TUNBRIDGE WELLS & RUSTHALL COMMONS MYCOLOGICAL SURVEYS YEAR ONE SUMMARY SHEET 2024

Glistening Inckap *Coprinellus micaceus* at Rusthall Common. September 2024 © Martin Allison

Sylvan Consultancy, Martin Allison, Pinehurst, Old Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1RX.

Tel: 07766113422

Martin.allison@sylvanconsultancy.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

A mycological survey of The Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons was commissioned by the Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators. The overall purpose of the survey was to record fungal species presence and distribution, and to provide advice on management for fungal communities across the commons in the final report.

It is recommended that a mycological survey covers at least three consecutive seasons to allow for fluctuations in fruiting caused by varying weather conditions. This was the first year of the commissioned work, which will continue into a second year in 2025, followed by a final year in 2026 (to be confirmed), after which a full report of the three survey years will be submitted.

Four visits were made to each of the Commons between early September and mid-November. Two public walks were held, one on each common. Due to the large size of the two recording areas, after the initial visit a decision was made as to which areas to prioritize for year one.

The weather during Autumn 2024 had consisted primarily of heavy showers and dull days. Temperatures were mostly mild, with only short spells of light frost. The ground was saturated in many areas, and such wet soils are not conducive to fungal fruiting, the optimum being warm temperatures and damp rather than waterlogged conditions.

It soon became obvious that certain areas supported a good range of fruiting fungi whereas others hardly any. This probably reflects the climatic conditions for this one survey year. The fungi are present in the substrate throughout the year and will only fruit in suitable conditions, hence the need for more than one survey season. The general view amongst mycologists this autumn was that woodland fungi were generally scarce, whereas those of grassland habitats were frequent and sometimes prolific.

YEAR ONE RESULTS

115 species of fungi were identified during the survey (Table 1). Of these, 78 were found on Tunbridge Wells Common, and 65 on Rusthall Common. As already mentioned, in 2024, woodlands had been rather poor for fungi whereas grasslands had been exceptional in places. This situation was somewhat reflected on the Commons. The most productive areas on Tunbridge Wells Common were to the north, where the semi-mature open grown oaks and other trees supported a good number of mycorrhizal species. However, of most importance was the grassland below the Wellington Rocks and that of the Lower Cricket Ground.

For Rusthall Common, by far the best area was the woodlands west of St Paul's Church and north of Happy Valley. The small churchyard itself proved of importance for grassland species, where the only BAP fungal species, **Pink Waxcap,** was recorded. Surprisingly, there were some good fungal records from along the verges of Tea Garden Lane. The woodlands north of Langton Road were mostly disappointing, but a few species found in the Toad Rock area were not seen elsewhere. There were some nice finds also around the periphery of the cricket ground.

GRASSLAND FUNGI

One important community of fungi in the UK is the waxcap grassland assemblage. This consists of four groups of fungi, clubs and corals (*Clavariaceae*), waxcaps (*Hygrocybe* etc.), pinkgills (*Entoloma*) and

earthtongues (*Geoglossaceae*). The grasslands are 'scored' by the number of each group, the scoring system known as CHEG. A fifth genus is usually included – crazed caps (Dermoloma sps.). The higher the CHEG score, the more important the site becomes, and if enough qualifying species are present, it will be classed either as Locally, Regionally, Nationally or Internationally Important. A prime example of the latter is the Kent & Sussex Cemetery off Forest Road.

On the Commons, waxcaps were the only well represented grassland group, although there were two club fungi (**Yellow Club** and **Apricot Club**) also recorded, along with **Crazed Cap**. A total of 9 waxcaps was identified, with six of these on the Tunbridge Wells Common Lower Cricket Ground. Additionally, two waxcap species, **Golden Waxcap** and the local **Heath Waxcap,** and **Yellow Club,** were found in the grass below the Wellington Rocks. The three remaining waxcap species were **Pink Waxcap** and **Slimy Waxcap** in St. Paul's churchyard, and **Honey Waxcap** in a grass clearing in woodland north of the Lower Pantiles car park. All these sites might harbour more species with further survey visits.

Taken as a whole across the two commons, the current waxcap community falls into the **Regionally Important** category.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION

There was some concern over the management of the Lower Cricket Ground. Apart from the periphery of the field where Wild Chamomile was present, the rest of the grass appeared to be mown regularly. The waxcaps were present along with the chamomile, but they are most likely also present across the wider field. It is therefore recommended that mowing stops by mid-September to allow any waxcaps to fruit in new areas. The mowing could then resume once the fungi are finished, usually around mid-November.

Table 1 Systematic List of all fungi recorded on the Commons in 2024

Species	English Name	Tunbridge Wells Common	Rusthall Common
Boletes			
Boletus edulis	Cep, Penny Bun, Porcini		*
Gyroporus castaneus	Chestnut Bolete		*
Pseudoboletus parasiticus	Parasitic Bolete	*	
Xerocomellus cisalpinus	Bluefoot Bolete	*	
Agarics (Gilled Fungi)			
Amanita excelsa var. spissa	Grey-spotted Amanita	*	*
Amanita fulva	Tawny Grisette	*	
Amanita muscaria	Fly Agaric		*
Amanita rubescens	Blusher	*	
Armillaria mellea	Honey Fungus	*	*
Britzelmayria multipedata	Clustered Brittlestem		*

Candolleomyces candolleanus	Pale Brittlestem	*	
Clitocybe nebularis	Clouded Funnel	*	*
Coprinellus micaceus	Glistening Inkcap	*	*
Coprinopsis acuminata	Humpback Inkcap	*	
Coprinus comatus	Shaggy Inkcap, Lawyer's Wig		*
Cortinarius leucoluteolus	Jaundiced Webcap	*	
Cortinarius lacustris	Lakeside Webcap		*
Cortinarius pilatii	Lemonbalm Webcap	*	
Crepidotus mollis	Peeling Oysterling		*
Cuphophyllus pratensis	Meadow Waxcap	*	*
Dermoloma cuneifolium	Crazed Cap	*	
Entoloma rhodopolium	Wood Pinkgill	*	
Gliophorus irrigatus	Slimy Waxcap		*churchyard only
Gliophorus laetus	Heath Waxcap	*	
Gliophorus psittacinus	Parrot Waxcap	*	*
Gymnopus erythropus	Redleg Toughshank	*	
Gymnopus obscuroides	A toughshank	*	
Hebeloma aestivale	A poisonpie		*
Hebeloma sinapizans	Bitter Poisonpie		*
Hygrocybe ceracea	Butter Waxcap	*	
Hygrocybe chlorophana	Golden Waxcap	*	
Hygrocybe coccinea	Scarlet Waxcap	*	
Hygrocybe glutinipes var. glutinipes	Glutinous Waxcap	*	
Hygrocybe reidii	Honey Waxcap		*
Hymenopellis radicata	Rooting Shank	*	
Hypholoma fasciculare	Sulphur Tuft	*	*
Inocybe cf flocculosa	Fleecy Fibrecap		*
Inocybe geophylla	White Fibrecap		*
Inocybe lilacina	Lilac Fibrecap		*
Inocybe xanthomelus	A fibrecap		*
Kuehneromyces mutabilis	Sheathed Woodtuft	*	
Laccaria amethystina	Amethyst Deceiver	*	*
Laccaria laccata	Deceiver	*	*
Lactarius quietus	Oakbug Milkcap	*	
Lactarius serifluus	Watery Milkcap	*	
Lepista nuda	Wood Blewit	*	*
Lyophyllum decastes	Clustered Domecap		*
Lyophyllum ellisii		*	
Marasmius hudsonii	Holly Parachute	*	*
Marasmiellus ramealis	Twig Parachute		*
Mycena aetites	Drab Bonnet	*	
Mycena arcangeliana	Angel's Bonnet	*	
Mycena hiemalis	Winter Bonnet	*	
Mycena inclinata	Clustered Bonnet		*
Mycena rosea	Rosy Bonnet		*
Mycena vitilis	Snapping Bonnet	*	*
Panaeolus acuminatus	Dewdrop Mottlegill	*	

Panellus stipticus	Bitter Oysterling	*	*
Pholiota gummosa	Sticky Scalycap		*
Pluteus chrysophaeus	Yellow Shield		*
Pluteus podospilus var, minutissimus	A shield		*
Porpolomopsis calyptriformis	Pink Waxcap, Ballerina		*churchyard only
Psathyrella microrrhiza	Rootlet Brittlestem		*
Psathyrella piluliformis	Common Stump Brittlestem	*	*
Psilocybe cyanescens	Bluefoot Brownie		*
Psilocybe semilanceata	Liberty Cap	*	
Rhodocollybia butryacea	Buttercap	*	*
Rickenella fibula	Orange mosscap	*	
Russula atropurpurea	Purple Brittlegill		*
Russula fragilis	Fragile Brittlegill	*	*
Russula nigricans	Blackening Brittlegill	*	
Russula ochroleuca	Ochre Brittlegill	*	*
Russula parazurea	Powdery Brittlegill	*	
Tricholoma lascivum	Aromatic Knight		*
Tricholoma scalpturatum	Yellowing Knight		*
Tricholoma sulphureus	Sulphur Knight	*	
Tricholoma ustale	Burnt Knight		*
Tubaria furfuracea	Scurfy Twiglet		*
Bracket Fungi & Allies			
Bjerkandera adusta	Smoky Bracket	*	*
Cantharellus cibarius	Chanterelle		*
Daedaleopsis confragosa	Blushing Bracket	*	
Fomitopsis betulina	Birch Polypore, Razor Strop Fungus	*	*
Fuscoporia ferrea/ferruginosa	Cinnamon/Rusty Porecrust	*	*
Ganoderma australe	Southern Artist's Bracket	*	
Laetiporus sulphureus	Chicken of the Woods	*	
Phlebia rufa			*
Plicatura crispa	Crimped Gill	*	
Schizopora paradoxa	Split Porecrust	*	
Stereum hirsutum	Hairy Curtain Crust	*	*
Stereum rameale		*	
Stereum rugosum	Bleeding Broadleaf Crust	*	
Stereum subtomentosum	Yellowing Curtain Crust	*	
Trametes versicolor	Turkeytail	*	*
Corals & Clubs			
Clavulina coralloides	Crested Coral		*
Clavulinopsis helvola	Yellow Club	*	
Clavulinopsis luteoalba	Apricot Club	*	
Ramariopsis subtilis	Slender Coral		*
Puffballs & Allies			

Clathrus archeri	Devil's Fingers	*	*
Lycoperdon excipuliforme	Pestle Puffball		*
Lycoperdon nigrescens	Dusky Puffball	*	
Phallus impudicus	Stinkhorn	*	
Scleroderma citrinum	Common Earthball	*	*
Scleroderma verrucosum	Scaly Earthball		*
Jelly Fungi			
Calocera cornea	Small Stagshorn	*	*
Exidia nucleata	Crystal Brain	*	*
Cup & Flask Fungi (Ascomycetes)			
Aleuria aurantia	Orange Peel Fungus	*	*
Claviceps purpurea	Ergot	*	
Cordyceps militaris	Scarlet Caterpillarclub	*	
Helvella crispa	White Saddle		*
Hypoxylon fuscum	Hazel Woodwart	*	
Rhytisma acerinum	Sycamore Tarspot	*	
Xylaria hypoxylon	Candlesnuff Fungus	*	*
Phycomycetes (Algal Fungi)			
Syzgites megalocarpus	Mould on earthballs	*	
Slime Moulds			
Arcyria denudata	Carnival Candy Slime Mould	*	
Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa	Coral Slime	*	