf litter – the species preferred by the group was ***Lactarius pyrogalus* (Firey Milkcap)** based on shape, colour, gills and the white milk released when damaged and which favours Hazel woodland.



This dirty olive brown mushroom had been already been cut open. It is probably **Ugly Milkcap (*Lactarius turpis*)**



This lovely orange mushroom is a Milkcap (*Lactaria*). The stem is the same colour as the cap and the gills are decurrent – they run down the stem. It is possibly a **Birch Milkcap (*Lactarius tabidus*)**

BONNETS (MYCENA)

These are small delicate bell or cone shaped caps on slender stems.



These tiny white mushrooms with radially grooved bell shaped cap are possibly **Milking Bonnet (*Mycena galopus*)**



This grey bonnet with a clearly striated stem is possibly **Grooved Bonnet** (*Mycena polygramma*)



A bell shaped orange-brown Bonnet with shaggy margins and dark stems – possibly **Burgundy Drop Bonnet** (*Mycena haematopus*). The colour of the latex when damaged can be used to distinguish between types. We will make sure to test this next time.



This Bonnet has a distinct colour rings with a dark centre and a light rim. Views of the cap, stem and gills of another Bonnet. The gills do not continue down the stem The cap has a campanulate shape (bell-shaped) with quite smooth, thin edges

ARMILLARIA (HONEY FUNGUS)



These may be species of **Armillaria** (Honey Fungus). The left hand example has a fibrous stem with a very prominent ring near the top. This is typical of ***Armillaria mellea***. The fungi of the right has a scaly or bristly cap and reddish slightly fibrous stem. There does not appear to be a ring but this may be hidden by the cap. This may also be ***Armillaria mellea*** which can vary considerably in appearance.

RUSSULA (BRITTLLEGILLS)



Two red mushrooms were found in leaf litter. The photographs do not show the stem or gills clearly but based on the very vibrant colour they are probably belong to the Russula genera such as the **Scarlet Brittlegill (*Russula pseudointegra*)** or **Rosy Brittlegill (*Russula rosea*)** which are common in broadleaf woodland.

PUFFBALLS



These smooth light brown puffballs growing on a dead tree look like Stump Puffballs (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*)

POLYPORE/BRACKET FUNGI AND CRUST FUNGI



A beautifully formed bracket fungi on fallen beech tree.



Bracket fungi



Birch polypore (*Fomitopsis betulina*) with soft spongy underside when fresh



Possibly **False Turkeytail (*Stereum ostrea*)** – a crust fungi that doesn't have pores on the underside.



This polypore has a maize-like pattern of pores on the underside. It could be *Daedaleopsis*. Possibly **Blushing Bracket (*Daedaleopsis confragosa*)**.



Crust fungus

One thing we learnt from our visit is that we need to take good photographs of all parts of the fungus and make detailed measurements and observations to have any chance making a confident identification. We will look forward to continuing our discovery of the world of fungi next spring.

Thank you to the Wychwood Forest Trust for permission to walk 'off piste' at Singe Wood.