

# Cotswold Fungus Group

[www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com](http://www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com)

Spring 2009



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## Group News

### Membership numbers maintained

Membership at the end of last year's foraying season stood at 141 fully paid up members (52 singles, 33 couples & 6 families) and 2009 renewals are coming in, with 62 members paid their 2009/2010 subscriptions as of 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Our overall membership numbers seem to have stabilised over the past two years at around 140. Typically we have gained at least as many members as we lose. This appears to be for a variety of reasons, including moving out of the area and sadly, as this year, due to failing health.

Most of our new members join the group via the website, which we are continuing to develop. Thank you for your support and please do let us know if you have any suggestions as to how we can improve the experience of being a member of the group.

### Subscription Reminder

If you haven't already returned your subscription and Membership Form (included with the CFG Spring Foray Program postal mailing), please do so soon. If you can't locate a copy of the form, or aren't able access it on our website [www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com](http://www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com), please send your subscription to Dave Shorten at the address above.

Our subscription rates for 2009 are:

#### Individuals or Couples

£5.00 per single person or £7.00 per couple living at the same address.

#### Family membership

£3.00 per address + £2.00 per head (e.g. 2 adults + 2 children = £11)

Please make cheques payable to Cotswold Fungus Group and don't forget to include your current name and address.

### CFG Accounts 2008/2009

I have just completed CFG's annual accounts for 2008/2009 financial year (April '08 to March '09) and a summary sheet is included in this Newsletter. Full copies of the accounts will be made available on request to those who want them. In summary: Income this year exceeded our outgoings by around £50 taking us to a balance of £516 in the bank. Therefore, as CFG is in a financially healthy position, subscription fees for 2009 have been held at the same level as for the last five years.

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CFG Members at Sherbourne Park including one of our newest recruits!

## Update to Spring Foray Program

Permissions have been received for the vast majority of our forays from the respective owners or managing agents, so we are planning to go ahead with our own forays as published for the moment. Some of the autumn fixtures may yet change, depending on success or not with outstanding foray permissions. If you haven't received a copy of the CFG Spring Foray Program, please get in touch.

## Other non-CFG Forays and Events

Sadly the BMS Fungus Road-show stand at the Three Counties Malvern Spring Show over the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May has been cancelled, and participation at the Malvern Autumn Show (26-27<sup>th</sup> September) is unlikely to go ahead either.

In addition to our own CFG members' forays, skilled fungus identifiers from CFG also run events on behalf of other organisations, something that brings in funding to the group's coffers. Although most of these events are in the popular autumn months, we are running a couple this spring (see page 4 of the Spring Foray Program). If there are any competent identifier-gatherers to help with the foray, roaming ahead of the main party and collecting interesting specimens for me to talk about, please contact me if you are available.

## Obituaries

**Sheila Nicholls** passed away in late September. Sheila was one of the early members of CFG, joining us in spring 1993 through our links with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Sheila was very active in bat conservation and also as a warden of her local reserve at Chosen Hill on the edge of Gloucester.

**Tim Bateman** co-founder and co-organiser of the Worcestershire Fungus Group sadly passed away in December after a prolonged period of illness through the latter part of last autumn. A number of you will remember Tim from our main autumn event at Westonbirt, (see picture right) or perhaps one of our many forays that Tim & Di came along to, or even some of our away-days in Worcestershire spent harvesting their Ceps and Horn of Plenty.



I've written a piece on Tim for both the BMS's Newsletter and the ABFG's magazine, and for those of you who subscribe to neither, it is reproduced here:

### Tim Bateman (15th September 1953 – 9th December 2008)

Tim's first passion was music, but mycology came a close second.

Although we first met up on one of Jack Marriott's forays in the Forest of Dean in the late nineteen eighties, we became closer when Tim and Di set up the Worcestershire Fungus Group in the early nineties. So, I suppose that I've known Tim and Di for about fifteen years and am lucky that I can count them as true friends.

It's difficult to talk about Tim without mentioning Di in the same breath, as they were virtually inseparable, sharing mutual passions for the outdoors, gardening, mycology, cooking, music, theatre and the cinema. I suppose the only time I've been with Tim and not Di was to a cricket match at Lords: a one-day cup final between my Gloucestershire and his Worcestershire.

Tim was fascinated by the art and craft of foraying, where to look and why this particular patch should be so much more



Tim Bateman and 'friend'  
(Cauliflower fungus)

fruitful than a similar scrubby bit of woodland a few yards further back. His inquisitive mind and interrogative temperament made him eager to learn more, especially about the practical skills of identifying, constantly probing for the small details about the fungi we found, which he later put to use in leading walks or just out for a stroll with Di.

Although Tim had been ill for some time, he never made a fuss over it and wouldn't let it slow him down in his enthusiasm to be out there and doing it. Many's the time we've both stopped at the top of an incline to catch our breath, only for Tim to start quizzing me about a particular specimen or habitat, then go back downhill and look at the site again.

Tim was in his element when talking to the general public, whether on his own turf in Worcestershire doing walks for the Wildlife Trust or at large public events, manning the British Mycological Society's road-show stand at Chelsea Flower Show, BBC Gardeners World show at the NEC, or the Three Counties show at Malvern.

But it wasn't just about the public performance for Tim. He could also be found working tirelessly in the background, encouraging and supporting Di when the exhibition stand was being built up or helping me setting out and labelling up the annual fungus display at Westonbirt Arboretum.

He was also passionate about supporting other local groups, encouraging others to come along to far-flung forays in neighbouring Shropshire, Herefordshire or Gloucestershire. The few photos I have of Tim were all taken on day-forays outside of his own Worcestershire.

For these things, he'll be sorely missed at future events, both in Worcestershire and around the west-country by a large number of fellow enthusiasts and friends.



A rare 'off duty' moment at Tim & Di's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2007

## France 2009

This year's trip to France will be our eighteenth consecutive mycological autumn visit to Normandy. We are looking at a schedule including forays in a new area of the Normandy region and being there during the French national fungus foraying weekend. The dates are going to be Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October.

Plans are still being made and final details of the trip will be available soon. Details will be sent to all current members, but please contact Dave or Jenny Shorten if you wish to register an initial interest in coming in 2009.

## Advance Autumn Diary

### Dean Heritage Museum: Sat/Sun 25th - 26th September

The Dean Fungus Group is running their popular Fungus Weekend event at the Dean Heritage Centre over Saturday and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September. There will be an exhibition of fungi on display in the museum over both days (open from 11am to 4pm) and a fungus foray on each of the two days (set off 2pm). If you want to attend the foray, please purchase tickets from Reception at the Museum (01594 822170) – see more details of the museum on their website at:

<http://www.deanheritagemuseum.com>.

Key CFG members will be helping with this event on the Saturday, so the CFG foray will be on the Sunday that weekend.

### BMS national foray week, Forest of Dean: Sun 20th - Fri 25th September

This is one of the four national forays organised each year by the British Mycological Society. By tradition, there is an Upland foray each year, usually in Scotland. Now that most high sites have

been comprehensively covered, the definition of upland has been 'stretched' to cover lowland areas of the UK, and this year the Forest of Dean. Forays are being run from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September and I will be at most of them. Further details on the Meetings and Forays page of the BMS website, at: <http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/events/showevent.asp?EventID=120>

### Joint Regional Foray at Westonbirt Arboretum: Sun 18th October

The date earmarked for our main autumn event is Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October, but as yet we haven't heard back from Forest Enterprise at Westonbirt if this is OK or not. Assuming it is, this will be the thirty-fifth annual all-day open foray and exhibition run in conjunction with local fungus groups in the region from Bristol & North Somerset, Swansea, Gwent, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Thames Valley and Hampshire.

### Joint CFG – NS&BFG Foray: Sat 21st November

Again we are joining up with the North Somerset & Bristol Fungus group at their flagship site, the National Trust property at Tyntesfield just outside Bristol for an all-day foray on 21<sup>st</sup> November. Pub lunch off-site will be organized in a local pub-restaurant with foraying into mixed woodland, parkland and Hygrocybe-rich grassland.

### Foray and Xmas lunch with WFG: Sun 13th December

The traditional trip up to join in on the Worcestershire Fungus Group's last foray of the year and Xmas Lunch Chinese Buffet style is on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Nearer the time, let me know if you are coming and we'll arrange to reserve enough tables.

## Fungi in the News

There were two serious cases of fungal poisoning reported widely in the press last autumn, one on the Isle of Wight, which resulted in one fatality. The second was in Scotland involving four people, all of whom survived their encounter with the Fleecy Webcap *Cortinarius speciosissimus*.



Fleecy Webcap  
*Cortinarius speciosissimus*

The Scottish incident was much more widely publicised because one of those poisoned was novelist Nicholas Evans, author of the Horse Whisperer (sold more than 15m copies worldwide and made into a movie directed by and starring Robert Redford in 1998). Mr. Evans and his wife were on holiday with family in Moray when the party cooked and ate freshly picked wild mushrooms, believing they were Chanterelles. The four were initially admitted to hospital in Elgin and then transferred to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary for kidney dialysis and treatment to recover their kidney function.



DeathCap  
*Amanita phalloides*

## Fungi & Health Scares

There was a series of EU-wide market recalls last September/October related to wild-picked fungi from Bulgaria, some packed in Holland, others on sale in France with high levels of radioactivity (Caesium 137, so perhaps originating from the Chernobyl fallout?). One incident involved fresh Hedgehog mushrooms (*Hydnum repandum*).

Then in December there was an alert in Italy over dried Ceps (*Boletus edulis*) with high levels of the potentially toxic heavy metal Cadmium.

### Book for sale:

Brand new, unopened (still in its shrink-wrap) copy of volume no.4 in the series The Fungi of Switzerland by Breitenbach & Kranzlin (Agarics part 2: Entoloma, Pluteus, Amanita, Agaricus, Coprinus, Bolbitius, Stropharia). Amazon listed at £85. Lady in Oxford Fungus Survey Group wants £60. Please contact Alan Hills in the first instance at [ahillsmegera@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ahillsmegera@tiscali.co.uk).

## Research Notes

### Velvet-shank extract as a preservative



Researchers in Tokyo has discovered that an extract from the common edible Velvet Shank (*Flammulina velutipes*) may stabilise the natural colour of beef and prolong the shelf-life of fresh tuna. The natural antioxidant molecule ergothioneine controlled the oxidation of lipids (fats) and thus the development of rancidity in both frozen beef and tuna meats. The natural colours of the meat were also maintained for a longer period, suggesting that this mushroom-extract could have a potential as a food preservative.

Although preliminary research has shown that extract from 0.5 kilos of mushroom would be required to preserve 1 kilo of meat, they have now found the same molecule in spent mushroom culture media normally sold on as waste to the fertiliser industry.

## Foray Records Data

As usual, the winter months have been spent compiling and correcting the data from our various forays throughout the last year, totalling up to almost 5,500 records. These have been sent off to the British Mycological Society's national database of fungus finds (FRDBI) and the Association of British Fungus Groups parallel dataset (CATE), for inclusion into the next update onto the NBN gateway for full public access. For more information about these databases – see article overleaf **Fungus Data on the Web**.

The data has then been split down to the various counties that we have forayed and also copied to the local biological records centre in Gloucestershire (3,438 records to GEDU in Stroud) and Wiltshire (1,959 records to W&SBRC at Devizes). A few other records have gone elsewhere, mainly Oxfordshire via OFSG, the local county-based fungus group there.

In addition, I've been updating the Fungus Species Lists for each of our two main counties: Wiltshire and Gloucestershire using the cleaned up species lists provided by the ABFG's database. This has significantly reduced the overall county species lists by removing a number of old and invalid names.

### Wiltshire data

According to our records, Wiltshire now holds 2,679 separate species of fungi recorded across both North Wiltshire (Watsonian Vice County no. 07) and South Wiltshire (VC.08). This is from both our foray data and from others in North Wiltshire (totalling some 35,400 records) as well as Ted Gange's accumulation of data from a lifetime's foraying in South Wiltshire. I spent some time in January going through all of this data and ensuring that the copy presented to the county biological records centre in Devizes was as up-to-date as possible with both current Latin-name nomenclature and common English names.

### Gloucestershire data

In Gloucestershire the equivalent tally is 1,671 separate species of fungi from just over 42,050 CFG foray records over the period 1992 – 2008. This is less than we have for Wiltshire, but is missing input from the other side of the county – the Forest of Dean.

My current project is the cleaning up the archival Forest of Dean records running from 1984 – 2004, alongside current data from the Dean Fungus Group from 2005 – 2008 and older archival BMS data from 1951-2000. This totals something in the region of 47,500 records and should be ready by mid-summer, in preparation for the BMS's national foray in the Forest of Dean in September.

### **CFG Wilts/Glos Checklist**

The combined list of 2,977 species of fungi recorded (predominantly by CFG forays) in the two counties is available as a checklist for anyone recording their own foray finds – contact me if you want a hard copy or electronic Excel spreadsheet.

Incidentally, at Christmas I handed over CFG's French foray data for inclusion into their national dataset. Our 2008 visit added a further 1600 records bringing us to a total of 18,287 records submitted to date.

## **Fungus Data on the Web**

### **National Biodiversity Network Gateway**

[www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk)

This online database contains records for anything 'biological' that has been recorded across the UK and access is free to anyone. The vast majority of the group's foray data has been uploaded into it, so you can search for your favourite fungus although the data presented is limited to the nearest 10Km square to discourage unscrupulous hunter-gathers finding all the good spots.

Once onto the NBN website, click on the 'NBN Gateway' tab, scroll down the page and select the large area of the map that interests you (for the CFG area, try ST). On the larger-detail map, select a 10-Km square (e.g. ST88). The new page displays the OS map for this square (ST88 should contain Westonbirt and any other woodland site in green, as on the OS map). In the central panel on this page, select 'fungus' and the next page will display the species list of the 10Km square.

### **BMS - Foray Records Database of Britain & Ireland**

<http://www.fieldmycology.net/FRDBI/FRDBI.asp>.

This is a fungus only database, hosted by the British Mycological Society and stored as county-based species lists. Here you will also find the group's records, along with thousands of others.

To view the information, first click on the option 'vice-county' and select your area from the drop-down box. Don't forget that Gloucestershire is split in two as 'Gloucester East' and 'Gloucester West' and Wiltshire as 'Wilts, North' and 'Wilts, South'.

Confirm your selection with 'Search' and the database should bring up the species list for the area or Vice County.

You'll see that the fungus species list for 'Gloucester West' contains 2654 species recorded, click on any one (e.g. *Agaricus augustus*) and this should bring up the full foray records for each of the 40 finds for this species in VC=34 West Gloucestershire.



Group Leader Dave Shorten with CFG members contributing to the records.

If part of the data is highlighted in blue (e.g. OS Grid Ref), click on it and the software should bring up a Streetmap map of the 1km square where the fungus has been recorded. This is a more detailed alternative to the 'nearest 10Km square' security feature used in the NBN database.

Records are being uploaded all the time, and I am currently helping to 'clean' the Forest of Dean foray records for submission. If you'd like to see what's currently there, alongside the CFG records, search under VC=34 for West Gloucestershire.

## Site Species Lists – want to know more?

As you know, we produce our fungus species list for each of the sites we foray regularly. The lists for 2008 have been sent to the site owner / managing agency as a catalogue of the site fungal biodiversity. For any member who is interested in making an individual visit to one of the public access sites we foray (possibly add to our records in the process!), I can produce a copy of the existing checklist of species for your to use. Here are the sites for which lists are available:

**Gloucestershire:** Batsford Arboretum, Buckholt Wood, Coopers Hill, Crickley Hill Country Park, Frith Wood, Lineover Wood, Lower Woods & Lower Wetmoor Reserve, Midger Wood, Minchinhampton Common, Sherborne NT Estate, Siccaridge Wood, Snows Farm, Westonbirt Arboretum & Silkwood, Woodchester Park.

**N. Wiltshire:** Clouts Wood, Coate Water Park, Great Wood Stanton Fitzwarren, Ravensroost Wood, Savernake Forest, Somerford Common, Spye Park, Stanton Park, Vincients Wood, Webbs Wood.

**S. Wiltshire:** Clanger Wood, Green Lane Wood.

Please contact me if you want the list for any specific site. Lists for other sites in private ownership will be made available if the site owner / managing agent agrees to the request.

## Unusual records

### ***Octospora musci-muralis*** (right)

Rita Holme's winter 2007 find of this small cup fungus (reported in last spring's CFG Newsletter) was repeated in late December 2008. This confirms its continuing presence as a fungus associated with moss on the northern edge of Gloucestershire.



***Puccinia adoxae*** (left) a chocolate-brown rust fungus specific to the plant *Adoxa* (Townhall clock) seen in late March by Paul Darby.

This is a new record for CFG, found at the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust site at Jones Mill Reserve on the edge of Pewsey.  
Photo © Paul Darby

***Sarcosphaera coronaria*** (or ***Sarcosphaera crassa*** in some older textbooks) the Violet CrownCup is one of the Red Data listed spring fungi that we have in the region. It prefers the basic / calcareous soils of Beech woodland on the Cotswold scarp. We have records of it from three sites: Buckholt Wood (1994, 2003, 2004, & 2006); Popes Wood (1994) and Coopers Hill (1998, 1999 & 2006). Keep an eye open for it this year, not just at the known sites but other Gloucestershire Beech woodlands.



## Beware of the blob...

No it's not an alien, but it is a slime mould: *Enteridium lycoperdon* (also known as *Reticularia lycoperdon* - sadly no common English name). This starts off as a soft wet slimy spongy mass, often a couple of inches (5cm) across on the trunk of an old tree, often on stream-side dead trunks, more often broadleaf trees, occasionally conifers. Slowly the outer layers dry out and become a silvery paper-thin but hard and leathery coat enclosing the fungal tissue inside. This tissue then matures to become a cocoa-powder brown dry mass of spores, and once the silvery skin is sloughed off the spores are exposed and blow away in air currents.



## Join the CFG Facebook Group

If you are a Facebook user, please do join our group. If you search under Cotswold Fungus Group, you should find us – we appear to be unique!

If you would like to be sent an invitation, (whether you are a Facebook user or not) please contact [jenny@jennyshorten.com](mailto:jenny@jennyshorten.com) and she will forward one to you.

# COTSWOLD FUNGUS GROUP

Chairman and Foray Leader: David Shorten, 45 Sevenfields, Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 7NF. 01793 764649.

## ACCOUNTS 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009

Item:	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE
<b>1. MEMBERSHIP 2008/2009</b> 52 singles & 33 couples & 6 families (= 141)	<b>£ 451.00</b>		<b>+ £451.00</b>
<b>3. Sale of BMS Booklets / Guides</b> *1	<b>£ 70.50</b>	<b>- £ 20.40</b>	<b>+ £ 50.10</b>
<b>4. Other Income &amp; 5. Expenditure</b>			
ABFG Membership *2		<b>- £ 32.00</b>	<b>- £ 32.00</b>
ABFG PLI-supplement (2008/9) *3		<b>- £ 30.00</b>	<b>- £ 30.00</b>
Slide-shows & Talks & Led forays *4	<b>£630.00</b>	<b>- £433.18</b>	<b>+ £196.82</b>
Petrol & Accom at B.M.S meeting *5			<b>£ 0.00</b>
Mileage: W&SBRC Meeting at Devizes *6			<b>£ 0.00</b>
Mileage: ABFG Annual General Meeting *7		<b>- £ 67.20</b>	<b>- £ 67.20</b>
Mileage: W&SBRC Meeting at Calne *8		<b>- £ 20.40</b>	<b>- £ 20.40</b>
Mileage: W&SBRC Meeting at Devizes *9		<b>- £ 19.10</b>	<b>- £ 19.10</b>
CFG website domain hosting & name renewal		<b>- £ 84.01</b>	<b>- £ 84.01</b>
<b>6. POSTAGE</b>		<b>- £137.55</b>	<b>- £137.55</b>
<b>7. STATIONERY</b>		<b>- £254.11</b>	<b>- £254.11</b>
<b>SUB TOTALS</b>	<b><u>+ £1,151.50</u></b>	<b><u>- £1,097.95</u></b>	<b><u>+ £ 53.55</u></b>
<b>OPENING BALANCE 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008</b>			<b>+ £462.41</b>
<b>CLOSING BALANCE 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009</b>			<b><u>+ £515.96</u></b>
<b>2. Subscriptions received in advance for 2009/10 (18 singles &amp; 15 couples &amp; 4 family):</b>			<b>+ £235.00</b>
<b>8. Income planned 2009/20010 (Slideshows &amp; Forays already booked)</b>			<b>+ £735</b>

### Notes:

\*1 : BMS recommended price for Pocket Guide is £1.50 with 20% donation to authors (30p each sale / give-away).

A large stock was obtained from the BMS in 2007 and are being given away at events to generate interest, especially children and is to be offset against income from other materials received free of charge from the BMS.

\*2 : ABFG Membership's accounting year changed from Jan to Sept & payment is for 1.5 years. Renewal due September 2010.

\*3 : ABFG Public Liability supplement of £30.00 to cover insurance for outstanding memberships of CFG at end of Aug 2008 and cover new CFG-members and occasional attendees during autumn foray season.

\*4 : Income & expenditure from a number of organisations for slideshow illustrated talks or fungus forays: Bath Naturalists, Purton & District Gardening Club, GWT Snows Farm Volunteers, Forest Enterprise Westonbirt, GWT at Midger Wood, White Horse Gardening Club, Swindon Rangers Service, Forest Enterprise Westonbirt, Dean Fungus Group, WWT Swindon Group, Swindon Rangers Service, Batsford Arboretum, Cotswold Wardens-Avon branch (Bath), GWT at Siccaridge Wood, Cheltenham Bird Club. Mileage reimbursed to DS at 30p/mile to each slideshow venue & lunches paid for DS & helpers at organised foray walks.

\*5 : Meeting held every 2 years and partly subsidised by BMS. DS not able to attend meeting in July 2008 at Preston-Lancs.

\*6 : Annual meeting for W&SBRC Biological Recorders at Devizes WWT centre (March 2009) – DS unable to attend.

\*7 : AGM of Association of British Fungus Groups in Chard, Somerset (22-03-2009). DS mileage reimbursed @30p/mile.

\*8 : W&SBRC Recorders summer meeting at Spye Park, Calne in July 2008: DS mileage reimbursed @ 30p/mile.

\*9 : Meeting with W&SBRC Database coordinator Jan 2009 to hand over CFG foray data for Wiltshire: DS mileage @ 30p/mile

**David Shorten.**