

EXCITING FINDS from Kenwood and Hampstead Heath

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It is close to 20 years now since I first began taking an interest in the larger fungi of Hampstead Heath and in more recent years the fertile grounds of the adjoining Kenwood Estate. My, how time flies when one is engrossed in such an alluring interest as that of the larger fungi!

As those who have trod a similar path will know, as the years roll by it becomes increasingly difficult to add to the list of recorded fungi from the local patch that you know so well, not least those that are very difficult to determine without the appropriate literature to hand. However, every year there are always one or two or if you are lucky three or four species that take you by surprise by their sudden appearance among those that appear more consistently. The following are some of those unusual species recorded during 2010 & 2011.

Buchwaldoboletus lignicola Fig. 1

When I received a call from the Head Tree Officer on Hampstead Heath about a *Boletus* emerging

from the roots of a Conifer, his description sounded unusual and worth investigating. Luckily I was available and the site was nearby, so I dropped what I was doing and hotfooted it to the location, where it wasn't too difficult to ascertain that this was the rarely recorded *Buchwaldoboletus lignicola*. It seemed to be the year for this species, with the editor of this very journal also recording it around the same time from three sites and there was a further record new to Kew Gardens. *B. lignicola* is usually found associating with the parasitic polypore *Phaeolus schweinitzii* but the conifer from which it was growing showed no sign of this species. It could be that the *Phaeolus* mycelium is in the roots of the tree and *B. lignicola* is/was associating with this. I have never seen fruitbodies of *P. schweinitzii* with this particular conifer and it is an area that I have visited every year for the past 15 years.

According to the Fungal Records Database of Britain & Ireland this would be the first record for Middlesex and of course Hampstead Heath.



Fig. 1. *Buchwaldoboletus lignicola* – Hampstead Heath. Photograph © Andy Overall.

*Flat 2, 39 Northend Road, Golders Green, London NW11 7RJ

Details of the illustrated collection

Cap 25–65 mm diameter, convex to flat, velutinous and olive-brown, margin inrolled for a long time. Pores fairly large, irregular or round, with a raised edge to some, blueing, attachment decurrent when immature becoming adnexed-notched with maturity. Stem 20–48 x 5–14 mm, cylindrical, tapered, concolorous with cap, yet reddening somewhat, apex remaining yellow, covered in tiny brown scales (floculi). Spores ellipsoid, thick-walled and spiny, 7.0 (–9.0) x 3.0 (–4.0) μm .

***Inocybe haemacta* Fig. 2**

I am sure that most field mycologists have encountered species, which, though reappearing over a number of years, have escaped a satisfactory identification. Whether due to lack of suitable literature on a given genus or other constraints, one is never fully satisfied with the determination assigned, if any. I have had one such species that I finally managed to pin down, some twelve years after actually seeing it for the first time. The genus in question is *Inocybe*, (not an easy genus at the best of times) and the species in question, *Inocybe haemacta*. *Inocybe* is not a genus that I am terribly at ease with (but getting better) and this species is not easy to pick out with the untrained eye. Thanks to a combination of the English translation of *Inocybe in Bavaria* by J. Stangl and Alan Outen and Penny Cullington's *Keys to the British Species of Inocybe*, I was finally able to reach a conclusion.

It is a species that could easily be confused with *I. corydalina* because of its greenish tones but it lacks the fruity smell typical of that species. Instead, it has an unpleasant smell, one that is manure-like. It also has reddening flesh.

Details of the illustrated collection

Cap 22–42 mm diameter, conical to convex, with dark brown fibrils on a light brown ground and a dark solid, central disc with green tones. Gills emarginate - adnate, of varying lengths, greyish to brown with a white edge. Stem 33–44 x 4–9 mm, cylindrical, greyish white, darkening in lower half, scaly with age, slightly swollen at base. Flesh in stem blue-grey half way down when cut in section, base appearing creamy yellow. Some parts reddening where eaten and where cut. Spores smooth, amygdaliform, 8.0 (-10.0) x 5.0 (-6.5) μm . Cheilo- and pleurocystidia sublageniform with apical crystals. This and earlier collections were associated with *Quercus robur* on sandy soil.

***Cortinarius subbalaustinus* Fig. 3**

I very nearly missed this species, as it was almost hidden in ivy and although it has quite vibrant rich red-brown colouration, it actually blended very well with the green of the leaves. *Cortinarius subbalaustinus* was a new find for me and caused a fair amount of head scratching before I arrived at my determination. This collection was associated with either beech or hornbeam, both of which are close by.



Fig. 2. *Inocybe haemacta*, Hampstead Heath. Photograph © Andy Overall.



Fig. 3. *Cortinarius subbalaustinus*, Kenwood Estate, with *Fagus* and *Carpinus*. Photograph © Andy Overall.

Details of illustrated collection

Cap 72–125 mm in diameter, a rich red-brown, smooth, glabrous and hygrophorous, campanulate to convex. Margin cream-white when immature and remaining pale with maturity. Gills cinnamon to rust brown, broad and fairly crowded with differing lengths, edge crenulate and paler. Stem 80–100 x 11–21 mm, cylindrical, stuffed, base slightly swollen, rarely tapered, outer surface white with red-brown fibrils. Flesh with a cream and red-brown marbled effect. The general effect is of a large species with the red-brown, smooth cap contrasting with the very pale, almost smooth stem, showing some white traces on the margin of the cap.

Russula graveolens f. *purpurissata* Fig. 4

The grounds of Kenwood House are very different from those of Hampstead Heath proper, having been landscaped by Humphry Repton in the 18th century. Two centuries later, as a result of this designed landscape, the varied habitat comprises woodlands with many veteran oaks, and grasslands which produce some very nice fungi. Beech, oak and sweet chestnut trees skirt the edges of old pasture ground and associating with these trees are a wide variety of species from genera such as *Russula*, *Boletus* and *Amanita*. Just in

this past year I recorded the uncommon *Russula faginea* with one of the beech trees.

The colour range within *Russula graveolens*, a species related to *R. xerampelina*, but growing with oaks rather than pines, can be quite astounding. One of the more beautiful forms I identified is *R. graveolens* f. *purpurissata*, following Sarnari's *Genere Russula in Europa*, Vol 2: 873.

Details of illustrated collection

Cap 65–81 mm in diameter, convex to flat, red-purple with a darker centre, matt, margin a little sulcate. Gills white, well spaced, and broad with a browning edge, thick and brittle. Stem 62–75 x 17–19 mm, white, browning with age and handling. Smell of crustaceans. Spores subglobose without reticulum, 9.0 (- 10) x 8.0 (- 9.0) μm .

Russula pseudoaffinis Fig. 5

At the beginning of the millenium I made a collection of *Russula* that had velar remnants on the cap surface. This was *Russula pseudoaffinis* and was new to Britain at the time. Subsequently I have recorded this species again from both Kenwood and Hampstead Heath. I include it here again, in more detail.



Fig. 4. *Russula graveolens* forma *purpurissata*, Kenwood Estate, under *Quercus*. Photograph © Andy Overall.



Fig. 5. *Russula pseudoaffinis*, Kenwood Estate, under *Tilia*. Photograph © Andy Overall.

Details of illustrated collection

Cap 30-70mm diameter, convex to flat, invariably with a sunken centre. The dark brown cap surface has an attractive tessellated pattern, the brown cuticle cracking to expose the lighter ground beneath. The dark patches of cuticle are decorated by a frosting of light grey velar remnants, the cap centre often appearing silvery. Margin sulcate and a little warty. Gills white, crowded, adnate to sub-decurrent, browning from the edge with age and on handling, fairly shallow, smell not strong or distinct. Stem 40–70 x 10 mm, cylindrical, tapering toward the base, white and browning upon handling and with maturity. Not tough, easily broken, chambered inside. Spores 6.1 (-7.7) x 5.3 (-6.1) μm , subglobose with small warts and no connecting lines. Dermocystidia absent. Cells of velar remnants cylindrical, narrow with vacuoles. Associating with *Tilia*.

Amanita franchetii Figs 6 & 7

One species of *Amanita*, which I have now recorded from a number of different locations on both Hampstead Heath and Kenwood, is the rarely recorded *Amanita franchetii*. I first recorded this species on the Heath extension with *Tilia* back in 2001 and I have since recorded it

with *Quercus* and *Carpinus*. It is very much like a small *A. rubescens* but with a bright yellow veil, which when immature covers the cap and stem resulting in a quite beautiful looking species.

Details of illustrated collection

Cap 22–56mm diameter, dome-shaped initially, and soon becoming convex then flat, mid brown with yellow velar patches covering the surface, flesh in cap yellow when immature, becoming cream in more mature specimens. Gills white and



Fig. 6. *Amanita franchetii*, a young button showing the pale yellow warts. Photo © Andy Overall.



Fig. 7. *Amanita franchetii*, Hampstead Heath, Photograph © Andy Overall.

free, broad and of varying lengths, edge entire, smooth to slightly eroded. Stem 62–105 x 12–20 mm (17–35 mm at base), cylindrical, tapering toward apex, widening and then swelling at the base to eventually taper off. Girdled by yellow scales from the universal veil. Flesh white, solid and thick. The smell was slight, of menthol or smoke.

Peziza cf. alborosea Fig. 8

The appropriately named Half Moon Lawn at Kenwood has deciduous woodland bordering its northern edge, dominated by oak. The lawn supports a number of different genera of fungi, some associating with the bordering oak, some with conifers, others with mosses and grass on the lawn itself. The fungus I'd like to bring to your attention is a *Peziza*, although which species is yet to be fully decided. It has been deposited at Kew as *Peziza cf. alborosea* by Brian Spooner. This was the nearest species he could assign it to, though as it was white, he also thought it might possibly be an albino form of a generally brown species. Dr Spooner recommended that I monitor the site to see if anything different turned up, such as a brown specimen, but so far they have all been white, apart from slight browning on the edges of some.

Details of the illustrated collection

Apothecia 20 x 40 mm diameter, whitish cream on inner and outer surfaces, with burnished areas on the margin of some specimens. Smooth on the inner surface, slightly furfuraceous on the outer surface. Sessile. Spores verrucose, 15 x 9 µm. Fruiting in soil, deep among moss and short grass on an old lawn. *Quercus robur* and *Abies* sp. nearby. No history of burnt areas or burnt wood.

Communication

It is a good thing that I have a healthy relationship with others who work on Hampstead Heath, especially those who work with the trees. A recent tip-off concerned a discovery that came from right under my nose. One of the old oak trees bordering the service drive at Kenwood had *Hericium erinaceus* fruiting from an old wound. This was a first for Middlesex. Unless you spend a fair amount of time peering upwards at particular trees, you most certainly would miss this. I look up as much as I can but this obviously escaped my attention. Once again I have the tree workers to thank for this one. Just goes to show you that the more eyes you have helping out, the more will reveal itself.



Fig. 8. *Peziza cf. alborosea*, on Half Moon Lawn, Kenwood Estate. Photograph © Andy Overall.