

Pembrokeshire Fungus Recording Network

(www.pembsfungi.org.uk)

Newsletter (3/2009)

Records

Red Data Book/local BAP species: Willow Blister (*Cryptomyces maximus*), a rare Red Data Book species, was recently found by Jane Hodges at Trefeiddan, near St. David's. Specimens were subsequently sent to Kew for verification along with fresh samples from a known site at Dowrog, just 3 miles away from the new location. The importance of these sites is reinforced by the fact that all other British records for the species are over 40 years old.



Cryptomyces maximus



Entoloma clypeatum

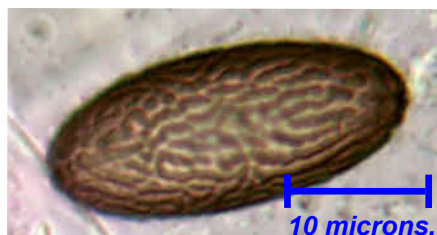
First County record: The West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre recently organised a recording day near Narberth. Several interesting fungus records were obtained including a County first: a collection of the Shield Pinkgill (*Entoloma clypeatum*) found by Paddy Jenks. True to the text-book description, this spring-fruiting pinkgill was found growing in soil at the base of a Hawthorn bush.

Dung fungi: Late winter/early spring can be a fairly quiet part of the year, but at least dung fungi can usually be found - and can be remarkably attractive, especially when viewed through a microscope.

The example shown here is a very common species found on cattle dung called *Ascobolus stercoraria* (*A. furfuraceus* in some books). The fruiting bodies are typically up to 5 mm wide with a yellow-green disc-like surface.



As the fruiting bodies mature, the surface darkens as it becomes dotted with capsules (asci) which each hold eight purplish-brown spores. The spores are quite large - typically 18 to 30 microns long and show a characteristic brain-like pattern on the surface.



When conditions are suitable, the spores are projected from the asci. This is particularly striking if a mature fruiting body is disturbed whilst being viewed under a stereo microscope. The darkened surface immediately reverts to a pale yellow-green colour as the cloud of dark spores is released.



Lycoperdon pyriforme

Earthstars and puffballs: A recent talk to the Hayscastle Environmental Group produced a new record for the Collared Earthstar (*Geastrum triplex*) - David Baster brought along a collection of fruitbodies collected from his garden last Autumn.

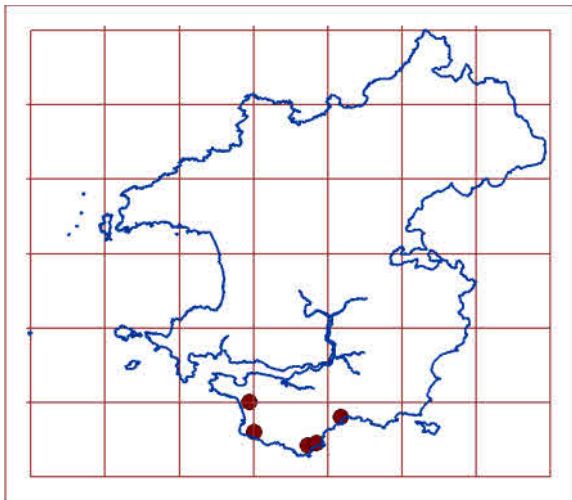
A few days later Holly Harries collected a specimen of the Stump Puffball (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*) from willow alongside a public path near East Williamston.

Pembrokeshire Red Data List

Hygrocybe calciphila

The most recent UK Red Data List for fungi was issued as a preliminary assessment in 2006. The purpose of the list is to identify those species which are regarded as being under threat.

An example of a Red Data List species found in Pembrokeshire is *Hygrocybe calciphila*, a small orange-red waxcap, typically growing up to 1 inch in diameter. It is restricted to calcareous soil - usually appearing in unimproved and dune grassland.



The distribution map shows how this species is restricted to five sites on the south Pembrokeshire coast, ranging from Kilpaison burrows in the west, through to the dunes at Freshwater East.

The largest concentration of fruiting bodies found so far is at Stackpole, especially in the Mere Pool Valley and the dune grassland areas of Stackpole Warren.

A very similar and closely related species is *Hygrocybe miniata*. However, this waxcap can be distinguished by its preference for acid conditions and slightly pear-shaped spores which are often constricted in the centre. *H. calciphila* spores are usually ellipsoid and never constricted.

Microscopes

The Network has purchased a copy of a training video produced by Leeds University. It provides an excellent introduction to the use of a biological microscope and is available for loan by network members. Please contact me for more information (DJH).

Regional news

Ceredigion now has a County Fungus Recorder: Steve Chambers works for the Welsh Assembly Government - Rural Affairs Department and has particular interest and expertise in lower plants. Contact details for all West Wales Recorders can be found on the West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre website (follow the link on the PFRN website links page).

Bruce Langridge reports that plans are well advanced in Carmarthenshire for the formation of a group based at the National Botanic Gardens. Bruce has been supported in this venture by Philip Jones (Carmarthenshire County Recorder) and Nigel Stringer, both of whom have provided our own network with considerable encouragement and help.

Waxcap article

Nigel Stringer has written an article for Llanelli Naturalists entitled "A History of Waxcap recording in Carmarthenshire". This is an excellent read for any grassland enthusiast and can be downloaded from Gareth Griffith's website. Follow the PFRN website link to the Aberystwyth University waxcap site, then navigate to the "Waxcap links" page for a host of interesting articles and reports.

David Harries (April 2009)