

President: Geoff Corney Editor: Joanne Colthup. Newsletter No 75 Spring 2016

Chairman's Report.

Welcome to our summer season of talks and walks, and I hope that you will find something in our programme which you will be able to attend.

One thing you might like to consider, is joining us on our field trip, which this year is in the wonderful Berkshire countryside.

I look forward to seeing you in the summer and hope that you can make the most of any really nice weather.

Evelyn Crispe

Saturday Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> The orchard at Pear Wood

The afternoon was warm and sunny as a good number of us gathered in the grassy open space at Pear Wood for a social afternoon. Rosemary and Claire had invited neighbours, provided seating, soft drinks and fingers foods. Conversation was flowing, and those of us who wished, wandered to the nearby fruit trees to pick as much as we wanted. It was a good year for apples, the trees were laden. At the end of the afternoon we were given a tour of the wood and lake

Saturday Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>. Fungus Walk in Pear Wood. Leaders: Claire Abbott and Rosemary Etheridge.

Ten of us met in Pear Wood for our annual fungus walk. The weather stayed dry and we had a pleasant walk round the site. We found over thirty species of fungus. The most spectacular was the Orange Peel fungus near the gate.

The full list of identified fungi is given below. In addition we saw several brackets and other bark fungi and a few "little brown things" which defied identification.

Orange Peel Fungus	<i>Aleuria aurantia</i>	Wood Wart	<i>Hypoxylon fuscum</i>
Honey Fungus	<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	The Deceiver	<i>Laccaria laccata</i>
Ear Fungus	<i>Auricularia auricularia</i>	Curry Scented Milkcap	<i>Lactarius campharatus</i>
Yellow Fingers	<i>Calocera cornea</i>	Common Puff Ball	
Trumpet Chanterelle	<i>Cantharellus infundibuliformis</i>		<i>Lycoperdon periatum</i>
Coral Fungus	<i>Clavulina coralloides</i>	Pear-shaped Puffball	<i>Lycoperdon pyiforme</i>
Fairy Clubs	<i>Clavulinopsis helvola</i>	Angels' Bonnet	<i>Mycena arcangeliana</i>
Trooping Funnel	<i>Clitocybe geotropa</i>	Bonnet Bell Cap	<i>Mycena galericulata</i>
Butter Cap	<i>Collybia butyracea</i>	Lilac Bell Cap	<i>Mycena pura</i>
Russet Tough Shank	<i>Collybia butyryophila</i>	Bark Bonnet	<i>Mycena speirea</i>
Glistening Ink cap	<i>Coprinus micaceus</i>	Bitter Oyster	<i>Panellus stipiticus</i>
Turkey Tail	<i>Coriolis versicolor</i>	Birch Polypore	<i>Polyporus betulinum</i>
Cramp Ball	<i>Daldinia concentrica</i>	Clean Air Fungus	<i>Rhystisma acerinum</i>
Beech Barkspot	<i>Diatrype disciformis</i>	Common Yellow	<i>Russula ochroleuca</i>
Black Witches Butter	<i>Exidia nigricans</i>	Russula	

White Brain Fungus	<i>Exidia thuretiana</i>	Common Earth Ball	<i>Scleroderma</i>
Meadow Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe pratensis</i>		<i>aurantium</i>
Hyphodontia sambuci	<i>Hyphodontia sambuci</i>	Tooth Fungus	<i>Steccherinum sp.</i>
Sulphur Tuft	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Candle Snuff	<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Oct. Oxhey Woods for Autumn Colour, Fungi & Sculptures

Leader: Elizabeth Stainthorpe

We had pleasant autumn morning for our walk around the 1km sculpture trail in Oxhey Woods. The trees were beginning to change colour and the sculptures all carved out of oak were fascinating. The trail was only 1km and the path well maintained so it made for easy walking. To mention some of the interesting sculptures, at the start of the trail we found a large Stag Beetle high in an oak tree. A short distance on, a large frog sat in the middle of a small pond. An enormous xylophone tempted us to pick up a stick and play, though few of us were able to anything tuneful. We came across a strange sight, a living room with an arm chair and a TV. It seemed odd to me and not fitting for a nature trail! The fungi was disappointing though we did see splendid Fly Agaric *Amantia muscaria*, Dead Man's Fingers *Xylaria hypoxylon*.. At the end of the trail we found a pleasant cafe with a very varied menu for lunch.

Stanmore Common Nature Trail 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. Leader: John Hollingdale

A northerly wind was just being to blow as six members set off on the short nature trail of about a mile.

We found post two and went through woodland that had a couple of leaning birch trees overhanging the path. Crossing two streams, one with a bridge and one without, we came to the 'Foxes Earth' mound which, according to the leaflet, was an ancient rabbit warren. It used to be known as Boudicca's grave.

The open space named Cerrisland was next. The name refers to the large Turkey Oak found here; all small ones are removed by the wardens. *Calluna vulgaris* (Ling) can be found here too. Also on the right, can be seen a 200 year old Hawthorn; one of the oldest in Southern England we were told. Past an oak with 'witches broom' twigs and over the stream, known as Tykes Water we entered Oakmead; the large multi-stemmed Oak stands in the middle. Could this be as a result of coppicing or a cache of acorns by Jays or squirrels? Margaret suggested that it could be a 'Bundle Oak' where several saplings are planted together. We noticed more than one multi-stemmed oak later on in the walk.

The next open area reached was Bluebell Heath where two scrapes had been created. This consisted of the top soil being removed by a bulldozer and piled up on the side of this open area effectively creating a barrier between the surrounding woodland and the open space. At the eastern end of Bluebell Heath, the leaflet told us, was a very old apple tree but we couldn't identify it. It would be best to have another walk in April/May when it is blooming.

We then made our way back across Pynding Mersc (an enclosed marshland) the Glade and back to the car park.

It would, as mentioned above, be more interesting to visit this site when flowers were out and more insects etc. could be seen.

Friday January 29<sup>th</sup>. Morning walk at Stocker's Lake. Rickmansworth. Leader: Brian Hunter

On a cloudy, cold and windy day, five members braved the weather to look for birds on Bury Lake, the northern end of Stocker's Lake and the adjacent area, being joined by three less mobile members afterwards for coffee in the Aquadrome cafe.

One highlight was observing, quite close, a pair of those lovely wintering ducks , Goldeneye, while they were preening. Another was watching a Red Kite overhead. We also saw a Red-wing and on the far side of Stocker's Lake a Little Egret. It was good to see many Widgeon in their bright new spring plumage and calling with their distinctive exited yelps.

Other birds seen on or near the water were Heron, Cormorant, Pochard, Mallard, Gadwall, Tufted Duck, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Coot, Moorhen, Great Crested Grebe, Black-Headed Gull, Herring Gull and Lesser Black-Backed Gull.

The following birds were also noted on the visit:- Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Lapwing, Woodpigeon, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackbird, Robin, Wren, House Sparrow, Blue Tit, Great Tit, and Long- Tailed Tit.

It is interesting to note that on the previous day I had seen, on the same route, many more Redwings, many Fieldfares (though distant) and two Egyptian Geese. So today we were not so lucky!

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February Morning Walk Scotsbridge Mill by River Chess Rickmanswoth.  
Leader: John Hollingdale

Four of us arrived at the mill, albeit in three different car parks. I was listing the birds seen. Jackdaws were heard calling from the car park as was a Chaffinch. Others were heard around the walk. Seen at the same spot were Crows, three Buzzards in the distance and nearer two Red Kites. Also noted here was a Magpie and were heard a Greater - spotted Woodpecker 'chipping' away. Along the walk we saw a Robin, Black-headed Gulls and a Kestrel. A Blue Tit was heard. Wood Pigeons were seen and along the Chess was a Little Egret. It reluctantly flew into a holly on the far bank and we could see its yellow feet quite plainly. A wren flew low across the path. Further along we heard a Great Tit and what I think was a Mistle Thrush. However an unidentified group of birds were twittering from the depths of a group of Holly bushes. The walk back through the fields was a little challenging, being quite slippery. We finished up in the Scotsbridge Mill for a pleasant lunch. Under the mill was a fish pass for Salmon that had been recently installed. I don't know how many Salmon had been seen using it through.

We are sorry to have to report the passing of Vera Murray- Fowler who had been an active member since 1987. Vera died on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, and donated her body to medical research, so there was no funeral. However there will be a celebration of the life of Vera at the Tithe Barn, Headstone Manor on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April from 3pm until 7pm. All members are invited.