

Trooper's Hill Fungus Foray and Survey: 2007.

A fungus foray and associated fungus survey was held on the 7th October 2007. 24 species of fungi were recorded, mostly macro-fungi, but some microfungi. This was regarded as low for the site, so a further fungus survey was undertaken on 4th November, adding a further 17 species to the list.

30 members of the public joined for the foray, and they were rewarded with nice examples of earthball fungi (*Scleroderma areolatum*), deadly poisonous *Clitocybe rivulosa* and *Crepidotus mollis*, with its detachable, gelatinous cap skin (pellicle). The woodlands and scrub on the site proved the most rewarding, even though there were less species than previously recorded, while the heath produced only a few puffballs. It was decided that a later survey would be undertaken to produce a more complete mycota for the site. This was held on the 4th November 2007, and produced a wide range of grassland/heathland species. These included 7 species of Wax Cap Fungi (*Hygrocybe*), a genus of brightly coloured grassland gill fungi, typified by slimy caps. They are generally used as monitors of habitat quality for unimproved grasslands. More than 5 species in a single visit indicates a site of moderate quality, while a total of over 15 for a site overall, indicates an important grassland site for fungi. All the Wax Cap fungi found are frequent in the UK in suitable habitat, with *Hygrocybe quieta* and *Hygrocybe reidii* being occasional.

Recently, CHEG values have been used for grasslands, with over 10 species indicating a moderate site (CHEG = *Clavaria* and allies, *Hygrocybe*, *Entoloma*, *Geoglossum*: fungi that have importance in the grassland habitat; each species found is scored with 1 point, the total score indicating the site value). On the 31st October, Trooper's Hill produced 7 *Hygrocybe*, 2 *Clavulinopsis*, and 2 *Entoloma* giving a CHEG value of 11, indicating a site of moderate quality. Further surveys should push this value up over time. Included within this suite was *Entoloma clandestinum*, the only true rarity on the site, and maybe a new county record.

Other species recorded on both days are regarded as common to frequent in the UK. The woodlands produced their typical birch associate, *Amanita muscaria*, the Fly Agaric, with much *Laccaria laccata* or Deceiver Fungi. Other genera recorded in the woods, such as *Psathyrella* and *Mycena*, are typical leaf litter decomposers. Numerous wood dwelling resupinate fungi were also found such as *Hyphoderma puberum*, frequent in the UK.

Habitat Management and Recommendations

As the grassland and heath are seemingly more important this year for fungi, some management suggestions for this habitat are presented.

1. Regular late season mowing of parts of the grassland (late August or September) may improve fungal fruiting.
2. Maybe patch mowing in the area around the tower, where most Wax Caps are to be found, especially where False Oat (*Arrhenatherum elatior*) and Cocks Foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) grasses dominate as they indicate enriched soil conditions.
3. Grazing by sheep, goats, horses and rabbits is also recommended to improve fruiting.
4. Removal of litter and dog waste will maintain soil pH conditions.
5. Regular monitoring of sward height by volunteers, especially where fungi (especially waxcaps) fruit in profusion will indicate the value of a low sward.
6. A one day fungus course to introduce volunteers to Fungal Identification!

Bibliography

Boertmann, D (2000): The Genus *Hygrocybe* (Fungi of Northern Europe: Volume 1).

Henrici, A et al (2005): Checklist of British Basidiomycetes (Kew/BMS)

Noordeloos, M & Arnolds, E (1991): Flora Agaricina Neerlandica: Vol 1 (Balkema)

Trooper's Hill Fungi Species List: 7th October & 4th November 2007.

Basidiomycetes

- Psathyrella prona* var *prona* in willow litter.
Auricularia auricula judae on elder. EAR FUNGUS
Stereum rugosum on oak branches.
Mycena galopus in leaf litter.
Crepidotus mollis in goat willow log. SOFT SLIPPER TOADSTOOL
Hyphoderma puberum on sycamore log.
Phragmidium violaceum on bramble. BRAMBLE RUST
Clitocybe rivulosa in meadow.
Psathyrella gracilis on pathside.
Collybia dryophila in broom and heather litter. RUSSET SHANK
Psathyrella candolleana in willow and oak litter.
Scleroderma areolatum in soil below oak.
Stropharia coronilla on path-side, in leaf litter.
Vascellum pratense on heath.
Bovista plumbea on heath.
Conocybe pseudopilosella in leaf litter by track.
Hygrocybe conica many colonies scattered on heath. CONICAL WAX CAP
Hygrocybe niveus many colonies scattered on heath. SNOWY WAX CAP
CAP
Hygrocybe chlorophana small colonies scattered on heath. YELLOW WAX CAP
Hygrocybe ceracea many colonies scattered on heath.
Hygrocybe reidii small amounts on heath. HONEY SCENTED WAX CAP.
Hygrocybe quieta small amounts on heath.
Hygrocybe coccinea one small colony on heath SCARLET HOOD
Entoloma sericellum single individual on heath.
Entoloma clandestinum single individual on heath.
Mycena pura scattered on heath.
Mycena aetites scattered on heath.
Cystoderma amianthinum scattered on heath.
Clavulinopsis helvola many clumps on heath.
Clavulinopsis laeticolor one tuft on heath.
Galerina clavata one small patch in longer grass on heath.
Rickenella fibula in mosses on heath.
Tubaria furfuracea on heath.

Ascomycetes

- Rhytisma acerinum* on sycamore leaves. TAR SPOT FUNGUS
Bisporella citrina on sycamore branch.
Microspphaeria alphetoides on oak leaves. OAK MILDEW
Nectria cinnabarinna on sycamore stump CORAL SPOT FUNGUS
Eutypa maura (*acharii*) on sycamore stump.
Erysiphe sordida on Great Plantain leaves. PLANTAIN MILDEW