

Trooper's Hill Fungus Foray and Survey: 2013.

Two fungus forays and associated surveys were held in 2013, the first with a group of 18 cyclists from Lifecycle on Friday 25th October and the second with 30 members of the public on the 3rd November. The first foray produced 15 species of mostly macro-fungi, whilst the second foray produced 28 species.

We were rewarded with nice examples of waxcap fungi (*Hygrocybe sp*), including the edible *Hygrocybe pratensis*, lots of *Hygrocybe conica*, and some slimy examples of *Hygrocybe laeta*, an acid soil loving species. Waxcaps are often used as monitors of habitat quality for unimproved grasslands. More than 10 species in a single visit indicates a site of moderate quality in nature conservation terms, while a total of over 18 species for a site overall, indicates an important grassland site for fungi, worthy of SSSI status.

All the waxcap fungi recorded this year are frequent in the UK in suitable habitat.

Woodlands and scrub on the site proved the least rewarding, but individual trees of Silver Birch produced a nice display, as usual, of Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*), Brown Roll Rims (*Paxillus involutus*) and a new Brown Birch Bolete record (*Leccinum cyaneobasileucum*) a species which is often blue-green tinged in the flesh near the stem base.

In nature conservation important grasslands, CHEG fungal values are often used (CHEG = *Clavaria* and allies, *Hygrocybe*, *Entoloma*, *Geoglossum*: fungi that have importance in occurring as species in mostly unimproved, low nutrient grassland habitat; each species found is scored with 1 point, the total score indicating the site value). On the 3rd November, Trooper's Hill produced 6 *Hygrocybe* and 1 *Entoloma* giving a CHEG value of 7, indicating a site of moderate quality. This result is much lower than in previous years, possibly due to the hot, dry summer, something that the more oceanic *Hygrocybes* are not keen on! Included within this suite was *Entoloma clandestinum*, this year's only true local rarity on the site. This species has also been recorded at Trooper's Hill many times before.

Unusually this year, the yellow coral and club fungi didn't appear on the upper slopes and were conspicuous in their absence on other local sites too!

This year, we also had a look at the dead wood communities associated with upright logs installed in a children's play area, which included new records for Trooper's Hill such as *Schizophyllum commune*, *Postia tephroleuca* and *Calocera cornea*.

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, and removal of cuttings, 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: 25th October and 3rd November 2013

* CHEG species

Friday 25th October

Agaricus silvicola
Amanita muscaria
Clitocybe rivulosa
**Entoloma chalybaeum*
**Entoloma clandestinum*
**Entoloma papillatum*
**Hygrocybe conica*
Hypholoma fasciculare
Laccaria laccata
Lycoperdon (Vascellum) pratense
Marasmius oreades
Mycena galopus
Mycena leptocephala
Mycena olivaceomarginata
Paxillus involutus

Sunday 3rd November

Amanita muscaria
Calocera cornea
Crepidotus mollis
**Entoloma clandestinum*
Galerina hypnorum
Galerina vittiformis
**Hygrocybe chlorophana*
**Hygrocybe laeta*
**Hygrocybe pratensis*
**Hygrocybe reidii*
**Hygrocybe virginea*
Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca
Laccaria amethystina
Leccinum cyaneobasileucum
Lycoperdon excipuliformis
Marasmius oreades
Mycena aetites
Mycena leptocephala
Mycena olivaceomarginata

Mycena vulgaris
Paxillus involutus
Postia tephroleuca
Psathyrella spadiceogrisea
Schizophyllum commune
Scleroderma verrucosum
Stereum hirsutum
Trametes versicolor
Xylaria hypoxylon