



Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group

News Sheet N° 42: 2024



Parasola kuehneri, ex Orleton, 14.08.2024. Photo: Mike Stroud.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

A warm welcome to issue no. 42 of our News Sheet.

Firstly, as you probably know, several years ago Graham Park very kindly volunteered to edit the HFSG News Sheet, when I was struggling to be both Group Secretary and also to produce timely issues of the publication. I cannot say how indebted I am to him for doing this over the last 9 issues thank you so much, Graham!

You are probably also aware that our recent AGM heralded the start of a totally new Committee. The Group is very fortunate in that there is enthusiastic 'new blood' prepared to carry on the day-to-day running of HFSG and we all wish them the best for the future.

The core of our News Sheets has always been the Recorder's Report, so professionally and interestingly written by Jo Weightman. This one is no exception and I should like to thank her for the amazingly high quality of this and the previous 25 Recorder's Reports that she has written for our News Sheets.

Debbie Evans has written a personal tribute to the well-known mycologist, Nigel Stringer who, although he lived in west Wales, was a member also of HFSG for many years. He is a great loss to Mycology and we send our

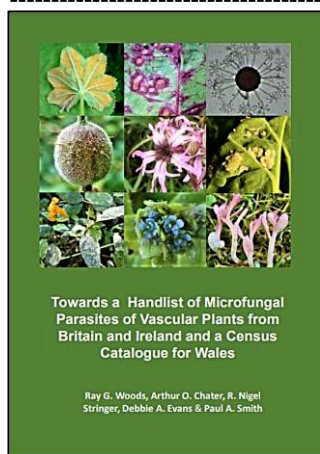
heartfelt condolences to his wife and all those who knew him well.

In this issue Peter Roberts and Shelley Evans give a 'heads up' on five cup fungi that we should be looking out for in the Spring. It should be a bit of a nudge to us all that we should be more observant when we are out walking near to our homes!

Jon Dunkelman and Les Hughes have each written about (a different) unusual find that has been made in our neighbouring counties: Jon's in Monmouthshire & Les' in Shropshire. These species are both very seldom recorded - as usual, whether this is because they are genuinely rare, mis-recorded, or just unobserved is anyone's guess!

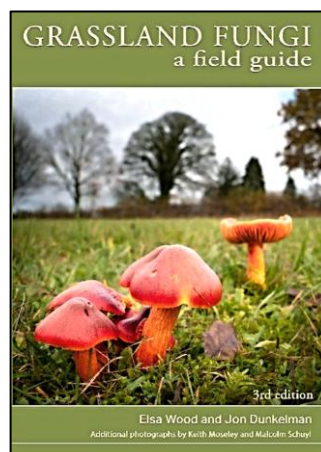
Whilst on the subject of News Sheet content, a reminder that all forty-two of our News Sheets are available on the HFSG website. There is also a very comprehensive index there that you can download as an Excel spreadsheet. Amongst other things, it now contains references to over 2000 species (not including synonyms), as well as many photographs, and interesting fungus-related articles. It is well worth having a look at it.

Finally, within the last year two books have been published which have been co-authored by HFSG members. I should like to draw your attention to them:



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RECORDER`S REPORT 2024

Jo Weightman

After the dry and often hot summers of recent years, cooler and wetter weather in 2024 promised great things but flushes in July were few and localised and only a disappointing emptiness was to come. Woodlands of all kinds, right across the County remained asleep. Come November, thankfully, waxcaps and their allies told a different story on both highland and lowland grassland sites.



It is safe to say that in a poor season there is always a fungus or two that buck the trend. For example, I regularly check out the beech in the car park at Croft Castle because over the years several Russulas have been recorded there. No such luck in 2024. Instead, there were hundreds (!) of Yellowing Knight *Tricholoma sculpturatum* (Plate 1) with a retinue of Stinking Dapperling *Lepiota cristata* and the same pair were also abundant high in the Wigmore Rolls. And in some sheep-grazed pastures Earth tongues (*Geoglossum* spp.) almost tripped me up!

Pl. 1 *Tricholoma sculpturatum*. Woolhope 2019.
Photo © Mike Stroud

The Forays

Spots on leaves

The gardens at Hergest Croft proved to be rich hunting grounds for spots on leaves. Finds included *Peronospora meconopsidis*, on the Welsh Poppy *Meconopsis cambrica*. It would appear that this species is either very uncommon or rare as it is a first county record and has only 21 hits on the FRDBI. It could be surmised that those records are due to the Covid epidemic, as all but two date from the time when outings were outed and foraying in the garden kept mycologists sane. Also, at Hergest *Botrytis tulipae* was a sad find as it is bad news for gardeners. I have it in my own patch and lose most of my tulips to it.

It was a similar story at Berrington where dead leaf litter under the maidenhair tree *Ginkgo triloba* hosted the living fossil *Bartheletia paradoxa*. Many thanks to Peter Roberts who identified a long list of 'Spots' on both occasions.

Grasslands

At the end of October the lawns at Whitfield House were outstanding. Several swarms of the dark turquoise earth tongue *Microglossum pratense* (Plate 2) were half hidden in the mossy grass and waxcaps were plentiful in diversity and number. They included Crimson, Orange and Toasted Waxcaps *Hygrocybe punicea* (Plate 3), *H. aurantiosplendens* and *Cuphophyllus colemannianus* respectively. As had been predicted by a contact, a search around the base of Meadow Waxcap *Cuphophyllus pratensis* revealed fruitbodies of Skinny Club *Clavaria incarnata*, an infrequently recorded pinkish club. We will probably be learning more about this association in years to come.



Pl. 2 *Microglossum pratense*. Whitfield Estate foray
Photo © Jo Weightman



Somewhat weather beaten waxcaps and clubs on areas of open grassland at both Ewyas and Bringsty Commons suggested further recording would be very worthwhile in the future. On the day Bringsty Common hosted a splendid example of Devil's Fingers, *Clathrus archeri*, making this the fourth Herefordshire site for the species. (Incidentally the Fingers were reported as abundant at their Brockhampton site at the end of September).

Pl. 3 *Hygrocybe punicea*. Cwmdru, Powys 2020
Photo © Mike Stroud



On Ewyas Common bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, the voracious opponent of grassland, was by now well broken down and it was not difficult to find examples of the tiny white Bracken Club *Typhula quisquiliaris* (Plate 4) peeping out from the splitting and broken stems.

Pl. 4 *Typhula Quisquiliaris* (left: on bracken stem; right: close-up) Photos © Mike Stroud

Woodlands and wood

In woodland situations some saprophytes did well. *Hydropus subalpinus* (Plate 5) for instance was found on two forays in succession, (Hergest Croft and Queens Wood Dymock). Is Herefordshire a hot spot for this fungus? To date we have 16 records from 10 sites which is more or less a quarter of those listed nationally on the FRDBI Or are we (ie Shelly Stroud) better at identifying them?

Pl. 5 *Hydropus subalpinus*
Photos © Mike Stroud



For our second visit to Mowley Wood we were once again offered the use of the fisherman’s hut near the entrance and made this our base for the day. Our thanks to the team at Mowley Woods for this and their welcome.

For half an hour we scoured the area around the hut with considerable success and then filtered off in various directions mostly down the slope towards the river. After lunch those who could stay on headed off round an old quarry and towards some pines. Even so, we only surveyed a small area of this very large area of woodland and pasture. We had to look hard but did compile a good list of fairly common species and, among them, the Vinegar Webcap *Cortinarius acetosus* and the Brownflesh Bracket *Coriolopsis gallica* which are seldom recorded.

A large group of forayers attended the Ewyas Common foray for the last event of the year - rather to the consternation of the local farmer who needed much of the parking space to manoeuvre heavy vehicles that day. Sharon found a number of us some good parking towards the bottom of the considerable slope and we inevitably became an Upper Group and a Lower Group. As the preceding days had seen snow and then very heavy rain, expectations were not all that high. The willow scrub towards the bottom of the Common promised well as a hunting ground for the future and it was here that the infrequent Contorted Pipe Club *Macrotyphula fistulosa* var. *contorta* (Plate 6) was found. Here also was the very first Scarlet Elfcap *Sarcoscypha* of the winter – just the merest initial of one.



Pl. 6. *Macrotyphula fistulosa* var. *contorta* Ewyas Harold Common foray
Photo © Mike Stroud

Pl. 7 *Helvella elastica*. Mortimer Forest 2016
Photo © Jo Weightman

At Little Doward in October torrential rain ended the day but not before many new to site records had been made. Most finds were old friends and important in filling gaps and increasing our understanding of the fungus flora of the site. White Saddle, *Helvella crispa* and Elastic Saddle, *H. elastica* (Plate 7), Jelly Baby *Leotia lubrica* and Terracotta Hedgehog *Hydnum rufescens* had not been seen here before.

At The Flits in August the Find of the Day was the uncommon *Neolentinus lepideus* (Plate 8), a gilled fungus that occurs on conifer wood, often on old railway sleepers, as it was in this case. Jagged-edged gills and a scaly all

over appearance make this fungus easy to recognise. This is only the second Herefordshire record, following the find made by our President Ted Blackwell at Wigmore Castle in 1995. By an amazing coincidence, on the very day of the foray, a granddaughter sent me a photograph of the same, rarely seen species growing on a roadside post near The Sevenoaks in Kent. The formal, but prosaic given English name for this species is Scaly Sawgill but online I also found Train Wrecker– a nice glance at its occurrence on railway sleepers.



Pl. 8 *Neolentinus lepideus* The Flits Nature Reserve foray
Photo © Mike Stroud

Top woodland notables



An investigation by Moo Hart of disturbance under an oak on Bringsty Common sparked off much excitement. She had found a truffle! The find was later determined as one of the false truffles, Stinking Slime, Truffle *Melanogaster ambiguus* (Plate 9) by Carol Hobart. Fortunately for the forayers, the smelly quality had not yet developed. 1st VC36 record.

Pl.9 *Melanogaster ambiguus* Bringsty Common
foray Photo © John Bingham

David Williamson collected a very unusual and unknown corticioid in the pouring rain at the end of the Little Doward foray. It had a strong smell of almonds. It was passed on to the specialist mycologists gathered in the Dean for a BMS foray and at the time of writing is awaiting acceptance and formal description as a new British species of *Megalocystidium*.

A corticioid with greenish, spaced-out spines on a whitish base layer was found by Susan Hunter during the foray at Mowley. When dry the spines collapsed and lost their greenish hue. The specimen, identified as *Kavinia alboviridis* (Plate 10) has been submitted to Kew. This species is new to site, new to Herefordshire and very rare in the UK. To date The FRDBI has just fifteen records. Bar one, these were all found well away in the southeastern counties, with the one odd one in Anglesey.

Pl.10 *Kavinia alboviridis* Mowley Wood foray
Photo © Jo Weightman



A fungus on a liverwort.

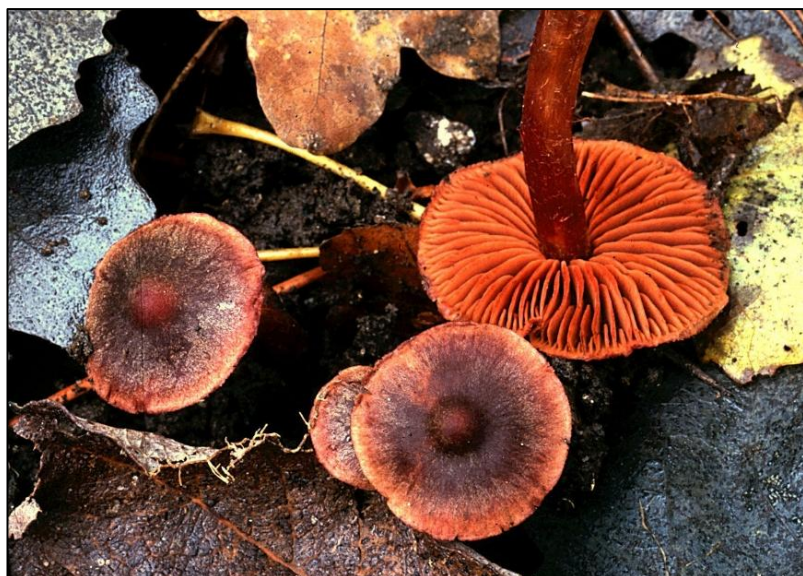
On Ewyas Common Tim Kaye recorded *Periantria frullaniae*, a barely visible fungus which grows on the liverwort *Frullania dilatata*. This is a new Herefordshire record and, once it is entered on the FRDBI, will be the first record there.

A fungus associated organism

Forayers commonly find slugs in residence on their finds but Tim Kaye looked harder and recognised the rare Lemon Slug, *Malacolimax tenellus*. He reports that "this is only the second record in the county for 35 years for a slug that is very much associated with fungi!"

UK Fungus Day 5.10.2024

The event was held as usual at Queenswood. By the end of the day nearly a hundred species had been collected by members of the public during the conducted walks and added to the display. There were even a few mycorrhizal species, gold in the woodland desert of 2024. Among these were several new site species: Grey Veiled Amanita, *Amanita porphyria*, Smouldering Webcap, *Cortinarius anthracinus* (Plate 11) , Opalescent Webcap, *Cortinarius collocandoides*, Sinuous Chanterelle, *Craterellus sinuosus* Whitegilled Pinkgill, *Entoloma lividoalbum*.



Pl. 11 *Cortinarius anthracinus* Sussex 2000.
Photo © Jo Weightman

Hairy Nuts Disco, *Lanzia echinophila*, a brown goblet-shaped species which grows on rotting sweet chestnut cupules, was also a new site record.

'Fascinating Fungi' Workshop at Queenswood 03.11.2024 – an HFSG 'outreach' event

Queenswood, a month later was still suffering from a dearth of fungi, but as ever the eager eyes of the attendees proved equal to the situation and found a sufficient number and range of species to study.



This was the year of the Knights (*Tricholoma* spp.). Blue Spot Knight, *Tricholoma columbetta* (Plate 12) is a regular here, pure white despite its given name. In my experience the blue/green colours mentioned in descriptions are elusive. Soapy Knight, *Tricholoma saponaceum* has also been collected here before – always so far in November. Yellowing Knight, *Tricholoma scalpturatum* (see Plate 1, Page 3) was a new site record and, as mentioned above, has been seen at several Herefordshire sites this year in troops, and always in very dry ground. Some, as yet not fully understood combination of factors evidently prompted this explosion. Sulphur Knight, *Tricholoma sulphureum* is always here and never fails to impress the students with its smell. Several Burnt Knights, *Tricholoma ustale* had survived, parched and shrivelled among the beech leaves.

Pl. 12 *Tricholoma columbetta* photographed on the Mowley Wood foray Photo © Mike Stroud

Other Records



Pl. 14 *Ciboria caucus*. Cwmdu, Powys 2005 Photo © Mike Stroud

Pl.13 *Encoelia furfuracea* Mowley Wood Photo © Sarah Cadwallader

The first record of the year was for *Bartheletia paradoxa* on the dead leaves of *Ginkgo biloba*, seen on New Years Day by Aaron Woods in his garden at The Leys, Wofferwood where we forayed two years ago. The management team at Mowley Woods then reported finding the clustering brown cups of Spring Hazelnutcup, *Encoelia furfuracea* (Plate 13), a winter into spring species on moribund hazel branches. Also in January a glossy bracket of Laquered Bracket, *Ganoderma lucidum* was spotted on field maple *Acer campestre* at Llangarron.

February is a month for treading with extra care under alders as this when the litter may be concealing the Alder Goblet *Ciboria caucus* (Plate 14), which arises from the previous year's catkins. Seen in Orleton, Wofferwood and Brockhampton.

A few Ascos

In April Cherry Greenway joyfully recorded two vernal species, the morel *Verpa conica* on compost in her garden and along Birchwood Lane and the Vinegar Cup, *Helvella acetabulum* (Plate 15) in Birchwood. The latter uncommon species was also reported by Beverley Thomas in Birtley near Lingen.

Yellow Fan, *Spathularia flavida* which is widespread in the county but infrequent was found by Ed Fox in Moccas Hill Wood at the end of September and by Sarah Cadwallader a couple of weeks later at Hergest Croft.

In October I was invited to look at the unimproved lawns in front of Lucton School where John Lyden has been recording for a few years. The most interesting fungus seen on the day was one of the brownish-green earth tongues in the *Microglossum olivaceum* complex.



Pl. 15 *Helvella acetabulum* Bradfield Woods, Suffolk 1991.
Photo © Jo Weightman



A collection of a similar earth tongue found at Hardwicke Churchyard in mid November was looked at by Shelly Stroud with the newly available key to the Group and found to be *M. truncatum* (Plate 16). The only other known site for this species complex in Herefordshire is Holme Lacy where its presence was noted in October 1873!

Pl. 16 *Microglossum truncatum* Hardwicke churchyard.
Photo © Mike Stroud

David Williamson and I attended a Bioblitz in Downton Gorge in June. Finding a *Postia guttulata* (Plate 17, page 10 below) was interesting but not in itself remarkable as we have a number of records for this nationally uncommon bracket - but it was good to see one that was young enough to have the clear droplets on the growing edge (see the 'call-out, below) that give it its name. Half an hour later however, the edge where the droplets had collapsed, was stained blood red! The dull red-brown streaks that often characterise the pileus when old, presumably originate from this staining.



Pl. 17 *Postia guttulata* Downton Gorge, June 2024
Photos © Jo Weightman

Fungi without gills

Hen of the Woods, *Grifola frondosa* was seen in September at Dinedor Camp, Mowley Woods and Brockhampton. Judith Oakley who keeps an eye on the Umbrella Polypore, *Polyporus umbellatus* site in the south of the county reported that there were two fresh clumps in August and one shrivelled one. And sadly, the precious Black Poplar, *Populus nigra* on the edge of Bircher Common has been colonised by the pathogen Giant Elm Bracket, *Rigidoporus ulmarius*.

There has been no news of the Sandy Stiltball, *Battarrea phalloides* site in Ross this year and Will Watson reported that there were no fruitbodies at the Docklow site either when he checked in October. This species does require a baking and may have become overgrown and/or would not have relished the damp summer. On the other hand, the uncommon jelly fungus *Exidia recisa* (Plate 18,) which sits fatly on willow branches when conditions are well and truly wet was reported from Mowley Woods in November by David Griffith.



Pl.18 *Exidia recisa* Mowley Wood
Photo © Sarah Cadwallader



Pl. 19 *Cyclocybe cylindracea* Darenth, Kent. 2005.
Photo © Jo Weightman

Fungi with gills

News of interesting agarics include Poplar Fieldcap, *Cyclocybe cylindracea* (Plate 19) at Wharton Court, Leominster in September (finder Will Watson), Twisted Deceiver, *Laccaria tortilis* from Norton Canon in November (finder Tim Kaye) and Plantpot Dapperling, *Leucocoprinus birnbaumii* from The Leys Wofferton in August (finder Aaron Woods), who discovered it in a pot in his house.

In 2013 a waxcap was found that differed from all others and was named Jubilee Waxcap, *Gliophorus reginae* (Plate 20) to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

On November 10 last year a waxcap I collected at Wilden Farm, near Leysters looked a distinct possibility for this new species, but was past its best. Adeline Jones from the farm was with me and a few days later she found several fresh examples in the same field. Then wind and snow and heavy rain grounded me and my hopes of seeing them. Amazingly, they survived the onslaught – see photo – and a month later Adeline found more on adjoining land belonging to a neighbour. While these are the first VC36 records for this new species, I must also mention that in 2023 John Lyden thinks he might have found it on those promising lawns at Lucton School, but has no photograph and it has not been confirmed. The FRDBI lists finds of the Jubilee Waxcap in five English counties, two in Wales and two in Ireland.



Pl. 20 *Gliophorus reginae* Wilden Farm, Nov. 2024.
Photo © Jo Weightman



HFSG members & guests foraging at Mowley Valley (left) and Whitfield Estate (right)

A TRIBUTE TO NIGEL STRINGER - 'KING OF RUSTS'

Debbie Evans



Nigel and our Smut and Allied Fungi of Wales book poster at Kew Sept 2018

This tribute to Nigel Stringer is very much a personal one and a much fuller obituary will be written by others for the BMS website and Field Mycologist in due course.

It was with deep sadness and shock that we heard about the sudden and unexpected death of Nigel on the 20th of December. He was a long-standing member of the HFSG and indeed it was through Nigel that I joined the group, encouraged by him and the fact that Dr Tom Preece, a good friend of his, was also writing articles on rusts and other micro-parasites for the News Sheets. I first got to know Nigel well over 20 years ago; I was already developing an interest in rust fungi and recording them and I saw a request from him for records of rusts from Wales, as he was compiling a database for the Country. I sent my list to him and within a day he had phoned me up and that was the start of a long friendship and a shared passion/obsession for rust fungi.

Nigel had a long career with the Countryside Commission for Wales and was an excellent botanist, a prerequisite to studying fungal parasites on plants where accurate identification of the host is essential. He developed a strong interest and knowledge of rust fungi especially, as well as other plant parasites, and he richly deserved his reputation as the 'King of Rusts'. His expertise was well known and respected by other rust fungus experts in Great Britain and indeed worldwide. Nigel co-authored many pioneering publications on rust fungi; he was a member of the Llanelli Naturalists, writing articles for their

newsletters, and he co-authored papers and articles for the Pembrokeshire Fungus Recorder and The Field Mycologist amongst others.

In 2014 Ray Woods suggested that a 'Red Data List of Rust Fungi for Wales' should be compiled and this marked the start of the Welsh Rust Group, now known as the Welsh Microfungi Group, (or 'The Famous 5' as we have been nicknamed!) This is a team of 5 similarly motivated mycologists spread over the whole of Wales, and of which I am also a member. Over the last 10 years we have jointly published a series of books on plant parasites and Nigel has been a key and very important member of the team. The last publication, 'A Handlist of Microfungal Parasites of Vascular Plants from Britain and Ireland', published in December 2024, (see also page 2, above) included a huge input from Nigel, especially with all the current name changes for rust fungi that needed addressing. In 2019 the group were awarded 'The Field Mycology Award' by the BMS, of which we were all extremely proud. Nigel will be irreplaceable within the group and as our friend, but we hope that the books and all his articles and papers will be part of his important legacy. Many of these can be found on ResearchGate, <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R-Stringer>



Presentation of the BMS Field Mycology Award to the Welsh Rust Group by Geoffroy Kibbv 19.10.19

Nigel was more than just a rust expert: he was a mentor and friend to many. He was always very generous with his help and encouragement, for which many people will be grateful and remember him. He had a brilliant sense of humour and could always make me laugh - even his car number plate made me smile!

Nigel will be greatly missed by myself and so many friends and mycologists: we are privileged to have known him. Our deep sympathy and thoughts go to his wife Ceri at this very sad time.



Nigel's Number plate

FUNGI TO LOOK OUT FOR IN SPRING

Peter Roberts & Shelley Evans

Whilst clearing a fallen ash branch in our Radnorshire garden this week we noticed scattered clusters of a small but easily visible, blackish cup fungus that seemed potentially interesting.

Looking up discomycetes (small cup fungi) on ash wood in Ellis & Ellis (in their old but still useful *Microfungi on Land Plants*), we came up with the name *Encoelia fascicularis*, a poplar species also said to occur on ash. Further research online led to the more updated names *Sclerencoelia fraxinicola* – a recently described species, backed by DNA sequencing – that is restricted to ash and the very similar *Sclerencoelia* (= *Encoelia*) *fascicularis* now only found on poplar.

FRDBI (the Fungal Records Database of Britain & Ireland) lists just four site records of *Sclerencoelia* on ash in the whole of the UK, with 13 site records on poplar. The only Herefordshire record is from Queenswood Arboretum, where *Sclerencoelia fascicularis* was found on aspen in April 1996. Both these species are almost certainly under-recorded in Britain, so well worth looking out for on dead wood of their respective hosts. Given the quantity of fallen ash wood currently littering the ground as a result of ash dieback it should certainly be feasible for the eagle-eyed to get the first Hereford record of *Sclerencoelia fraxinicola*.



Sclerencoelia fraxinophila (Radnorshire VC): clusters erupting from ash bark and already drying out. Photo ©Peter Roberts

Both species form brown to blackish discs up to a centimetre or so across, typically in clusters (particularly so as the name suggests in *S. fascicularis*) erupting out of the bark. The undersides are similarly coloured, but white-pruinose (dusted white). Microscopically they have cylindrical, slightly allantoid (sausage-shaped) spores around 12 to 15 microns long. The best chance of finding either species is in wet or damp weather, since the fruitbodies shrivel up when dry and become hard to spot.

On hazel, the related and better recorded *Encoelia furfuracea* is more conspicuous, forming small to large clusters on dead branches, and is common enough to have an English name, "Spring Hazelcup". (See also page 8, above) The brown discs can be quite large, up to a couple of centimetres across, but are frequently inrolled showing the paler brown, furfuraceous (scurfy) undersides. There are records from over 30 Herefordshire sites on the FRDBI.

Some other seldom-recorded spring fungi to look out for are even more conspicuous and should all be identifiable in the field. If you know of an old cedar in your vicinity, it's worth carefully examining the ground for some yards around its trunk in search of *Geopora sumneriana*, the Cedar Cup. Its brownish fruitbodies are spherical at first, around five centimetres across, and are typically produced just under the soil or litter surface. When mature, they split open to reveal a hollow, contrasting whitish interior so that they look like slightly sunken cups. The species is ectomycorrhizal and only associates with cedar, so if you come across them in the right place at the right time – March to May – you can be confident that's what they are. In Herefordshire, Cedar Cups have been recorded at Hampton Court, How Caple churchyard, Sutton St Nicholas, and Ross on Wye.

Another spring species with a similar half-buried habit is *Sarcosphaera crassa*, Violet Crowncup. This is a distinctly uncommon fungus across the UK (on the 2006 Red Data List as "Near Threatened") and does not yet appear to have been recorded for Herefordshire, so it would be a really nice thing to find. It forms quite large, spherical fruitbodies, up to 12 cm across, that are whitish, but tinted purple to violet inside when they split open at the soil surface. They too are ectomycorrhizal but form less strict associations, often with pine or fir, but in England more typically with beech. The species seems to favour alkaline sites and the only time we have encountered it was close to a ring of *Calocybe gambosa*, the spring-fruited St George's Mushroom, which also favours non-acidic soils.



Sarcosphaera crassa (South Devon VC). Fruitbody splitting open to reveal purplish interior. Photo © Shelley Evans

In recent literature, Violet Crowncup has usually been called *Sarcosphaera coronaria*. DNA sequencing, however, now shows that there are two European species, too similar to separate with confidence by traditional methods, but with *S. coronaria* having a more central European distribution than *S. crassa*. The latter species has been confirmed as British and it seems probable that all UK collections are likely to be *Sarcosphaera crassa*.

We were surprised to find that another late spring to early summer ascomycete seems to have no Herefordshire records at all, even though it is brightly coloured, easily recognized, and generally rather common. It's the Bog Beacon, *Mitrula paludosa*. Fruitbodies are a few centimetres high, with white stalks and contrasting oval, bright yellow, fertile heads. They usually appear in swarms – sometimes several hundred at a time making quite a spectacle – and typically occur on dead vegetation that is slightly submerged under water. They can appear at the margins of ponds, but ditches are their favourite habitat or even ruts and tracks with standing water. They seem perfectly happy in conifer plantations where they can put on a colourful show in drainage ditches and are probably at their peak in May. It seems unlikely that there is no suitable habitat in Herefordshire, so maybe all that's needed is a sharp-eyed mycologist in the right place at the right time.

So happy hunting and good luck finding any of these species over the next months! And if you're successful, please do alert the HFSG recorder with the details.

A RARELY RECORDED WAXCAP FROM OVER THE BORDER IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Jon Dunkelman



Papillate Waxcap, *Hygrocybe subpapillata*

Photos © Jon Dunkelman

In August 2023 I spotted in my own field a small red and orange waxcap that looked slightly different from those I usually find.

It had a greasy cap and had no tiny scales so was not the Vermilion Waxcap (*Hygrocybe miniata*), the Garlic Waxcap (*H. helobia*) or the Limestone Waxcap (*H. calciphila*). The cap was not viscid like the Glutinous Waxcap (*H. glutinipes*). It had no honey smell and was the wrong colouration so was not the Honey Waxcap (*H. reidii*). They didn't taste bitter so the Bitter Waxcap (*H. mucronella*) was unlikely.

It was time to look at the spores – and that confirmed it wasn't the Bitter Waxcap and I realised I had found the Papillate Waxcap (*Hygrocybe subpapillata*). Although the first ones I found did not have an obvious and distinct papilla, more emerged that clearly did have that.

Nonetheless I thought such an unusual find might benefit from confirmation so I managed to get some DNA testing on a sample and the Papillate Waxcap was confirmed.

No sign of it in 2024 but for my site 2024 was a relatively poor Waxcap year in any case, with 18 species versus 24 species in 2023.

Has anyone found this in Herefordshire? ¹

Identification

I think the distinct papilla is a great hint - although the very first ones I found did not have this.

The description below is from my specimens, but I have added figures from Boertmann ² in brackets

Cap 8-18 mm (5-30), deep red fading to orange with centre remaining red and usually with tiny papilla. Faintly striate towards the margin. Greasy texture.

Stipe 40x2 mm (20-50 x 2-3), orange above, yellowish below.

Gills orangey yellow with a paler edge, broadly attached to emarginate.

Spores 7.4-8.3µm x 4.5 -5.5 µm (7-9 x 4.5-5.5)

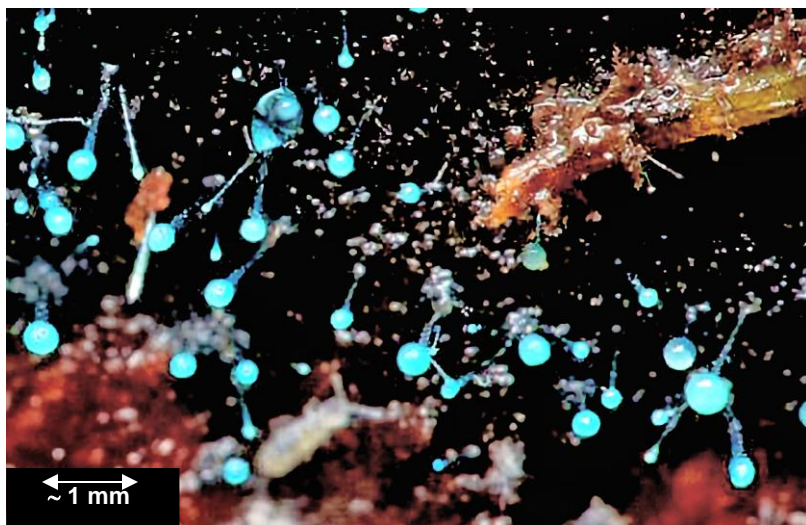
¹ At present, there is one Herefordshire record – out of only 6 on the FRDBI – from 2005, collected by Sheila Whipp (Sheila Spence) and identified by Ted Blackwell – Ed

² Fungi of Northern Europe, Volume 1: The Genus *Hygrocybe* – David Boertmann

Jon is co-author with Elsa Wood of 'Grassland Fungi – a field guide'. The third edition has recently been published and is available from NHBS (www.nhbs.com) – more details on the Monmouthshire Meadows Group website (www.monmouthshiremeadows.org.uk)

FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTY

Les Hughes



Dendrostilbella smaragdina (Dudmaston, Shropshire) Photo © Eric Steer

Here is an interesting record from our neighbouring county, Shropshire. This is *Dendrostilbella smaragdina*, the Teal Conifer-Pin.

It was found on the Dudmaston Estate early in 2024 by two lichenologists, Eric and Mary Steer, who realised it was something special and set out to find out what they had come across.

Their searches led them to send a specimen to Paul Cannon, who identified it and it really is rather unusual.

If you examine the records on FRDBI you will only find five previous, the closest of which was in Gloucestershire in 2019. The others are all southern or northern records.

It was growing on *Rhododendron*, and apparently tiny - around 1 mm tall, but I did not see the original specimen - which demonstrates the value of hanging around with lichenologists, who really do get up close and personal with trees!

It is often associated with rotten conifer wood or, as here, *rhododendron* and is this astonishingly bright blue-green colour hence, its name.

Something to watch out for.

Dendrostilbella smaragdina

Photomicrograph, by kind permission of Paul Cannon

<https://fungi.myspecies.info/all-fungi/dendrostilbella-smaragdina>



IN THE GARDEN - 6

Typhula phacorrhiza & *Chrysomphalina grossula*

Shelly & Mike Stroud

On one of our raised beds last October we discovered the white thread-like fruitbodies of *Typhula phacorrhiza* (Tuberous Club).

Whilst not uncommon (there are 210 records of *T. phacorrhiza* on the FRDBI at present), the various species of *Typhula* are always interesting to find and are often overlooked – not surprisingly, when you consider their stature!

As you can see from the photo, the fruitbodies of this particular species are usually very fine yellow/white clubs, 40-120 mm tall.

If you carefully prize the soil/litter away from under one of them you will see that it is attached to a *sclerotium* (pl. *sclerotia*)*, 2-4 mm long - see the inset on the image.



Typhula phacorrhiza – with insert: close-up of the sclerotia
Photo © Mike Stroud

The genus *Typhula* contains a number of fungi that we regularly find, many of which are quite small, eg the tiny Bracken Club, *Typhula quisquiliaris* (see Jo's Recorder's Report, p4). They are all well worth looking for!

*A *sclerotium* is

'... a compact mass of hardened mycelium stored with reserve food material that in some higher fungi becomes detached and remains dormant until a favourable opportunity for growth occurs' and is evident in a number of different fungi.



Chrysomphalina grossula Photo © Mike Stroud

The second species that we were interested to find was 'a little, yellow job' nestling in some moss at the base of a Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) at the bottom of the garden.

It turned out to be *Chrysomphalina grossula* (the Green Navel). This species is almost always associated with conifers and seems to have very few records (28) on the FRDBI - including one from Jo, found in Herefordshire in 2002. As usual, whether this is because it is genuinely uncommon, or just not often recorded is anyone's guess!

The literature says that the cap is from 2-30 mm in diameter and the stipe 5-40 mm long, although the ones that we have found here are very much at the lower end of the scale, as indeed are most of the photos we have seen. You will see that the gills are very decurrent which is, of course, by definition a characteristic of omphalinoid fungi.