

Ardley Quarry

3 November 2024



Sunday, November 3rd, saw the FSO's first visit to Ardley Quarry, a large old limestone-working site, part of which is now an SSSI and BBOWT Local Wildlife Trust nature reserve.

Some parts of the reserve are steep and slippery, especially in wet weather, and carry a risk of sliding down the railway embankment. We chose the flatter part, starting through a field used by dog walkers, and then into the more open parts of the reserve, with grassland, scrub and a pond. These have very different fungal communities. *photo left DK*

The field has both Clustered and Gristly Domecaps (*Lyophyllum decastes* and *Lyophyllum loricatum*). An even more evocative name is the Weeping Widow (*Lacrymaria lacrimabunda*). This looks like an unexciting medium-sized brown felty toadstool, but it exudes drops like tears, and these turn black with its spores, so even its tears are in mourning.

In the reserve field, with its shallow covering of turf and moss over the quarried surface, the grey day was brightened by a good show of waxcaps of several colours. One of the red species turned out to be the Bitter Waxcap (*Hygrocybe mucronella*). This, like many in the group, is identified by taste, in this case on the tip of the tongue. *photo DK*



Fortunately, waxcaps aren't poisonous, though some of them are slimy enough to be appropriate for the Hallowe'en period, such as these *Hygrocybe conica*, known as Witch's Hats or Blackening Waxcaps. *photo CH*



Near the pond, was the Split Gill (*Schizophyllum commune*). These furry white 'hands' look quite innocent in the wild on their damp branch, but they can also appear in quantity in plastic-wrapped haybales, and can cause the possibly fatal disease 'Farmer's Lung' if the spores are breathed in. *photo CJH*



Here are some other fungi that we saw:



Auricularia auricula

(Jelly Ears)

photo DK



Apioperdon pyriforme

(Stump Puffballs)

photo CH



Chondrostereum purpureum

(Silverleaf Fungus)

photo CH



Inocybe or Cortinarius sp.

(to be identified)

photo DK



Clavaria fragilis (Fairy Finger)

photo CH



Clavulinopsis corniculata
(Meadow Coral)

photo CH

Two different views of *Bolbitius titubans* (Yellow Field Cap), photo left DK, right CH



Report by C. M. Jackson-Houlston

Photos: Denis Kennedy (DK), Christopher Hoskin (CH) and C. M. Jackson-Houlston (CJH)



photo CH