

## Trooper's Hill Fungus Foray and Survey: 2008.

A fungus foray and associated fungus survey was held on the 2nd November 2008. 26 species of fungi were recorded, mostly macro-fungi, but also 2 species of microfungi.

26 members of the public joined the foray, and they were rewarded with nice examples of wax cap fungi (*Hygrocybe sp*), including abundant and edible *Hygrocybe pratensis*, and unusual double headed specimens of the puffball, *Lycoperdon nigrescens*. The woodlands and scrub on the site proved the least rewarding, with only one species of micro-fungus found, while the grasslands and heathy areas produced the majority of the recorded list. These included 7 species of Wax Cap Fungi (*Hygrocybe*), a genus of brightly coloured grassland gill fungi, typified by slimy caps. They are often 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 miniata* being occasional locally owing to limited occurrence of suitable habitat. Typically, this species is only found in acid grasslands.

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 occurring as mycorrhizal species in mostly unimproved grassland habitat; each species found is scored with 1 point, the total score indicating the site value). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, Trooper's Hill produced 7 *Hygrocybe*, 2 *Clavulinopsis*, and 2 *Entoloma* giving a CHEG value of 11, indicating a site of moderate quality. This result corresponds with the same figure for 2007. 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. This species was also recorded in 2007 at the same location.

Other species recorded on both days are regarded as common to frequent in the UK. *Laccaria proxima* was new to the site, a species of acid heath, more typically found in damp, peaty sites. Two *Polytrichum* associates were also recorded, *Galerina hypnorum* and *Psilocybe montana*, easily overlooked LBJs (Little Brown Jobs!).

## 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!

## Trooper's Hill Fungi Species List: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008

Species listed firstly by Class then in order of recording during walk.

### Basidiomycetes

- Hygrocybe virginea* on south facing slope on heath SNOWY WAX CAP  
*Rickenella fibula* on south facing slope on heath  
*Cystoderma amianthinum* abundant in the grassland  
*Hygrocybe conica* on south facing slope on heath CONICAL WAX CAP  
*Entoloma clandestinum* on south facing slope on heath  
*Mycena arcangeliana* on dead wood  
*Hygrocybe miniata* couple of specimens in grassland  
*Lycoperdon nigrescens* in grass near broom and heather  
*Galerina hypnorum* in *Polytrichum juniperinum*  
*Mycena aetites* in grassland  
*Clitocybe metachroa* with heather in *Polytrichum*  
*Scleroderma areolatum* in litter near oak  
*Clitocybe nebularis* in litter near oak CLOUDED AGARIC  
*Collybia dryophila* in litter near oak RUSSET SHANK  
*Peniophora quercina* on oak branches  
*Hygrocybe pratensis* abundant in grassland BUFF MEADOW CAP  
*Laccaria proxima* with heather on heath  
*Clavulinopsis luteoalba* in grassland  
*Clavulinopsis helvola* in grassland  
*Hygrocybe psittacina* in grassland PARROT TOADSTOOL  
*Hygrocybe ceracea* in grassland  
*Hygrocybe coccinea* in grassland  
*Entoloma sericeum* in grassland  
*Psilocybe montana* in *Polytrichum juniperinum* by track

### Ascomycetes

- Rhytisma acerinum* on sycamore TAR SPOT FUNGUS  
*Microsphaeria alphitoides* on oak leaves OAK MILDEW