Bittern Countryside

Community Interest Company

An Atlas & Guide to some of the Fungi of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB

Supporting the **Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company
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A Guide to some of the Fungi of the AONB

John and Sheila Weir, February 2015

What do fungi do?

Firstly they decompose and recycle organic matter. The essential part of a fungus is the mycelium, a network of hyphae which extends throughout the soil or leaf litter, or within the wood on which the fungus is growing. This is responsible for the break-down of the organic matter providing nutrients both for the fungus itself and to enrich the soil.

Secondly, they are agents of growth. Virtually all fungi form symbiotic relationships with plants through mycorrhizas. The mycelium wraps itself around or penetrates the fine plant roots and nutrients are interchanged. The fungus obtains carbohydrates from the plant, and absorption of minerals from the soil by the plant is facilitated via the fungus. Not all fungi are host-specific, but some woodland fungi grow with a particular tree, or trees. Grassland fungi are not known to be mycorrhizal, but some woodland fungi are found on calcareous grassland, associated with rock-rose.

To disperse, the fungus needs spores. These are produced by the fruiting bodies - the fungi we see in the countryside. The embryo mushroom is enclosed in a bag – the universal veil. This often disappears as the fungus expands but in some species it is more robust and remnants may remain on the cap, stem, or as a sac (volva) surrounding the stem base. The young gills may also be protected by a membrane which may persist as a ring round the stem. These features can aid identification of some species. Other characteristics which may help in fungus identification are its shape, colour and texture and the way in which the gills are attached to the stem.

Many mushrooms decay within days of producing spores. Others such as brackets found on trees are longer lived. Also, fungi are unpredictable. The mycelium may still be there, but they may not produce fruiting bodies every year making it difficult to know just where, and if, they will occur. We have indicated on which sites we have found a species in the past to give an indication of where to start looking. The purpose of this guide is to enable the reader to recognise some of the fungi found in the AONB. Many fungi appear in Autumn (Sept or Oct) – any exceptions will be indicated.

Two major habitats are considered: **Grassland**:- the AONB has several areas of unimproved grassland – Post Office Lots, Jack Scout and Redhills Pasture are particularly rich (but not every year). Also look for Waxcaps in graveyards.
Woodland:- sites include Gait Barrows NNR and Eaves Wood (NT)

A good website for further information and photographs is
http://www.countrysideinfo.co.uk/fungi/contents.htm

Mushrooms by Peter Marren (British Wildlife Publishing) is a comprehensive and very readable general book, written for the layman.
Collins Complete British Mushrooms and Toadstools by Paul Sterry and Barry Hughes is a good book for identification.

Photographs by John and Sheila Weir (except where stated). Edited by Ann Kitchen

All profits from this publication will go towards recording and conserving the flora and fauna of the AONB.

Glossary

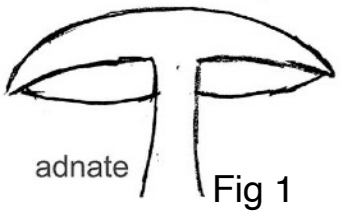


Fig 1

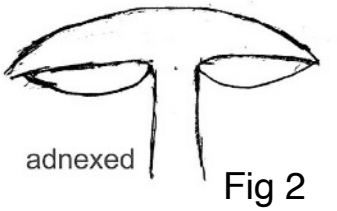


Fig 2

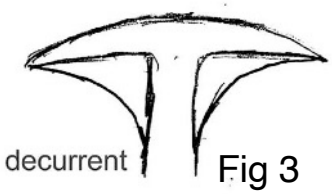


Fig 3

adnate – gills broadly attached to stem (Fig. 1)
adnexed – gills narrowly attached to stem (Fig. 2)
apex – top (of stem or of fungus itself)
bulb – swelling at base of stem
calcareous – on chalk or limestone soils
cortina – partial veil protecting young gills
decurrent – gills extending down stem (Fig.3)
deliquescent – becoming liquid after the spores mature
depressed (of cap) – middle of the cap sunken
fibril – fine fibre
fibrillose (of stem) – with long vertical fibrils
free (of gill) – not attached to stem
fruiting body – spore-bearing fungus (eg mushroom, bracket)
fugacious – short-lived
gills – plate-like spore-bearing structures
hypha(ae) – microscopic fungal strand(s)
inrolled – cap margin curled under
latex – liquid exuded by certain fungi
margin – edge of cap or gills
milk – latex exuded by Milkcaps (Lactarius)
mycelium – mass of hyphae
mycorrhiza – relationship between fungus mycelium and plant roots
ochraceous – brownish orange-yellow coloured
olivaceus – olive coloured
pores (1) – openings of spore-bearing tubes
pores (2) – openings in Puffballs
pruinose – covered in floury dust
rhizomorphs – mycelium formed into cord-like structures (“bootlaces”)
ring – remains of cortina on stem
sinuous – wavy, twisting
spore – microscopic reproductive body (cf.seed in plants)
spore print – pattern of spores when a cap is left, gills down, on a sheet of paper overnight (Fig 4a and 4b)
striate – marked with lines, grooves or ridges
subglobose – almost globose, spherical
symbiotic – mutually beneficial
tubes – tubular spore-bearing structures
umbo – central swelling on cap
umbonate – with umbo
veil – bag of tissue enclosing and protecting developing fungus
viscid – sticky, slippery
volva – bag-like structure at stem base formed from veil

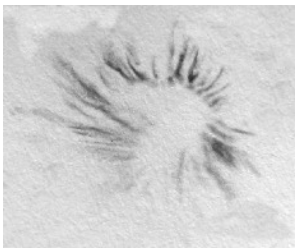


Fig 4a black spores on white paper

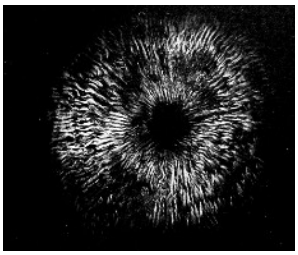


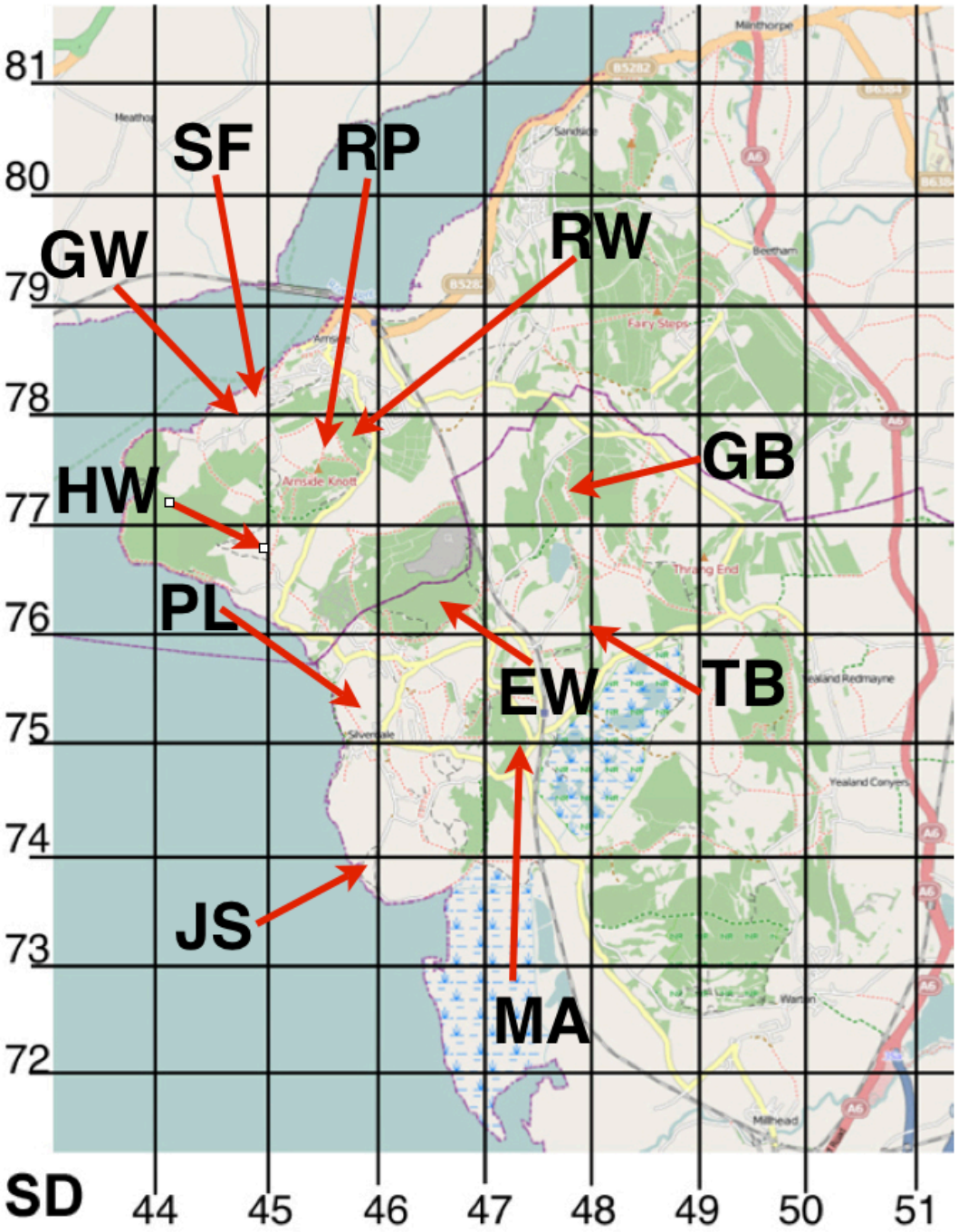
Fig 4b white spores on black paper

Grassland Sites

Grubbins Wood (Sands Field)-**SF;** Heathwaite-**HW;** Jack Scout-**JS;**
Myers Allotment-**MA;** Post Office Lots-**PL;** Redhills Pasture-**RP;** Trowbarrow-**TB**

Woodland Sites

Eaves Wood-**EW**; Gait Barrows-**GB**; Grubbins Wood-**GW**; Redhills Wood-**RW**



While only 2 of the fungi in this atlas are fatal if eaten, many are toxic and can cause severe reactions in certain people. Handle all fungi with care and do not eat anything without reference to an expert.

Index

Scientific Name

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Common Name

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Grassland Fungi - Waxcaps

Over 20 species of Waxcap have been found in the AONB. Many are shades of red, orange and yellow. Some can be difficult to identify in the field (even for an expert). The following are some of those which have features enabling them to be identified more easily. Important characters are colour, whether viscid or dry and gill-attachment. Waxcaps may be found from early September through into November. Some waxcaps, marked *, can also be found in light woodland.

Snowy Waxcap – *Hygrocybe virginea*

Cap: 2 – 4 cm; Height: to 5 cm; Spores: white.

Cap white, sometimes ochraceous; convex, becoming flattened or depressed with age; slightly viscid, soon drying.

Gills widely spaced, decurrent.

Found on all sites.

Cedarwood Waxcap – *Hygrocybe russocoriacea*

Cap: 0.5 – 2 cm; Height: to 3 cm; Spores: white.

Much smaller and less robust than the Snowy Waxcap. Often found in scattered groups.

Cap whitish with ochraeous centre, slightly viscid.

Gills decurrent. *Distinct smell* of cedarwood especially on bruising. Found on JS, RP, and PL

Golden Waxcap* – *Hygrocybe chlorophana*

Cap: 2 – 6 cm; Height: to 8 cm; Spores: white.

Cap lemon-yellow to orange-yellow; hemispherical becoming flattened. Very viscid.

Gills yellow, adnexed. Stem yellow, dry (but can be moist on handling);often flattened.

Found on JS, RP, MA and PL.

Parrot Waxcap – *Hygrocybe psittacina*

Cap: 1 – 3 cm; Height: to 4 cm; Spores: white.

Cap colour variable; yellow or shades of brown, pink or purple with *green* tones.

Gills yellow, greenish towards centre. Stem yellow, *always green at apex.* Cap and stem both strongly viscid.

Widespread - probably on all sites.

Meadow Waxcap – *Hygrocybe pratensis*

Cap: 3 – 8 cm; Height: to 5 cm; Spores: white.

Cap ochraceous to apricot especially towards centre; becoming distorted and often cracking with age. Dry.

Gills buff; strongly decurrent. Stem buff, tapering, dry. A robust fungus.

Found on all sites except TB.

Blackening Waxcap* – *Hygrocybe conica*

Cap: 3 – 5 cm; Height: to 5 cm; Spores: white.

Cap yellow, orange or red but always blackening with age, viscid or dry, initially conical becoming convex, often with a small umbo.

Gills yellow, adnexed to free. Stem yellow, becoming streaked with black; viscid or dry. Whole fungus blackens on bruising. Found on all sites.

Crimson Waxcap* – *Hygrocybe punicea*

Cap: 3 – 7 cm; Height: to 10 cm; Spores: white.

Cap *blood-red to brownish-red*, discolouring buff, slightly viscid.

Gills yellow, later flushing red, narrowly adnate. Stem robust, straight, yellow with orange-red fibrils, dry. Found on JS and RP – and in light woodland at GB.

Scarlet Waxcap* – *Hygrocybe coccinea*

Cap: 2 – 4 cm; Height: to 6 cm; Spores: white.

Cap bright red, may become more orange when dried out, hemispherical, slightly viscid.

Gills reddish towards cap, yellow at edge, broadly adnate, often with decurrent tooth. Stem red, paler than cap, may become yellow towards base, dry, smooth.

Found on all sites.

Splendid Waxcap – *Hygrocybe splendidissima*

Cap: 2 – 6 cm; Height: to 8 cm; Spores: white.

Cap bright red, conical to hemispherical, becoming flatter, dry.

Gills red with paler edge, adnexed.

Stem red, often with yellow base, may be flattened or twisted, dry.

Found on JS.

Date Waxcap – *Hygrocybe spadicea*

Cap: 2 – 7 cm; Height: to 7 cm; Spores: white.

Cap brown, conical becoming flattened with small umbo, radially fibrillose, slightly viscid.

Gills lemon-yellow, adnexed to free.
Stem lemon-yellow, often brown towards base, dry.

Not yet recorded for our AONB. Occurs on Humphrey Head across Morecambe Bay. A possible specimen on Myers Allotment was too old and damaged to be reliably identified. This is a rather uncommon but distinctive fungus. One to look out for!

More Grassland Fungi

These are a few of the other fungi you may find in our grasslands.

White Spindles – *Clavaria fragilis*

Height: to 10 cm; Spores: white.

Fruit body white with branches 3 to 5 mm wide. Branches simple, round, becoming flattened or grooved. In small clumps or occasionally singly. Widespread in small numbers.

Several simple yellow corals, Golden Spindles, also occur but the different species are difficult to distinguish in the field.

Meadow Coral – *Clavulinopsis corniculata*

Height: to 5 cm; Spores: white.

Fruit body golden yellow to ochraceous. Grows in tufts. Branches arise from a common whitish base, repeatedly forking to antler-like tips.

Found in groups and often part buried in grass. On most sites – look particularly on PL and RP.

Violet Coral – *Clavaria zollingeri*

Photo: Ken Kitchen

Height: to 8cm; Spores: white.

Fruit body *violet pink to amethyst*. Several branches arise from a common whitish base, repeatedly forking.

Branches rounded or compressed, wrinkled, sinuous. Solitary or in groups.

An uncommon fungus, our only record from the AONB is on MA.

Earth Tongue – *Geoglossum sp.*

Height: to 8 cm; Spores: dark brown.

Fruit body black. Head up to 6mm broad,club-shaped, flattened and sometimes grooved, surface often slightly rough. Tapers into a round, narrower stem. Solitary or in small groups.

Difficult to see but occasionally numerous. Widespread but found particularly on RP and PL. Also found in moss under Yew at GB.

Mousepee Pinkgill – *Entoloma incanum*

Cap: 1 – 3 cm; Height: to 5 cm; Spores: pinkish.

Cap olivaceous with darker centre, finely scaly, striate. Gills pale, becoming pink. Stem *bright green*, smooth, fragile.

Smells of mouse droppings (hence awful name!). May occasionally be confused at first sight with the Parrot Waxcap but this is a much more delicate fungus than the waxcap.

Often solitary and found on most sites. May also be found on pathsides at GB.

Slender Parasol – *Macrolepiota mastoidea*

Cap: 8 – 12 cm; Height: to 10cm; Spores: white

Cap convex then flattened with prominent umbo. Ochraceous cream to buff with darker centre, matt with adpressed scales, often shaggy or broken at margin. Gills whitish, crowded. Stem whitish to pale brown with slightly swollen base, fine brownish scales and thick whitish ring.

Fairly common on grassland (may be associated with rock-rose, see image) JS, RP. Also in woodland RW. Autumn.

Woodland Fungi

Many of them are common and widespread in the AONB so look out for them in all woodlands. Look amongst trees as well as at the side of paths. In some cases we indicate where we have found them, but you may also find them elsewhere

Fly Agaric – *Amanita muscaria*

Cap: 8 – 15 cm; Height: to 15 cm; Spores: white.

Cap bright scarlet with fleecy white scales, often fades to orange when mature and scales may be washed off by rain. Gills white. Stem white with shaggy white fibrils and with a membranous white or slightly yellowish ring near apex. Bulbous stem base sheathed with shaggy white volva remnants. Grows in soil, often with birch trees, isolated or in groups. GB and RW. From late summer into autumn. **Poisonous**

Death Cap – *Amanita phalloides*

Cap: 7 – 12 cm; Height: to 15 cm; Spores: whitish.

Cap yellow-green to bronze with a metallic sheen, darker at centre and often fibrillose. Gills white. Stem white, faintly banded, with a fragile white membranous ring near apex and a swollen base enclosed in large, sac-like white volva. Grows in soil in mixed deciduous woodland, isolated or in small groups. GB and EW. Found from late summer.

Deadly Poisonous

Burgundy-drop Bonnet – *Mycena haematopus*

Cap: to 2.5 cm; Height: to 6 cm; Spores: white.

Cap dark pinkish buff to burgundy with paler margin, bell-shaped.

Gills pale pink. Stem reddish brown, exudes wine-red latex when broken. On old stumps and logs of broad-leaved trees, usually in tufts. Widespread. Found on all sites. Autumn.

Rosy Bonnet – *Mycena rosea*

Cap: to 6cm; Height: to 10 cm; Spores: white.

Cap deep pink, paler at centre, bell-shaped, soon becoming flat, margin sometimes undulating, striate. Gills pinkish. Stem pale pink, hollow. Smells of radish. Grows in leaf or needle litter, usually under broad-leaved trees (occasionally conifers), often in large groups. Widespread, particularly in RW. Summer into late autumn.

A similar fungus is the Lilac Bonnet (*Mycena pura).* This is smaller, less robust and much paler, lilac-pink soon fading to beige or even whitish or yellowish. Also smells of radish.

Honey Fungus – *Armillaria mellea*

Cap: to 12 cm; Height: to 15 cm; Spores: white.

Cap ochraceous yellow to dark tawny brown, often with dark scales near centre, rounded when young, becoming flat.
Gills white becoming yellowish. Stem yellowish, darker towards base with a thick, woolly yellowish white ring. On stumps and at base of deciduous and coniferous trees, often in very large clusters. Found also on buried roots. Spreads with black chord-like “rhizomorphs” under bark of infected trees. Very common on all sites - look also on verges and in gardens. Late summer into winter. A destructive and incurable parasite of trees and shrubs.

Sulphur Tuft – *Hypholoma fasciculare*

Cap: 2 – 5 cm; Height: to 8 cm; Spores: purple-brown.

Cap sulphur yellow tinged orange at centre with paler veil remnants, hemispherical becoming flatter. Gills yellow becoming purple-brown from spores. Stem yellow, dark brown towards base, often curved, with faint ring zone near apex. In dense clusters on dead stumps and logs. Very common on all sites. Late spring to winter.

Sheathed Woodtuft – *Kuehneromyces mutabilis*

Cap: 3 – 6 cm; Height: to 10 cm; Spores: ochre-brown.

Cap cinnamon or yellow-brown, drying paler at centre (*appears two-toned*), convex then expanded with broad umbo.

Gills pale becoming cinnamon. Stem ochraceous, sheathed (sock-like) with red-brown fibrils below the fragile ring. In dense clusters on deciduous stumps.

GB, EW and GW. Summer to early winter.

Velvet Shank – *Flammulina velutipes*

Cap: 2 – 8 cm; Height: to 10 cm; Spores: white.

Cap yellow-brown with darker centre, domed becoming flat, smooth and very viscid.

Gills pale yellowish. Stem yellow above, dark brown velvety below, *very tough*. Grows in small clusters on rotting stumps of deciduous trees (often Ash). EW.

Late autumn to early spring. A winter fungus, it can withstand being frozen solid.

Clouded Agaric (Clouded Funnel) – *Clitocybe nebularis*

Cap: 5 – 20 cm; Height: to 10 cm; Spores: cream.

Cap rounded then flatter, sometimes slightly depressed at centre, margin in-rolled at first then often undulating. Cloudy grey-brown, paler at margin, darker at centre, often with a whitish bloom.

Gills decurrent, crowded, yellowish white. Stem greyish white, swollen at base, fragile. Common in mixed woodland, often in troops or rings.

Widespread. GB, EW, RW. Occasionally found in grassland (RP see back cover). Late autumn.

Wood Blewitt – *Lepista nuda*

Cap: 5 – 15 cm; Height: to 9 cm; Spores: dingy pink.

Cap rounded then flatter with broad umbo, margin inrolled, often becoming slightly depressed with wavy margin. Warm brown with lilac tones especially towards margin. Gills adnexed, crowded, bluish lilac then buff. Stem purplish, often swollen at base, fibrillose.

Widespread, often in large groups in mixed woodland – also in hedgerows. RW. Late autumn.

Butter Cap – *Collybia butyracea*

Cap: 3 – 6 cm; Height: to 5 cm; Spores: pale cream.

Cap convex becoming flat, often with broad umbo. Ochraceous buff to dark brown with paler margin, drying ivory to grey-brown. Surface greasy.

Gills crowded, ivory-white. Stem brown, flattened, darker and wider towards base, very tough, distinctly hollow. Widespread in woodland, often in large groups. EW, RW. Autumn to early winter.

Lawyer's Wig (Shaggy Ink Cap) – *Coprinus comatus*

Cap: 5 – 15 cm high; Height: to 30 cm; Spores: black.
Cap cylindrical, white, becoming brownish at centre, surface matt breaking into shaggy scales. Gills very close, white then blackening and finally deliquescing into an inky spore-laden liquid. Stem white, cylindrical, often with a fragile, loose ring. At pathsides in woodland, roadsides, stony ground and lawns. GB and Ashmeadow grounds. Late summer and autumn.

Photo: Ken Kitchen

Glistening Ink Cap – *Coprinus micaceus*

Cap: 1 – 4 cm high; Height: to 8 cm; Spores: black.

Cap ovate becoming bell-shaped, grooved from margin towards centre, golden brown with darker centre, surface covered with “sugary” veil remnants especially when young.

Gills crowded, pale, becoming darker and deliquescing.

Stem white. In large tufts on broadleaved stumps and buried roots.

Widespread. GB, EW. Summer to early winter.

Twig Parachute – *Marasmiellus ramealis*

Cap: 0.5 – 1cm; Height: to 1 cm; Spores: white.

Cap convex then flat with small central depression. Whitish with darker centre, papery, wrinkled.

Gills distant, interleaved, white.

Stem white, brown towards base, scurfy. On woody debris and old stems, especially brambles.

Widespread. On all sites. Early autumn.

Yellowing Woodwax – *Hygrophorus discoxanthus*

Cap: 3 – 6 cm; Height: to 6 cm; Spores: white.

Cap variable - convex becoming umbonate or flat, later with depressed centre and undulating margin. White at first then centre becoming yellow-brown, very viscid.

Gills decurrent, distant, white then edges yellowing. Stem white becoming yellow-brown, rooting. In leaf mould with deciduous trees, mainly beech.

Not common but locally frequent in RW, GB and EW (Beech Circle, see back cover). Autumn.

Ochre Brittlegill – *Russula ochroleuca*

Cap: 4 – 10 cm; Height: to 7 cm; Spores: white to pale cream.

Cap convex then flat, often with slight depression or undulating margin. Ochraceous yellow. Gills adnexed, creamy white.

Stem whitish becoming rather grey with age, especially if waterlogged. With deciduous and coniferous trees.

Widespread. Found on all sites. Autumn. This is one of the commonest Russulas in Britain.

Woolly Milkcap – *Lactarius torminosus*

Cap: 4 – 10 cm; Height: to 6 cm; Spores: pale cream.

Cap convex becoming flat, often with shallow depression, margin inrolled and very woolly. Surface fleecy. Pale pinkish orange to salmon, darker at centre, often with indistinct concentric bands.

Gills slightly decurrent, crowded, pinkish cream. Stem paler than cap, downy. Milk white.

Widespread in woodland with birch. GB, RW. Autumn

Bearded Milkcap – *Lactarius pubescens*

Cap: 4 – 10 cm; Height: to 6 cm; Spores: pale cream.

Similar to Woolly Milkcap but: - Cap yellowish cream without banding and margin rather less hairy. Gills yellowish, darker with age.

Stem often has reddish band near apex. Milk white.

Widespread in woodland with birch. On all sites. Autumn.

Yellowdrop Milkcap – *Lactarius chrysorrheus*

Cap: 3 – 7 cm; Height; to 8 cm; Spores: pale straw-yellow.

Cap convex to flat with central depression, margin incurved at first. Pale creamy apricot. Surface slightly felted, often with shallow darker pits. Gills decurrent, pinkish buff.

Stem paler than cap, often flushed pink towards widening base. Milk white *soon becoming lemon yellow on gills or flesh.*

Widespread in woodland with oak. GB, EW, RW. Autumn.

Chanterelle – *Cantharellus cibarius*

Cap: 3 – 10 cm; Height: to 7 cm; Spores: pale cream.

Cap rather flat at first with inrolled margin, becoming depressed at centre, undulating and lobed. Bright egg-yellow. Gills very decurrent, narrow and fold-like, fragile. Concolorous with cap. Stem solid, tapering to base, concolorous or paler. A robust fungus. Smell fruity.

Widespread in deciduous and coniferous woodland. On all sites. Late summer to autumn.

Brown Birch Bolete – *Leccinum scabrum*

Cap: 5 – 12 cm; Height: to 15 cm; Spores: ochre-brown.

Cap hemispherical, smooth, dry (tacky when wet), hazel to dark brown. Pores ivory becoming darker, bruising brownish.

Stem greyish white with woolly dark brown scales which soon become black.

A rather variable fungus. Widespread in woodland with birch. On all sites. Late summer to autumn.

Lurid Bolete – *Boletus luridus*

Cap: 6 – 15 cm; Height: to 14 cm; Spores: olive-brown.

Cap hemispherical to convex. Walnut to olivaceous brown, sometimes paler. Slightly downy at first, becoming smooth. Pores orange red, yellow towards margin.

Stem orange, covered with an orange-red network, deeper red and wider towards base. Whole fungus bruises blue-black when handled and flesh becomes rapidly blue when cut.

Widespread in deciduous woodland. Also found in grassland associated with rock-rose. GB, EW, HW. Summer to autumn.

Birch Polypore (Razor Strop Fungus) – *Piptoporus betulinus*

Width: to 20 cm across; Thickness: to 8 cm; Spores: white.

Initially sub-globose expanding to rounded, kidney-shaped, with inrolled margin. Attached to wood with rudimentary lateral stem. Upper surface smooth, lacquered, pale cream then warm brown to grey brown. Lower surface whitish with minute pores (hand lens).

Flesh tough, corky. Usually solitary on trunks and branches of dead *birch*. Annual but old fruit bodies persist. Very common on all sites. All year. Was used in the past to sharpen razors.

Dryad's Saddle – *Polyporus squamosus*

Width: to 30 cm across; Thickness: to 5 cm; Spores: white.

Brackets rounded/oval, flattish to depressed, undulating, with rounded margin and short lateral stem. Upper surface yellowish orange-brown with dark brown fibrous scales, often in concentric circles. Lower surface ochraceous cream with angular pores. Generally in layers.

Parasitic on broad-leaved trees, often ash. Common. GB, EW. Also in hedges and on stump at corner of Arnside WI car park. Summer.

Chicken of the Woods – *Laetiporus sulphureus*

Width 10 – 40 cm across; Spores: white.

Brackets fan-shaped, irregular, undulating. Thick and fleshy. Upper surface uneven, wrinkled, lemon-yellow to orange-yellow, often with darker margin. Lower surface paler with rounded pores.

Widespread on deciduous trees, especially oak, also yew. EW, GB, GW and look in Longtail Wood. Late spring and summer.

Turkeytail – *Trametes versicolor*

Width: 3 – 6 cm across; Spores: white.

Brackets approximately semi-circular. Upper surface velvety, *concentrically zoned*, rust-brown, grey-blue, blackish green (*colour very variable*), often with cream margin. Lower surface white becoming brownish with very small pores. Thin, tough and leathery.

Grows in overlapping tiers on deciduous wood. Very common and widespread on all sites. All year. Annual but old algae-covered brackets often persist from year to year.

Hairy Curtain Crust – *Stereum hirsutum*

Width: 3 – 8 cm across; Spores: white.

Brackets approximately semi-circular, undulating. Upper surface zoned, reddish ochre, hairy. Lower surface orange-yellow becoming brownish, smooth (*no pores*). Thin, tough, leathery. Often in tiered groups on deciduous stumps, logs and fallen branches. Very common and widespread on all sites. All year. Annual but old brackets may persist.

Common Puffball – *Lycoperdon perlatum*

Width: 2 – 5 cm across; Height: to 8 cm; Spores: olive-brown.

Fungus subglobose with distinct stem. White becoming brownish, covered in short, pointed warts which rub off to leave a mosaic pattern.

Interior white, spongy becoming olivaceous brown and fibrous as spores mature.

Spores dispersed through large pore at apex. On soil in woodland.

Widespread. On all sites. Late summer to autumn.

Pestle Puffball – *Lycoperdon excipuliforme*

Width: 5 – 8 cm across; Height: to 15 cm;
Spores: brown.

Fungus distinctly pestle-shaped. Brownish white becoming darker. Interior whitish becoming purplish brown as spores mature.

Small warts on surface soon disappear leaving a smooth, papery inner wall which breaks open to release spores.

On soil in woodland. Widespread. EW, GW, RW. Also found on grassland RP.

Late summer to autumn.

Hedgehog Puffball (Spiny Puffball) – *Lycoperdon echinatum*

Width: 1 – 4 cm across; Height: to 4 cm; Spores: chocolate-brown.
Fungus subglobose with short stem. Greyish brown with long pointed spines, joined at apex in groups of three or four. Interior whitish then purple-brown as spores mature.

Spores dispersed through a central pore at apex. On soil and litter in deciduous woodland. Occasional in EW and GB under yew, *difficult to see*. Late summer to autumn.

Stump Puffball – *Lycoperdon pyriforme*

Width: 3 – 4 cm across; Height: to 4 cm;
Spores: olive-brown.

Fungus subglobose with short stem. Whitish, soon becoming brown. Surface granular at first, becoming *smooth, papery*. Interior white becoming olive brown as spores mature. Spores dispersed through pore at apex. Very common and widespread on *rotten stumps and logs,* often in large groups.

On all sites. Late summer to autumn.

Sessile Earthstar – *Geastrum fimbriatum*

Width: 2 – 6 cm across when open; Spores: yellow-brown.

Fruit body globose at first, outer wall splitting into 5 to 8 pointed rays which curl back under fungus. Pale greyish brown. Spore-sac globose, stalkless, dark cream to grey-brown. Spores dispersed through protruding fibrillose pore at apex.

Occasional. EW, Leighton Moss. Also in gardens. Autumn

The **Collared Earthstar – *Geastrum triplex***

Width: to 10 cm across when open; Spores: dark yellow-brown.

Bulb-shaped at first, the fleshy outer wall opens into 4 to 8 rays then cracks concentrically leaving the grey-brown spore-sac sitting in a kind of *saucer (collar).* Spores dispersed through protruding pore at apex. In woodland.

Fairly common. GB. Autumn.

Stinkhorn – *Phallus impudicus*

Height: 10 – 20 cm; Spores: pale olive-brown.

Initially a whitish, half-buried, jelly-filled egg-like sac, 3 to 5 cm across from which the fungus emerges.

Stalk robust, white, fibrillose with head covered by a meshed cap thickly coated in dark olive spore-bearing slime.

Smell strong, of rotting meat, attracting insects which disperse the spores.

Common in woods and gardens on buried wood. GB. Autumn

Dog Stinkhorn – *Mutinus caninus*

Height up to 12cm; Spores: olive-brown.

Initially a whitish, half-buried, jelly-filled egg-like sac, 1 – 2 cm across from which the fungus emerges.

Stalk slender, white becoming pale orange, surface pitted. Rather pointed orange-red head covered in olive-green slime containing spores.

Smell faint, sickly.

Occasional on leaf litter, wood chips and very rotten wood. GB, Warton Crag. Autumn.

Jelly Ear – *Auricularia auricula-judae*

Width: 3 – 8 cm across; Spores: white.

Fruiting body ear-shaped. Outer surface rusty brown, minutely hairy.

Inner surface greyish brown, shiny, often wrinkled. Flesh tough, gelatinous.

On deciduous trees, especially elder. Common.

All year. GB, EW

Photo: Chris Weir

Yellow Brain Fungus – *Tremella mesenterica*

Width: 2 – 10 cm across; Spores: white.

Fruiting body golden yellow, soft, gelatinous in irregular lobes and folds. Orange-brown and hard when dry.

Widespread on dead deciduous branches.

All year in woodland and along hedgerows. Roadside at Jack Scout.

Yellow Stagshorn – *Calocera viscosa*

Height: 3 – 8 cm; Spores: white.

Fruiting body deep golden yellow, drying darker. Stems multiply branching with antler-like tips.

Usually in clumps. On stumps and roots of conifers and yew.

Very common. EW, GB, GW. Autumn.

Candlesnuff Fungus – *Xylaria hypoxylon*

Height: 1 – 5 cm; Spores: black.

Fruit body initially cylindrical then branching, branches often antler-like. Black, surface rough, flesh tough.

Upper branches covered in loose, white powdery deposit.

Very common on dead coniferous and deciduous stumps and logs.

All sites. Late autumn.

Dead Man's Fingers – *Xylaria polymorpha*

Height 3 – 8 cm; Spores: black.

Fungus irregularly club-shaped, sometimes lobed and/or flattened with short, slender stalk. Black, surface rough, flesh hard, somewhat cinder-like.

Often in groups on old stumps and logs of deciduous trees.

Very common. All sites. Late summer to autumn. Persistent.

King Alfred's Cakes (Cramp Balls) – *Daldinia concentrica*


Photo: Ken Kitchen

Width: 2 – 10 cm across; Spores: black.

Fruiting body subglobose, then often irregularly shaped. Reddish brown at first but soon black, matt. Flesh very hard, somewhat cinder-like. Persistent, a new layer added each year. Interior zoned, like tree rings. On dead wood, mainly ash. Common. GB, Leighton Moss, Hyning Scout Wood.

Green Elfcup – *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*


Photo: John Leach

Width: 0.1 – 0.5 cm across; Spores: white.

Cup-shaped then may become flattened, distorted. Interior bright blue-green, smooth. Outer surface felted, greyish. often on a short stem. Fruiting body grows on barkless rotten wood of deciduous trees, especially oak. Often in untidy groups.
Associated wood is stained green by the mycelium. Green stained wood common on all sites (all year). Fruiting bodies occasional. EW. The stained wood is used in marquetry to produce "Tunbridge Ware".

Scarlet Elfcup – *Sarcoscypha austriaca*


Photos: Ken Kitchen

Width: 1 – 4 cm across; Spores: white.

Cup-shaped at first, then irregular as it expands. Interior scarlet, smooth. Outer surface with scurfy whitish coating. Often in large groups on rotting woody debris and buried wood. Occasional but locally common. Late winter to spring. Leighton Moss, Middlebarrow Wood.

Yellowing Woodwax at Beech Circle, Eaves Wood, September 2013

Jack Scout

Clouded Agaric ring on Redhills Pasture, October 2004