

# COTSWOLD FUNGUS GROUP

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Dear Member,

Continuing the series of occasional CFG Newsletters, here is a round up of news of mycological events for our local region and around the country:

## Hot News:

First sighting of Morels (*Morchella esculenta*) in Bristol on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March and in a well renowned fruitful location in the Stroud Valley area of South Gloucestershire on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March. So, get out there and start looking.

## CFG Website:

Over the winter months CFG has bought its domain name and has just launched its website – have a look at: [www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com](http://www.cotswoldfungusgroup.com). In addition, I have changed email address ([daveshorten@cotswoldfungusgroup.com](mailto:daveshorten@cotswoldfungusgroup.com)) as the old Freeserve address was spammed to death.

The website will initially hold all the background data on CFG, the foray dates (but not locations), membership details and joining instructions. The next phase will be to set up a picture gallery to host photographs of unusual local fungi and members of the group - you may already notice we've dotted the main website with photographs of foray activities already.

Apologies to those who appear in the earlier photos from my collection, but I am currently going through it and digitising something in the region of three thousand slides, beginning in the early 1990's. When I get into the current century, we'll replace the older photos with current forayers and more recent pictures of old forayers. However, we do hope to have a separate picture gallery of our exploits in France and my photos certainly go back to the Belleme festival 1994.

We may also publish recipes for edible fungi at a later stage, if you have any we'd be glad to accept them for the website, especially if they are accompanied by a good photograph of the prepared dish and/or fungus ingredient.

When this Newsletter is uploaded onto the website, I'll try to include photographs of the relevant fungi to illustrate the comments made about them.

## Good Home Wanted for Field Mycology magazines:

Incomplete set from October 2000 (vol.1/4) to October 2005 (vol.6/4). This is the magazine subscription purchased by CFG to support the magazine in the set-up years to ensure that it made it through its trials phase with the BMS. So these back issues are free to any paid up member of CFG, first one to contact me gets them – Tel: 01793 764649 or email to [daveshorten@cotswoldfungusgroup.com](mailto:daveshorten@cotswoldfungusgroup.com) and make arrangements to collect at a foray event.

## Missing:

I'm assuming that the recipient(s) of these loan items still have them and are lying forgotten on a bookshelf somewhere – please check if you think you might have them:

- (i) **The Forayer** (Journal of the ACFG) Volume no.1, Issue no.3 for Autumn 2005.
- (ii) **Special Champignons** magazine No.48 August-September 2005.

### **CFG Accounts 2006/2007:**

I will shortly be compiling CFG's annual accounts for 2006/2007 financial year (April-March) and full copies of the accounts can be made available on request to those who want them, otherwise summary accounts will be sent out with the autumn program mailing list. At the moment there is no plan to call an AGM. Whilst outgoings this year slightly exceeded our income, CFG is in a financially healthy position and subscription fees for 2007 will remain the same as for the last couple of years. **Subscription fees for 2007 are now due** and a subscription reminder is included with this mailing.

### **Conservation & National Red Data List of Fungi:**

A revised list of species has been submitted by the expert mycological working party to JNCC (the Joint Nature Conservancy Council) and is under consideration. This is a 2006 update to the original 1992 list of rare, endangered or threatened fungi which forms the backbone of conservation concerns across the country.

The original 1992 list was used by all local authorities to base their conservation priorities upon and formulate their BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) when it came to assessing priorities for fungi. In our region there were only two key Red Data List fungi present in Gloucestershire or Wiltshire on the original list (*Boletus satanas* and *Hygrocybe calyptyraeformis*) with a handful of other species in the lesser listed categories.

The new list is still not agreed, even after more than two years of preparation, but at least it has been drawn from more up-to-date records in the national database of fungus foray data, which includes a large volume of data recorded in the 1990s by the spread of local fungus groups.

One of the casualties of the revised list is that both *Boletus satanas* and *Hygrocybe calyptyraeformis* fall off the main list, but are replaced by other more representative and truly rare and endangered species. I suppose it was inevitable that this would happen: nominate something as rare on limited data and people will go out looking for it, creating more data, which will include the occasional find for it, thus proving it is not rare after all, just under-recorded.

The revised list (currently a 'Preliminary Assessment') is available from the British Mycological Society's website at: <http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/news/shownews.asp?NewsID=101> and can be downloaded as a PDF format document for printing (13 pages). I can make hard copies of the document available to members of CFG who do not have access to the web.

Also an extract of the list appears on the Association of British Fungus Groups website at: <http://www.abfg.org/BAP1.htm>. The latter is particularly useful as it also contains pictures of each of the key 67 species being considered for drawing up revisions of current BAP fungi lists.

It is this list of species that will be used by CFG in assessing the status of our regular foray sites. As I write this, I'm currently looking at the list for submission to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's revised Biodiversity Action Plan and we have 15 of these 67 species of endangered fungi recorded in the county of Wiltshire, nine of them in our 'Cotswolds' area of North Wiltshire.

### **2005 Drugs Act:**

The position of the police and criminal system has not changed on the issue of some fungi being listed as Class A substances under the 2005 act – the note that was sent out to members last year is therefore still current, as is the list of fungi considered as hallucinogens and thus illegal to possess them. A link to the original advice and interpretation of the 2005 Drugs Act is available on the website.

### **Recommended English Names for Fungi:**

The current document published a couple of years ago by the British Mycological Society (available at: [http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/files/ENGLISH\\_NAMES.pdf](http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/files/ENGLISH_NAMES.pdf)) is being revised to include Latin name nomenclature changes brought about by the publication of the 2005 Basidiomycete Checklist (for cap-and-stem toadstools, brackets, boletes, jelly fungi, puffballs, earthstars, rust and smut fungi, etc). It will also include new English names constructed for the species in the Red Data List when this is finalised, but as this is still a working document – the re-issue of the English Names document could be some time away.

### **Food Standards Agency and retail fungi:**

The national authority on food safety for the UK, the FSA, regularly analyses foodstuffs available in the marketplace for the presence of toxic chemicals, heavy metals, food-poisoning bacteria and other contaminants.

A recent survey published in January 2007 as Food Survey Information Sheet #01/07 was on the subject of Metals in Food. The items in the 310 survey purchases from across the UK for analysis included 50 of mushrooms. Results were generally below acceptable limits for safety, but for the fungi - four samples of cultivated mushrooms showed levels of Cadmium above the permitted limits. Overall the conclusion was that “the estimated dietary exposure to metals and other elements ...does not pose a significant risk to consumer safety .....”

Action is being taken where any result was outside of the permitted levels and discussions are underway between FSA and the British Retail Consortium and the Brand Owners and/or importers. The full document (some 51 pages) is available from the FSA website at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveillance/fsisbranch2007/fsis0107>

### **Public Liability Insurance:**

One of the conditions of the Public Liability Insurance scheme is that our forays have to be led by a paid-up member of ABFG and thus personally covered by its PLI scheme. Currently this is usually OK as long as I am present at forays to lead them, but under exceptional circumstances where I'm not available, forays can go ahead if led by any one of the other fifteen paid-up ABFG members within CFG.

### **Site Species Lists:**

Over the winter months I have been compiling Fungus Species Lists for individual foray sites that we visit on a regular basis. This is to inform the owner of what species are present and begin the assessment process of what need to be done to preserve the habitat and survival of any potentially threatened Red Data species.

If anyone wants a copy of the list for a specific woodland – let me know, and I can email an electronic copy of the document, or post on a hard copy. These may be useful if you are routinely walking any one of these sites and want to contribute to the knowledge of the fungus flora of the site. Lists are available for the following open public access sites:

Batsford Arboretum, Buckholt Wood, Clanger Wood, Clouts Wood, Coopers Hill, Crickley Hill Country Park, Frith Wood, Great Wood Stanton Fitzwarren, Green Lane Wood, Lower Woods & Lower Wetmoor Reserve, Midger Wood, Siccaridge Wood, Snows Farm, Webbs Wood, Westonbirt Arboretum and Woodchester Park.

**Westonbirt Arboretum:** A nationally rare, endangered and (old 1992) Red Data Listed species of fungi was recorded at a second location in the Old Arboretum in 2006. The unusual bolete *Pulveroboletus lignicola* grows in association with the mycelial strands of the bracket fungus *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, itself feeding off the roots and trunk base of conifer trees.

The *Phaeolus* bracket is relatively un-common in our area – we have 60 records for it in Gloucestershire over 15 years of CFG's foraging activities, all but five of these are at Westonbirt itself. We have recorded the parasitic bolete *Pulveroboletus lignicola* only on three occasions, twice at Westonbirt: in the 'log-pile' area in 2001 and in the Arboretum in 2006; and on our 1995 overseas foray in Normandy. It has so far eluded us in Wiltshire.

Our foraging activities at Westonbirt last year took the tally to a grand total of 1,077 species of fungi recorded there since the first BMS Day Forays were instigated in 1974. Incidentally our January picnic and foray day there in early January netted another two new records, including *Hypoxylon howieanum* a close relative of the other black warty blobs we find on broadleaf branch debris (*Hypoxylon fuscum* on Hazel, *Hypoxylon fragiforme* on Beech, *Hypoxylon multiforme* on Birch). This however has an unusual growth habit, normally just a reddish-brown warty blob but in the winter months it spreads out with spidery tendrils of a mid-tan-brown fine powdery network of filaments.

I suppose the oddest find at Westonbirt in January was the autumnal grassland species *Calocybe carnea* in a grassy glade in Silkwood. Although we occasionally see it fruiting early in the summer months, never this late in the winter before – is this more evidence of autumnal species hanging-on through the winter because of global warming?

**Great Wood (Stanton Fitzwarren):**

Our forays at Great Wood added a further 54 new species records to the already large list for the site, taking it up to 765 separate species of fungi recorded there, and making it our second-highest recorded Wiltshire site. In fact, just over 7,100 of our 31,000 data records for the county of Wiltshire (almost 23%) come from Great Wood, largely because it is my local woodland but also because it is so well managed for fungi.

Great Wood had four species under the old (1992) Red Data list (*Amanita echinocephala*, *Melanoleuca subpulverulenta*, *Pseudocraterellus sinuosus* and *Craterium aureonucleatum*) and two of the key 67 conservation species under the proposed 2006 RDL-BAP submission. One of these was recorded for the first time in 2006 and was a particularly unspectacular find - Tim handed me an orange soft but firm stone-like object about the size of a pea. It turned out to be one of the rare truffle fungi: *Stephanospora caroticolor*, so named for its characteristic colour.

Great Wood remains one of our key habitats for the Wrinkled Peach *Rhodotus palmatus* in North Wiltshire. There are only 32 records for it over the period 1986 – 2006, covering eleven sites in all and 12 of these records are here at Great Wood. This gilled fungus is species-specific to Elm (*Ulmus*) only, usually on felled or recently deceased trees, which are hanging on at this site and a few other reserves in Wiltshire.

**Lower Woods & Lower Wetmoor NNR:**

Our foray visits to Lower Woods in 2006 saw us reaching the goal of 500 species of fungi recorded and then extending it to 536 by the end of the year. A list of 500+ species is an achievement, both for a woodland and any recording group and qualifies the site under the BMS's listing as an IFA (Important Fungus Area) and thus worth conservation for its wealth and diversity of fungi, whether it has any red-data species present or not.

For those of you who are members of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, there is a write up on our achievements at the site in GWT's Wildlife News magazine on page 6 of the February 2007 edition.

### **Buckholt Wood NNR:**

Similar multiple ad-hoc visits to Buckholt and Cranham Woods National Nature Reserve by members of the group throughout the year pushed the count for this site from 463 to 556 separate species of fungi recorded and thus qualified it also as an IFA.

Amongst the 'new' records for the site were the (old 1992) Red Data Listed Devil's Bolete *Boletus satanas* seen for the first time at the Cranham end of the woodland reserve as well as the scurfy-capped bolete *Strobilomyces floccipes* 'The Old Man of the Woods'. See the images printed in October 2006 (vol.7/4) edition of Field Mycology on page 131.

Although 2006 was overall a good year for the fruiting of fungi in general, it brought out significant numbers of new records for some specific families of fungi – Cortinarius being a good example, with seven new species of Cortinarius added to the ten on the existing list for Buckholt, including two of the red Corts: *Cortinarius cinnabarinus* and *Cortinarius sanguineus*.

One of the most spectacular sights was a swathe of the Giant Club *Clavariadelphus pistillaris* running along a mossy bank, petering out into a colony of the green Earth-tongue *Microglossum viride*.

Buckholt Wood remains as our county stronghold for the 1992 RDL and 2006 Red Data Listed fungus the Violet Crowncup: *Sarcosphaera coronaria*. Look out for it on our late spring visit there on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Tyntesfield Estate NT:**

In February 2007 a number of us were invited to a North Somerset and Bristol Fungus Group foray at the National Trust Tyntesfield estate just to the south-west of Bristol. The local group have been foraying there for only a short period of time and have already amassed a healthy list of fungi for the site, but have so far concentrated on the grassland and park-woodland sectors of the estate.

The efforts of a dozen or so CFG members on a cold but fine February day added a significant number of 'new' finds to the overall list for the site, mainly from the neglected woodland on the upper slopes of the estate. Final numbers have yet to be confirmed but we believe that we added over a hundred species to the list on that one day. Again our thanks to both the local fungus group and the NT warden for their hospitality.

Two on the first few fungi we saw as we set off on the morning walk at the corner of the drive were of the black pustular encrusting fungi: *Eutypa spinosa* the ugly black stain running at an angle down the trunk of a big Beech, and *Hypoxylon cohaerens* (a little like *Hypoxylon fuscum* the Hazel Woodward) on a fallen Beech branch. Both are listed in the recent English Nature report #597: "Developing tools for assessing fungal interest in habitats. 1: Beech woodlands" by Martin Ainsworth as characteristic of Beech woodland habitats but often overlooked.

We will be visiting the site in the autumn and have a joint foray with NS&BFG planned in the calendar for Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November.

### **BMS Membership & Journal queries:**

The BMS has appointed a new administrator at its new office in Manchester. Please contact Laura Crossley at: [laura@britmycolsoc.info](mailto:laura@britmycolsoc.info) with any membership queries. She may also be able to help with teething problems related to Field Mycology and Mycologist magazine subscriptions, although these should be resolved initially with [nlinfo-f@elsevier.com](mailto:nlinfo-f@elsevier.com) at Elsevier, the publishers. The BMS is about to cease publication of The Mycologist magazine and switch members subscription to a free issue of either Fungal Biology Reviews or Field Mycology. Having said that, my last quarterly copy of Field Mycology was the October 2006 issue with nothing since and the November-2006 Mycologist only arrived this month.

### **ABFG membership**

Membership of the Association of British Fungus Groups entitles individuals to full public liability insurance cover when foraging anywhere in the UK and Europe as well as the informative and lively The Forager magazine written by ABFG Chairman Michael Jordan. Membership of ABFG is currently only £17.50 – see: [www.abfg.org](http://www.abfg.org)

### **Diary Dates:**

A few other things are happening in the region that may interest you:

Malvern Spring Garden Show 10 - 13<sup>th</sup> May: come and visit the BMS Roadshow fungus display.

Chelsea Flower Show 22 – 26<sup>th</sup> May – visit the ABFG stand (no.20) in the Grand Pavillion.

Monmouth Show 30<sup>th</sup> August – Gwent Fungus Group stand and display.

Malvern Three Counties Autumn Show 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> September – BMS Roadshow fungus display.

Dean Heritage Museum 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> October – Fungus weekend, display and forays.

Fungus forays are being run throughout the autumn months for various local organisations (Westonbirt Arboretum, Batsford Arboretum, Glos Wildlife Trust, Wilts Wildlife Trust, Swindon Rangers Service). Please book for these events with the relevant organisation.

### **CFG Autumn Events:**

The main autumn event for CFG is the annual open foray at Westonbirt Arboretum on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October (please note that it is much later in the autumn calendar than usual), to which all local fungus groups in the region are invited. The format will be largely the same as in previous years – a morning foray around the Old Arboretum (no dogs allowed), pic-nic or restaurant lunch, afternoon foray into Silkwood followed by an open exhibition of the day's finds by the Education Centre on the edge of the arboretum.

This year's trip to France will be our fifteenth consecutive mycological autumn holiday in Normandy and the fourteenth to the international festival of fungi at Belleme. The planned dates are outbound Wednesday overnight ferry sailing Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October and return overnight Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October to arrive back early morning Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>. This year there will be a one-day visit to Les Mycologiades on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>. Let me know if you are interested in coming and I will include you in the information mailings during the summer months.