

**The Warburg BBOWT Reserve
Sunday 20th October 2024**

On a damp, grey and blustery morning eight of us met up in defiance of the weather and storm warnings but with our fingers crossed. After a very wet start, we were rewarded with improving conditions as the morning progressed. This was a shared meeting with another local society, the Thames Valley Fungus Group, and we welcomed one new FSO member, Kate. I think it's fair to say that what we lacked in numbers we made up for with interest and enthusiasm.

A walk up a track through ankle deep mud and water led to a rewarding climb up a slope through mixed woodland, dominated by hazel, into traditional Chiltern beech woodland. It was evident from the first that this was a day of bonnets (*Mycena*), knights, (*Tricholoma*) and webcaps (*Cortinarius*).



Left is *Mycena haematopus* (Burgundydrop Bonnet) which seems to be abundant this season and has been found on most surveys.

Mycena are prolific on woody debris whether on stumps, twigs or logs and can certainly be found almost everywhere this season, whereas *Tricholoma* and *Cortinarius* can be found emerging through leaf litter but are easily missed as they are disguised by the leaves.

Cortinarius are notoriously difficult to identify without further analysis and so it proved with a number of different *Cortinarius* requiring DNA analysis to give us some identification.



One unusual find on the slope under hazel was a waxcap (these are usually associated with grassland). However occasionally one of the blackening waxcaps can be found in wooded areas so it was expected this specimen would be *Hygrocybe conica*. The specimens we found were very immature and small, and very red in colour. The most mature example was taken for further study, and it did not blacken at all. In conclusion, we believe it to be *Hygrocybe coccinea*.

Plentiful at the site were the unusual and distinctive saddles *Helvella crispa* (White Saddle) and *Helvella lacunosa* (Elfin Saddle). Other favourites found included the Blue Roundhead (*Stropharia caerulea*)—some very faded by the rain, in the beech leaf litter and the Porcelain fungus (*Mucidula mucida*) on fallen beech branches.



In addition to the fungi a couple of slime moulds were found including this distinctive specimen, which is possibly a *Stemonitis* sp, but we need further study to determine ID.

In case the close-up on the left is a bit scary, here is a wider view of it *in situ* on the right. Note that the bluey green in the background is the fruiting body of *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, the Green Elfcup, which was sharing the branch with the slime mould.



Notable by their absence were *Russula* (Brittlegills) and *Lactarius* (Milkcaps) despite a seemingly ideal habitat. Every season is a different one!

Report by Julia Huggins with thanks to Daisy Yiangou and Harold Gough for the photographs.