

MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

29 July 2010



They're here – six weeks early! Could this be the start of something great?

I have long-since given up trying to predict the coming season. Basically every time the innate optimist in me comes to the fore I seem to have my hopes dashed, but there really is some good news at the moment. A regular newsletter reader, John from Merthyr, reported finding assorted boletes in the Black Mountains last week. I didn't pay too much attention, thinking he had just stumbled across a few 'rogue' specimens. Then a neighbour, Steve, popped around last night with a basket full of mushrooms he'd collected while at work (he's a forester and had been working in some of the vast conifer local plantations). He'd found what he thought were porcini and wanted confirmation. I greeted the news with due scepticism, because late July really is ridiculously early for porcini. So I expected to be greeted with assorted pine, larch, orange- and brown birch boletes.

Oh ye of little faith! He had three or four kilos of mature *Boletus edulis* – and better still they were in perfect condition! Normally one expects early season big boleti to be riddled with insect larvae, but these were firm and perfect. I can only assume that two very poor mushroom years, possibly coupled with the hard winter, have taken their toll of the little fruit flies and beetles which are even more devoted to this kind of mushrooms than we humans. Finally – and perhaps best of all – he left a 1kg monster as payment for my identification services – it's drying on top of the woodburner as I type and should yield a good 50g of chips: enough for two decent casseroles.



Brown birch boletes are up too

Sure enough, when I popped into town to post a letter this morning I spotted a brown birch by the side of the road. These make very indifferent eating – very watery – but tend to come out a few days earlier than their better-tasting relatives. And the news continues to be good on the chanterelle front too, so there is every reason to get out hunting this weekend – and do let me know what you find.



Chanterelles are still out there in force (photographie 7 July)

Good hunting!

Daniel Butler

www.fungiforays.co.uk

01597 811168 / 0779 429 4221

P.S. As always, just a quick reminder that because I loathe junk e-mails, I'd hate to think I was cluttering up your inbox. If at any time you want your name taken off, just let me know with a brief - preferably polite - indication that you want to be removed.