

CHURCHYARD AT LETTON

Over 50 species were recorded in this small churchyard during 2003. Predictably, most were micro-fungi during the spring and summer months, the larger fungi only making a very late appearance in this exceptionally dry year. The micro-fungi consisted largely of rusts, smuts and powdery mildews along with other colonisers of living, moribund and dead leaves both on the native vegetation and on the various introduced plants (roses, honesty, honeysuckle etc).

All the larger fungi which appeared eventually in November were saprophytes, assisting in the breakdown of vegetable matter. Some, like the blewitts and *Lepiota serena*, occurred in deep leaf litter or compost, while others, eg *Vascellum*, *Agaricus campestris* and the *Mycenas* (one additional species *M. flavoalba* was recorded in December), grow in the turf which is kept short near the church and gate. One fungus was recorded on a lichen growing on the *Robinia* and another on the beech mast fallen from an overhanging tree. All the fungi recorded were typical of their habitat and none is thought to be scarce or rare – in other words a good representative selection in a year that was disastrous for fungi throughout the British Isles.

This churchyard is likely to support a more diverse mycoflora than was present in 2003, in particular in the areas of short turf where the moss *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* is locally abundant.

(This is not to suggest that a larger area should be kept mown as the un-mown sections support a good range of vascular plants encouraged by a late cut and clear strategy.)

JW for HFSG 2003