

Tyntesfield Audit, 25 February 2022



Polyporus brumalis - the Winter Polypore

As expected, the February Audit was a little sparse, only 22 species being found. Most winter fungi have now finished fruiting and it has not yet been warm enough for the spring fungi to have developed. Two winter fungi were, however, exceptional. The most beautiful was a perfect example of *Polyporus brumalis* (see above), growing on a felled tree branch. The other was *Sarcoscypha austriaca* (Scarlet Elfcup). We have noticed a general increase in frequency of Elf cups over the last few years. Initially, they were seen at only one site but are now scattered throughout the woodland.

The most interesting fungus was found on the South Lawn under a Cedar. Unfortunately, when we found it it did not seem worthy of a photograph. It was small (2cm), pale brown with a small pimple on the cap. The stipe was furry. Microscopic examination revealed simple pale brown ellipsoid spores. However, the gill edge was rich in remarkable large spear-like cystidia (see below). After much attention to keys etc, it was suggested that I might see if it had any smell. Instantly, the smell of linseed oil revealed its obvious identification - *Macrocystidia cucumis*, the only fungus with such a smell and with similar cystidia (hence its name). The only problem, and the cause of the initial confusion, was that the sample found did not look like the normal form of this species. However, consultation of Fungi of Temperate Europe revealed the answer - it was a perfect example of *Macrocystidia cucumis* var *latifolia*, a very rarely reported species!

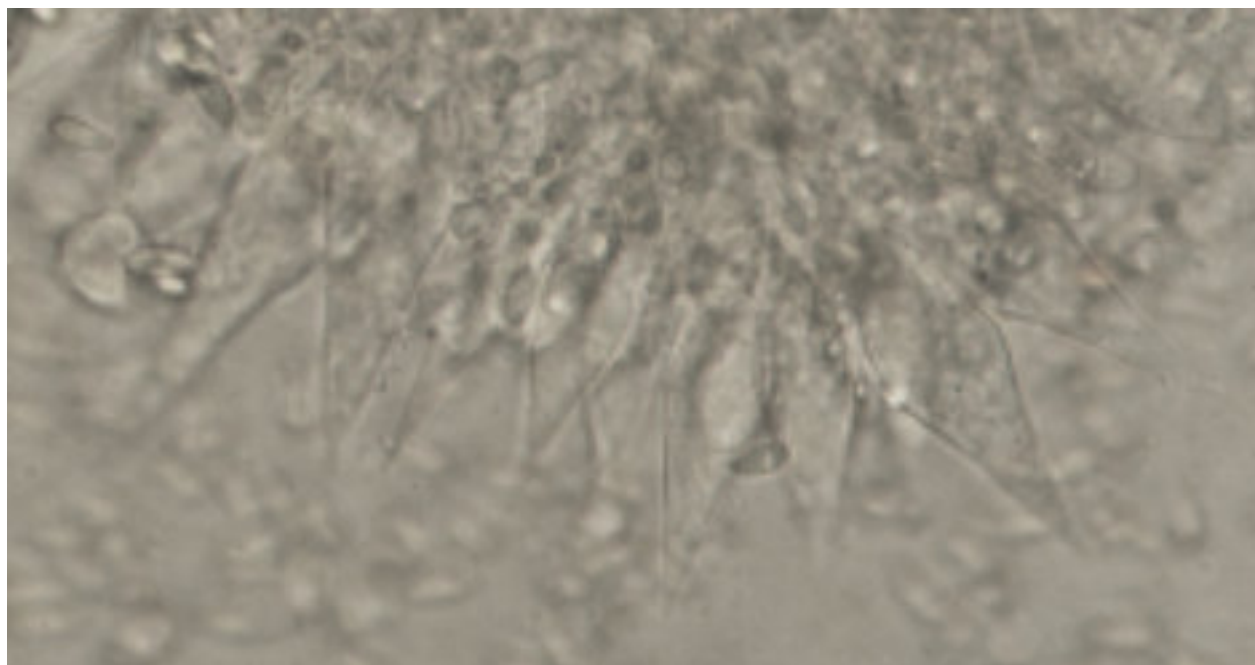
List of Fungi

Chondrostereum purpureum
Clitocybe fragrans
Dacrymyces stillatus
Daldinia concentrica
Galerina clavata
Ganoderma australe
Gymnopilus penetrans

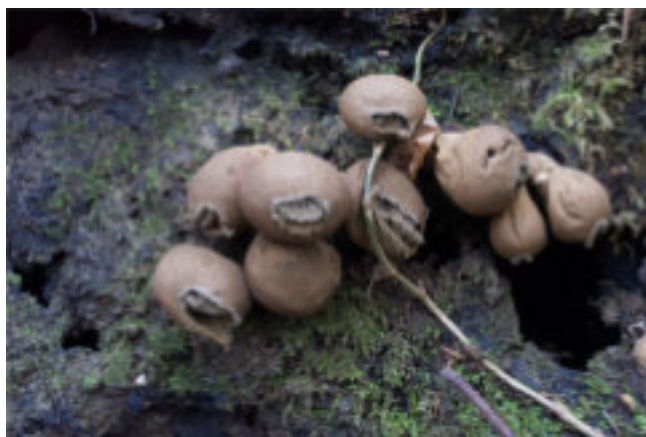
Hymenochaete rubiginosa
Kretzschmaria deusta
Lycoperdon pyriforme
Macrocystidia cucumis var. *latifolia*
Panaeolus acuminatus
Peziza micropus
Polyporus brumalis

Puccinia caricina
Sarcoscypha austriaca
Stereum rugosum
Stereum subtomentosum
Stropharia pseudocyanea
Trametes gibbosa
Trametes versicolor
Tubaria furfuracea

Cystidia on the gill edge of *Macrocystidia cucumis* var *latifolia*: these were large and sharply pointed. Such a shape is unusual, but absolutely typical of this species. We will make careful observations under the Cedar tree for further examples in the future.



Two fungi at the base of the remains of a beech tree near the exit road in Farm Plantation: a collection of Stump Puffballs (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*) (below left) and extremely large examples of *Ganoderma australe* (below right) The presence of such large infestations suggests that the large dead stump may well be unstable.



Scarlet Elfcups (*Sarcoscypha austriaca*). This fungus always brightens a winter's day. The species grows predominantly on moss-covered twigs and branches. Several were seen on a log pile at the top of the hill, but others were spotted at various places throughout the woodland. It appears to be increasing in frequency in the Tynesfield woodlands.

