

## Annual Sightings for 2014.

### **January**

The wettest month since records began in 1910, plenty of mud in the wood but still no snow. Early in the month a group of oyster mushrooms appeared at the Knaves Hill public footpath entrance. They seemed to be growing out of the large oak timbers which had been placed there about 18 months earlier to edge the path with. I have never seen fungi on treated timbers



before but these were growing out from between the large timber posts and not actually through the wood. These were first spotted by Dave & Sue Booth who kindly supplied this photo of them.

There were a few sightings of Jelly Ear Fungus (*Auricularia auricula-judae*) in the old wood. This is mainly seen in winter and spring. It grows mainly on dead elder trees and on fallen branches in damp and shady woods, but occasionally you may also find it growing on other kinds of hardwood. Auricula is a latin word meaning ear. Judae means Judas, the Jew who it is said betrayed Jesus. Older fungi guides may list this species under the common name Jew's Ear. This is reference to the belief that Judas Iscariot hanged himself on an Elder tree in shame after betraying Jesus Christ to his executioners.

### **February**

With the continuing rain, both the old and new woods where ankle deep in mud, although there was no snow at all. These conditions would not have affected the fungi but it made walking and searching the woods extremely difficult, needless to say I didn't visit the woods at all during the month nor did anyone report any fungi sightings.

### **March**

Early arrival of spring with primroses in full bloom, another Jelly Ear found in the old wood.

### **April**

Bluebells in full bloom, but no new fungi seen.

## **May**

A large troop of Glistening Inkcaps sighted on old rotten logs beside the path on the southern end of the old wood. Previous sightings of this species was in October 2012 at the northern end of the old wood. The caps are covered with mica scales when fresh which produce a glistening effect, hence its name. However the scales soon fall off. The pale cream gills of the fungus quickly turn to a sodden black colour resembling ink.

## **June**

In mid-June the Chicken of the Woods fungi made a reappearance on the same old fallen, long dead, tree at the northern corner of the old wood, last seen in early June 2012. It was already a few weeks old and past its best. No other fungi were spotted during the month.

However on the 18<sup>th</sup> some 20 bee orchids were seen at the entrance to the hazel coppice area plus 6 common spotted orchids. Rory's pond was also very full and 19 common spotted orchids were seen in the hawthorn bushes behind the pond.

## **July**

In mid-July several Cramp Balls were sighted on an old dead Ash tree in the old wood. This species had been seen previously on a different tree about 30 metres away, in January 2012. These uneven, ball-shaped black fruit bodies are hard but relatively light. When young, they are a dark rusty brown colour, blackening with age. When cut in half they reveal concentric black and silver/grey rings. Traditionally used as a preventative for cramp, they are also known as King Alfred's Cakes for their resemblance to the cakes the Saxon king supposedly burnt. Otherwise there were no new sightings in July.

## **August**

Visited the old wood on the 8<sup>th</sup> August no fungi sightings at all, even the Giant Polypore on the signature tree had not yet made its annual appearance.

## **September**

The Giant Polypore finally made its annual reappearance on the 'Signature Tree' but only a very small clump, also another one reappeared on the dead tree between the two main entrance gates, also rather small.

Dave & Sue Booth spotted a new fungi in the Old Wood, a Blushing Bracket, pictured. This is the first sighting of this species in the wood and has been added to the definitive list. The tubes and pores are white at first, becoming beige and ageing to grey, the underside bruises pinkish-brown when handled, hence its name. Most of the pores are closed slits, but some form maze-like patterns. (Image below shows the underside pores)



The three tiny bracket fungi (largest was 4 cms across) were on a small dead branch, maybe wild cherry, in the centre area of Bluebell Wood at map grid G6.

The Golden Scalycap last seen in October 2011 made its first reappearance in the bottom of the hollow dead ash tree at map grid G6

### **October**

Several species made reappearances which included a large group of Glistening Inkcaps, also sighted in May but in another part of the Old Wood. Alas no new species found.

### **November**

A couple of familiar species made reappearances, the Turkeytail and a single Jelly Ear. Both of which regularly fruit throughout the year. Alas no new species found.

### **December**

Similar to November with a few returning species spotted, otherwise no new species found. After 3 years of recording the fungi in Linslade Wood, 39 species have been identified and photographed. This definitive list and all of the fungi images are available to view on this website. Further updates are not anticipated.