

MUSHROOM NEWSLETTER

25 September 2012



Not a bad haul for a damp September evening – particularly when the gate into the forest was closed . . .

The latest update on the season is that things are looking good – good, but not great. Last Sunday (23) I had my first foray and took 17 participants and

we picked half a dozen good species (porcini, bay boletes, hedgehogs, amethyst deceivers and yellow russulas) in fair numbers, plus a solitary chanterelle for identification. There were also blushers, fly agaric and death caps on view, plus lots of plums and custard and coral fungus.

This evening I went out again with my dear friend Justin (he insists on this prefix) and his delightful friend Judy (here the pronoun is entirely mine). We had been told we could drive around a closed forest gate but my informant clearly assumed I would be driving a Chieftain tank or quad bike and had a suicidal disposition. As usual, Justin was extremely pessimistic at the outset, pointing to a few long-since dead porcini as evidence that the best had gone.

But then we began to strike lucky – lots of mature specimens (c. 1kg) in fairly good condition and quite a few babies too! As always we didn't weigh the haul (and Justin, damn him!, insisted on taking the best third), but I reckon we scored over 3kgs in the hour.



Fly agaric is finally beginning to emerge (taken this afternoon – 25 September) . . .

More encouragingly, over the past week or so the first real signs of fly agaric have become evident. As one of my guests once announced to me: “Where there’s a queen, look for the king!” If you will allow me to translate, this means roughly, that where you see the delicate, but highly visible, fly agaric, the chances are there is a chunky, but less flamboyant cepe/porcino growing alongside.



Barbie is just a blushing, tentative, soul . . .

Oh, and just in case it interests any of you, I have a new companion – ‘Barbie’ – who flew into my life last week. She’s a passage female gos who accidentally got trapped in my chicken coop – fortunately for her, I spotted she had a potentially lethal toe infection before I released her. Those of you coming on a foray will make her acquaintance.



A porcino novice showing his appreciation of things fungal . . .

But back to the idea of introducing novices to mushrooms: following last weekend's foray, I got some really great feedback and everyone went away claspng knives, field guides and – of course – mushrooms.

I now have places on only two forays (although I just might be tempted to lay on another on 20/21 October if there is enough interest):

29 and 14 October

Happy hunting!

Daniel Butler

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P.S. As always, let me know if you want to be removed from the list and I will do it forthwith.