

The Nuthurst Society's 2011 Fungus Foray

At Pondtail Farm on the Knepp Castle Estate

By kind permission of Charles Burrell, this year the Society was privileged to be able to foray the northern block of the Knepp Castle Estate at West Grinstead. About thirty five men, women and children gathered under the soaring barns at Pondtail Farm kitted out with pots, pails and panniers ready to reap the natural harvest of fungal delights.



Although autumn was proving delightful in many ways it had been very dry. Your leader was pessimistic about the fungal haul and had brought along some he had found earlier, so as not to disappoint.

The adjoining map shows the pattern of woods surrounding the central parkland that we were offered. The heavy line shows Charles Burrell's own suggested route. The dotted line shows the route we eventually took after delaying over a number of noteworthy finds.

We crossed the open land from the farm east to Coates Wood and up to the A24. The ground was very dry but, encouraged by the enthusiasm of the children who refused to be down-cast, the remains of a number of species were revealed. Turkey-tail, Saffron Milkcap and Honey Fungus were the species encountered.

We doubled back to leave the roar of the A24 behind us and came across a fallen beech with Giant Polypore at its base. Nearby, Giant Flame-cap was discovered and we paused to take stock of the species that had actually come to light. One person walking those woods may not have seen anything at all but together we found a fine selection.



rossing the open ground several people noticed the Petticoat Fungus or Fringed Hay-cap. Entering Coates Furzefield the scrubby birch yielded a memorable group of Stinkhorns including a young 'egg'. Was it here that the iconic Fly Agaric appeared? Oyster Mushrooms were found on a branch and the tally rose to make it a foray worth its name.



We entered Horsham Common, clambering down into a bone-dry stream and scrambling up the other side. This is an excellent woodland but the fungal highlights were perhaps behind us. We emerged by Keepers Cottage and headed back to the farm admiring the sloes, hips and haws in the hedgerows along the way.

Back at base we shared our treasure and attempted further identification. The camping stove was produced and soon the Oysters were sizzling in the pan. The Chanterelles and Orange Birch Boletes, gathered the previous day on Ambersham Common, followed and we sampled the delicious taste of autumn.



The Fungi

Here is a list of all the species that were identified.

Doubt remains (?) over many because of the poor quality of the specimens.

Botanical Name	English Name	Notes	Edible
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly Agaric	The iconic red mushroom with white spots, usually under birch	
<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	Honey Fungus	In woodland – cover logs with characteristic black bootlace network	Yes
<i>Clitocybe quercina?</i>	Oak Funnel	Small species with gills running down the stem	
<i>Collybia butyracea</i>	Buttercap	Can be very common in woodland. Hollow fibrous stem and buttery textured light brown cap	
<i>Collybia fusipes</i>	Spindleshank	Grows in groups at the foot of old oaks. Has a tapered stem - spindleshank	
<i>Coprinus atramentarius</i>	Common Inkcap	Grow in groups on open ground. The caps slowly turn black and inky	
<i>Coriolis versicolor</i>	Turkeytail	Growing on wooden stumps	
<i>Daedaleopsis confragosa</i>	Blushing Bracket	Growing on wood, the underside pore surface bruises pink	
<i>Daldinia concentrica</i>	King Alfred's Cakes	Solid bun-sized lumps on ash with brittle concentric rings inside	
<i>Flammulina velutipes</i>	Velvet Shank	Grows on dead elms. Grown commercially in Japan as Enokitake	Yes
<i>Ganoderma applanatum?</i>	Artist's Fungus	Substantial bracket fungus on beech with white pore-bearing surface that can be drawn on with a stick	
<i>Gymnopilus junonius</i>	Giant Flame-cap	Spectacular large orange species growing in small groups on wood	
<i>Heterobasidium annosum?</i>	Root Rot	Attacks the base of conifers	
<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Sulphur-tuft	Sickly green-yellow gills. Common throughout the year in large groups around wood.	
<i>Hypoxylon fragiforme</i>	Beech Woodwart	Small hard black bumps on beech	
<i>Lactarius deliciosus</i>	Saffron Milk-cap	Orange and green when fresh	Yes

Lepiota procera?	Parasol Mushroom	But this one was rather small and might have been a deadly 'dapperling'	Yes
Lycoperdon perlatum?	Common Puffball	Starts off white outside and inside, when it is edible, and then browns off, eventually releasing clouds of brownish spores	Yes
Melanoleuca polioleuca?	Common Cavalier	One species seen in several places seemed to be of this genus – but specimens rather gone over	
Meripilus giganteus	Giant Polypore	Large frond like growth on beech, often leading to felling of tree in parks	
Panaeolus sphinctrinus	Fringed Hay-cap	Grows on dung with a pretty white fringe to the hemispherical cap.	
Phallus impudicus	Stinkhorn	Grows from an 'egg'	
Pleurotus ostreatus	Oyster Mushroom	On old wood - delicious	Yes
Polyporus betulinus	Birch Polypore	aka Razor-Strop Fungus –common on birch	
Polyporus leptcephalus?	Blackfoot Polypore	Grows on wood with a tough drk stem and a pore bearing undersurface	
Rhytisma acerinum	Tar Spot Fungus	The black spots on sycamore leaves are caused by this fungal disease	
Russula nitida?	Purple Swamp Brittle-gill	Yellow gills, white stem under birch	
Scleroderma citrinum	Earthball	Spherical or mis-shapen with a solid black spore mass inside	
Stereum hirsutum?	Hairy Curtain Crust	A bit like Turkeytail but thinner	



