

Chesworth Farm Fungus Foray 2023

It was a lovely early autumn day following several days of rain but the fungi were still recovering from the heatwave at the end of the summer. We looked around the excellent garden at the Centre, then strolled down to the river and then continued a short distance further up towards Denne Hill. Despite the number of species scarcely made double figures we found that we had plenty to observe and wonder at.

Panaeolus foenisecii Turf Mottlegill

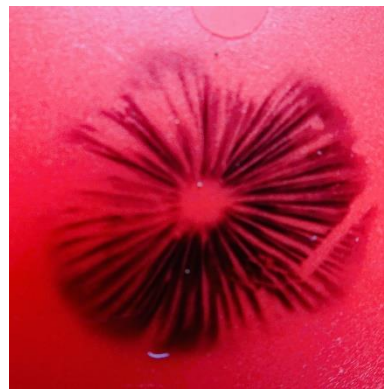
The first species we found was in the grass outside the centre: a good number of small grey hemispherical caps less than 5mm diameter on delicate stems. These were very probably Turf Mottlegills. They often turn up on old lawns after mowing. Before drying out they are brown. The developing dark spores on the gills give a mottled appearance which can be seen with a hand lens.

Trametes versicolor Turkeytail

On the top of an old log we found a rosette of Turkeytail. The underside of this bracket fungus when fresh is a pure white surface of pores from which the spores drop. The pores are just visible to the naked eye. The concentric bands of varying colours give the fungus its name.

Agrocybe species a Fieldcap

In the woodchip was a healthy group of fungi with long thin stems and caps in various shades of brown, being paler where the flesh was drier. There are a number of different 'fieldcaps' that grow in woodchip and I am hesitant to identify this one fully straight away. However, it will probably reappear and allow a closer examination in the future. The second picture below shows the print made by the spores when the cap was left on a surface overnight.



Marasmius rotula Collared Parachute

We moved from the garden down the track to the river. In the hedgerow was a group of small but robust fungi: Collared Parachutes. The stems were dark and springy and where they met with the cap the gills formed a circular collar around it.

Stereum hirsutum Hairy Curtain Crust

Nearby in the ditch was a bracket fungus growing along an old log. The bracket was thin and wavy. This is one of the most common fungi found on forays and is usually a more colourful mixture of orange and browns. It can be confused with Turkeytail but underneath the sporulating surface is smooth rather than covered with pores.

***Scleroderma verrucosum* Scaly Earthball**

We crossed the river and started up the hill. By the side of the track in several places we came across earthballs in various states of maturity. We saw that in young ones the spore mass inside was black and shiny. The older ones that had ruptured were releasing the spores in grey-brown clouds. This particular species of earthball has a prominent 'foot' attaching it to the ground and the mycelium beneath.



***Hypoxylon fuscum* Hazel Woodwart**

On old hazel branches we found these small black forms. There are other woodwart species to be found on beech and birch. Also on Hazel we saw 'resupinates' (pictured): fungi that just lie along the surface of trunks and branches without forming proper brackets.



***Daldinia concentrica* King Alfred's Cakes**

We found several spots for these 'burnt cakes' on sawn ash logs. Unusually we also saw a few on what looked a bit like a cherry tree. By breaking them open we saw the growth rings and the variety of creatures who find a convenient home within. It is said that ancient man used the cakes to carry fire from one place to another.

***Inonotus hispidus* Shaggy Bracket**

This was probably the highlight of the foray, growing higher up on standing ash and looking very fresh with a brown mop-top above a white pore surface. Here and elsewhere we also saw last remains of last year's crop, now black and crumbly.

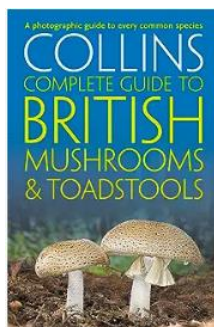


***Russula species* a Brittlegill**

On our way back to the Centre there was one Brittlegill with red and green shades in the cap and beautiful yellow gills.

Summary

<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Map Ref</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Agrocybe species	a Fieldcap	TQ 176 294	In the woodchip in the garden. Hygrophanous cap. Needs keeping an eye on.
Collybia dryophila	Russet Toughshank	TQ 174 292	In a group under hazel on the Denne Hill path. Stipes shreddable, caps changing colour as they dry.
Daldinia concentrica	King Alfred's Cakes	TQ 175 293	Small group on tree which seemed NOT to be ash but then also further on on cut ash logs.
Hypoxylon fuscum	Hazel Woodwart	TQ 175 293	On hazel by the Denne Hill track
Inonotus hispidus	Shaggy Bracket	TQ 175 293	On ash on the Denne Hill track. One fresh bracket with black old ones on the ground below. Old ones seen further on too.
Marasmius rotula	Collared Parachute	TQ 177 294	A small group on leaf litter in hedgerow
Panaeolus foenisecii	Turf Mottlegill	TQ 176 294	A number in the grass outside the Centre. The gills were mottled. Hemi-spherical caps.
Russula species	a Brittlegill	TQ 176 293	Green an red shades on top and dark yellow gills beneath.
Resupinate species	A resupinate	TQ 175 292	On several hazel branches by the Denne Hill track
Scleroderma verrucosum	Scaly Earthball	TQ 176 293	Several by the trackside going to Denne Hill with prominent 'feet'
Stereum hirsutum	Hairy Curtain Crust	TQ 177 294	On fallen wood in a ditch by the track. Thin wavy bracket with smooth underside.
Trametes versicolor	Turkeytail	TQ 176 294	In a rosette on the top of an old log. Pores visible on white undersurface.



If you are interested in learning more about fungi this is a good reference that is reasonably comprehensive but not overwhelming:

[Collins Complete British Mushrooms and Toadstools: The essential photograph guide to Britain's fungi: Amazon.co.uk: Sterry, Paul, Hughes, Barry: 9780007232246: Books](#)

There is of course a huge amount of information available on the internet. Try putting in one of the names of the species we saw into a search engine. Most searches will give a link to www.First-Nature.com, which I always find to be informative and reliable. For instance: [Trametes versicolor, Turkeytail fungus \(first-nature.com\)](http://www.First-Nature.com)

Feel free to mail me about the foray or any other fungi you have seen. jonathanHsimons@outlook.com

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