

**Sturt Copse, East End  
23 October 2024**

Eight of us gathered on this dry morning to investigate a small, wooded area that is an SSSI and part of the Blenheim Palace Estate which we had not surveyed before. Permission for the survey was granted by the estate on the understanding that we would not pick or remove any fungi and only remove part of a specimen if necessary for further identification work.

Things did not look promising at first as there were few fruiting bodies around, but we soon found the usual suspects of *Daldinia concentrica*, *Auricularia auricula-judae* and *Xylaria hypoxylon*.

Then as the walk proceeded more fruiting bodies were found but only in ones and twos with the only group found in number being *Mycena* on both leaf litter and fallen wood. Here are some examples found; *Mycena haematopus*, *Hemimycena cucullata* and *Mycena crocata*.



In addition to being few in numbers the specimens we found were mainly in a state of decay either drying (as above with the *Mycena haematopus* and *crocata*) or being reduced to slime, both of which made identifications tricky throughout.



In a state of reduction to slime, we found a glorious stand of *Pholiota aurivella*, but in a perfect state, albeit difficult to access under a fallen tree, was this *Agaricus xanthodermus* (left) which had to be bruised to show its yellowing properties. There were two fruiting bodies, with this one in an immature state but its partner on the other side was more mature and open.

The copse, in general, has a lot of dead and rotten wood lying around which has provided a good habitat for resupinate fungi but unfortunately none of us felt sufficiently confident to provide identifications. However, as always, we marveled at what we saw. A couple of brackets we felt confident with were *Plicatura crispa*, which has become more common in recent years, and *Postia tephroleuca* (Greying Bracket).

In addition to resupinates we saw the bright colours of at least four slime moulds shining out of the gloom including this golden example which is probably *Tubifera cf ferruginosa*.



The find of the survey however was towards the end. On a fallen tree trunk, so old and denuded of bark it was difficult to be certain what it was, we found three very young *Rhodotus palmatus* – Wrinkled Peach. Jewels in the dark with plentiful oozing ‘juice’. A real treat to end an interesting and enjoyable survey.



Report by Julia Huggins, with thanks to Denis Kennedy in the main for the admirable photographs, but also Caroline Jackson-Houlston for the last gem.