

## Gregynog Fungus Foray 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Following a dry September with very little fungus in evidence, we were rather relieved when it rained heavily in the first few days of October. A wet day was also forecast for our outing, but to our immense relief the rain cleared in the early morning leaving warm sunshine in its wake.

We were pleased to see Les Hughes arriving with the other 41 members in spite of difficulties he had experienced with fuel shortages. Les, who chairs the Shropshire Fungus Group and is the County Recorder, joined our very enjoyable fungus foray in 2019, so we were grateful to have his expertise again this year.

The day started with a brief introduction by Russell Roberts the Operations Manager for the charitable trust now running the estate. As well as a résumé of the history of Gregynog he outlined how, in view of the climate crisis, the trust aims to pursue a sustainable future for the whole estate, whilst respecting traditional farming methods. After this Les said a few words about the day. Given the dryness of the season he was not hopeful of finding very many species, but he offered to lead two walks for members.

The morning walk through the Great Wood was somewhat disappointing in the fungus found, but provided a lovely walk in dappled sunshine through the ancient trees, mainly oak. We heard Great Spotted Woodpeckers, saw a Treecreeper and someone reported a number of hornets buzzing around. We did find some fungus, including Common Earthball, *Scleroderma citrinum*, which Les cut in half to show us its thick outer skin. Meanwhile other members were scouring the front lawn which, rumour had it, was a great place for finding Waxcaps. Quite a few interesting fungi were found and later taken to Les for identification.

The afternoon walk in the woodlands around the hall and near the pond yielded more species and by the end of the day Les declared himself pleasantly surprised by the number of different fungi we had found, which later turned out to number 44 different species.

We gathered in the hall for a generous tea during which, after thanks given by the Chair, Sue Southam recalled some details of the year's outings and all agreed how nice it was to be meeting each other as normal again. Finally, MFS member Joan Daly shared with us some of her childhood memories of growing up on the estate, especially the freedom and friendliness of everyone living there. Joan's memories of Christmas at Gregynog were of the generosity and kindness of the Davies sisters. She also however recalled the fierce injunction against crossing the Great Lawn when the sisters were in residence!

All in all, Gregynog provided a satisfying close to our 2021 outings.