

HFRG Report 2023

Group Activities

The weather was not always cooperative last year with high winds heavy rain and flooding requiring us to rearrange one outing, abandon another and completely cancel a third. In total there were 20 group surveys, 1 Bioblitz in Alton, 8 Fungus Walks at the Reptile Centre, Hilliers, Marwell and Swanwick Lakes plus a couple of post-AGM/workshop forays at Hursley.

We did organise 2 outings with MikeH's TVFG and a trip to the Island with Colin Pope's group unfortunately the weather put paid to one of Mike's and only Sue and I managed to make it over the Solent, where we did find a few interesting things in what was a rather dry Island.

However, there were too few volunteers to allow us to take part in the Gilbert White House Nature Festival in May.

Many thanks should yet again go to Pam and others who have taken on the task of both recording what we find in the field and then entering these into the FRDBI. I keep saying that this is a "great learning opportunity" and while this is (undoubtedly) true, one can have too much of a good thing so more volunteers would be more than welcome.

As mentioned above, we ran 4 external educational events with reasonable success – the Hillier's walks were fully booked yet again and the Reptile Centre publicity seemed to have worked much better this year, at least partly due to Russ putting the details on his site :-)

As you will see in Dave's report we got a contributions to our funds for leading a walk at Swanwick Lakes and the Marwell and Cranborne Chase outings.

We did manage to hold a microscope session at Hursley and a few more DNA-processing tasters.

Our membership has fluctuated over the year with about 50 paid-up members (plus our two honorary life members!)

Findings

After adding personal finds to the surveys, over 1700 records covering 674 species were added to the FRDBI, with *Trametes versicolor* regaining the top spot and over 400 species recorded only once. See HFRG2023Merge.xlsx for details.

The weather was slightly more "normal" than 2022 but, because of a careful choice of sites that might have been damp in the expected (from 2022) drought, the number of ectomycorrhizal species we came across was reduced even though they were reported all over the rest of the Forest in late summer – yet another "feature" of Forest England's restrictive permit process.

However, there were a few such things in Hursley in July, including a *Russula* I have been calling *R. odorata* since we got it sequenced in 2019 (MW487955) but I have just heard that Felix Hampe has been working on the genus and it matches the (unpublished!) holotype of *R. annae*, which makes it another NTB.

The most interesting rotter we came across was not really a Hampshire record as it was first spotted in a plant pot in Aldermaston, but said pot was subsequently transferred to Winchester for more careful study. Thanks to DNA, it was identified as *Psathyrella kellermanii* (OR907165), which isn't in any literature I could find other than the original description in 1906 and its transfer to *Psathyrella* in the fifties...

Communication

Phil has continued to do a great job of maintaining and tweaking the website and he has managed to continue working on it from Tasmania but we really do need to find a willing deputy.

You may also have noticed that the species list are now supplemented by trip reports and photos from DaveS – keep up the good work.

Further suggestions for other improvements are welcome – particularly if they are accompanied by an offer to help bring them about...

XXXXt does leave the Facebook thingies with just DaveM to look after them, so I'm sure that he would welcome some help – any volunteers?

DNA Stuff

DNA processing has proceeded apace with over 250 samples processed in 2023 and a further 88 sequences have been published on Genbank, bringing the total to 262.

In addition to those mentioned above we didn't have any additional confirmed NTBs this year but there were several novel sequences:

- *A Hyphoderma* from Herbert plantation collected by Leif/PaulH (OR907162)
- *A Hypholoma* from Emer Bog found by MikeH (OR907164)
- *A Trechisporales* (not *Dendrothele!*) found on Yew in Hale Churchyard by SueR (OR907157)
- *A Arrhenia* found by SueR (OR907160)
- *A Melanoleuca* (not *fresii*) found by Leif in Crab Wood (OR907161)
- *A Hemimycena* found in Pipers Copse (OR907166)
- *A Peziza* (possibly *granularis*) found by Eric at Hilliers (OR907170 and OR907166)
- An *Inosperma* from Broughton Down (OR907173)
- *A Flagelloscypha* found by SueR in Crab Wood (OR933750)

As we are getting donations from other groups for whom we process samples, we are currently covering the ongoing PCR costs. The sequencing tab is currently being picked up by the BMS but, as have used the vast majority of their grant, it isn't clear how much longer this will be extended as other groups are coming on-line and deserve a some help too.

I spent several days helping Claudi Soler from the Surrey group get up to speed with the PCR process and Leif (foolishly :-)) offered to take this opportunity to document the process. As this is something that needs to be done by a neutral observer, this was very welcome and the resulting document is a very useful education resource.

BMS Liaison

Apart from calls between the small number of people consuming the DNA sequencing grant, the only real BMS liaison activities have been a couple of group leaders calls, which contained a couple ideas which we might talk about later.