

**Montgomeryshire Field Society**  
Fungus Foray  
**Leighton Estate Woods, Forden SJ 247033**

**Thursday 16th October 2014**  
Organizers Sheila Turner & Lizzie Beare

The day started hopefully weather wise but by the time we had gathered at the car park to the Redwood Grove at Leighton it was threatening rain. How very grateful we were that David Williams, the Royal Forestry Society warden for the Grove had offered us the use of RFS members' chalet for lunch and shelter, as during his explanation of the history and management of the Grove the rain started to team down. It didn't stop all afternoon. However true to their reputation the MFS members did not flinch and set off in search of fungi or just a bracing walk. Neville Walters, mycologist, was undeterred too and we found quite a good collection of some different types.

Leighton Hall was bought by Christopher Leyland, a Liverpool banker, in 1845. He gave it to his favourite nephew John Naylor who spent the rest of his life and a good part of his fortune, building and maintaining the infrastructure of this innovative estate which was the best example of a Model Farm by the time the Great Exhibition was held in 1861. Buildings included a gas works to provide heat and power, major water driven turbines for electricity, the corn mill at Cilcewydd and indoor animal husbandry units (a new idea at the time). The manure collected from these units was hauled by broad-gauge funicular railway (locally known as the shit train) up the side of Long Mountain on which the Estate sits and then distributed by drainage pipes to fertilize the land.

In 1857 John Naylor sent a plant collector to California to bring back 35 seedlings in pots of the California Redwood, *Sequoia Sempervirens*, which form the core of this amazing Grove. The seedlings thrived in the care of dedicated plantmen who propagated more and more for years, along with many other exotic conifers. It was the chance positioning of two cypresses, Nootka and Monterey, close together that produced the famous (or possibly infamous) clone, the Leyland cypress *Cupressocyparis Leylandii*, named for the generous uncle. In their home habitats, continents apart, these two parent trees would never have encountered each other, so it just goes to show what happens when you interfere with nature. You might spawn a monster that has neighbours at each other's throats.

Neville Walters like most people who encounter the Redwood Grove for the first time, was mightily impressed by their height, girth and health. Many of the trees are over 130 feet tall and still growing since they particularly enjoy the micro-climate of the Long Mountain. For such a massive tree the foliage is feathery and delicate and the cones relatively tiny. One of its most unusual characteristics, especially for a conifer, is that it will regenerate when cut. The Mother tree which blew over in a storm last century has not only continued to live but has re-rooted along its length forming a line of trees springing from the original trunk. Although an evergreen the Redwood sheds foliage profusely so that the whole area beneath the trees in autumn is covered in a cushioning carpet of reddish gold. The Grove has a slightly eerie atmosphere especially on a wet gloomy day like somewhere in one of the darker fairytales.

We were glad to gather for a delicious tea in the warm and whimsical surroundings of the Bay Tree Vintage Tea Room in Welshpool and peruse our day's collection of 23 fungi specimens.

<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	Shaggy Inkcap
<i>C. atramentarius</i>	Common Inkcap
<i>C. micaceus</i>	Glistening Inkcap
<i>Leucopaxillus giganteus</i>	Giant Funnel
<i>Gymnopilus junonius</i>	Spectacular Rustgill

<i>Rhytisma acerinum</i>	Tar Spot
<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore, or Razor Strop Fungus
<i>Heterobasidion annosum</i>	Root Rot
<i>Coriolus versicolor</i>	Turkey Tail
<i>Clitocybe nebularis</i>	Clouded Funnel
<i>C. odora</i>	Aniseed Funnel
<i>Trametes hirsutum</i>	Hairy Curtain Crust
<i>Marasmius androsaceus</i>	Horsehair Parachute
<i>Daedaleopsis confragosa</i>	Blushing Bracket
<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Candlesnuff Fungus, or Stagshorn
<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	Jelly Ear
<i>Calocera viscosa</i>	Yellow Stagshorn
<i>Hygrocybe ceracea</i>	Butter Waxcap
<i>H. Pratensis</i>	Meadow Waxcap
<i>Clitocybe dealbata</i>	Ivory Funnel
<i>Collybia confluens</i>	Clustered Toughshank
<i>Mycena maculata</i>	no common name
<i>M. lactea</i>	Milky Bonnet