



5th October 2019 – Post event funding report

Overview:

Bristol Fungus Day was held as planned on Saturday 5th October 2019, with the event open to the public from 10.00 till 16.00. The aim of the event was to shed light on the understated role of fungi, from plant symbiosis to medicine and many other aspects.

The event was held at Arnos Vale Cemetery and utilised the whole space: table displays, and student posters were situated in one chapel, while talks were held in the other. Charity stalls, artists and cultivation demonstrations were outside in the wooded area in the upper part of the site, which is also where the forays left from. Fungi-themed artwork was scattered along the paths throughout the site, while the children's eco-crafting workshops were held in marquees at the bottom of the site to facilitate easy access. Food stalls for the public were also in the bottom of the site, while volunteer food was sited up the top to avoid confusion. There was also all-ages entertainment in the form of walkabout performers and fungi folklore storytelling. Although talks were ticketed, entry to these and to the rest of the event was entirely free.

The day was an overall success, with 605 attendees (not repeat entry) recorded through the gates by our volunteers during the day. The talks were attended at an average of 74% capacity (see appendix 1), and the 3 forays that took place during the day were so popular that people had to be turned away.

Attendee demographic:

The event attracted a diverse demographic of attendees from Bristol and beyond (Figure 1). According to data collected from Billetto (ticketing platform for the talks), 26% of talk attendees were from Bristol, 13% from London, with a further 4% of attendees from Bridgewater, Glastonbury and Nottingham. One group also reported that they'd driven all the way from Cornwall specifically for the event.

Analysis of our Facebook event data shows that the event attracted people from all age groups (Figures 2-3). The age groups most strongly represented were 25-44 year olds. The largest number event responses were from the 25-34 year old group with 27.8% women and 13.6% men. The gender disparity seen within this group was mirrored in other groups, with between 3% and 8% more women responding to the event in every age group bar under 18s. This amounted to roughly double the number of women responding to the event than men in most age categories and overall. These online figures were mirrored on the ground (see appendix 3 and 4).

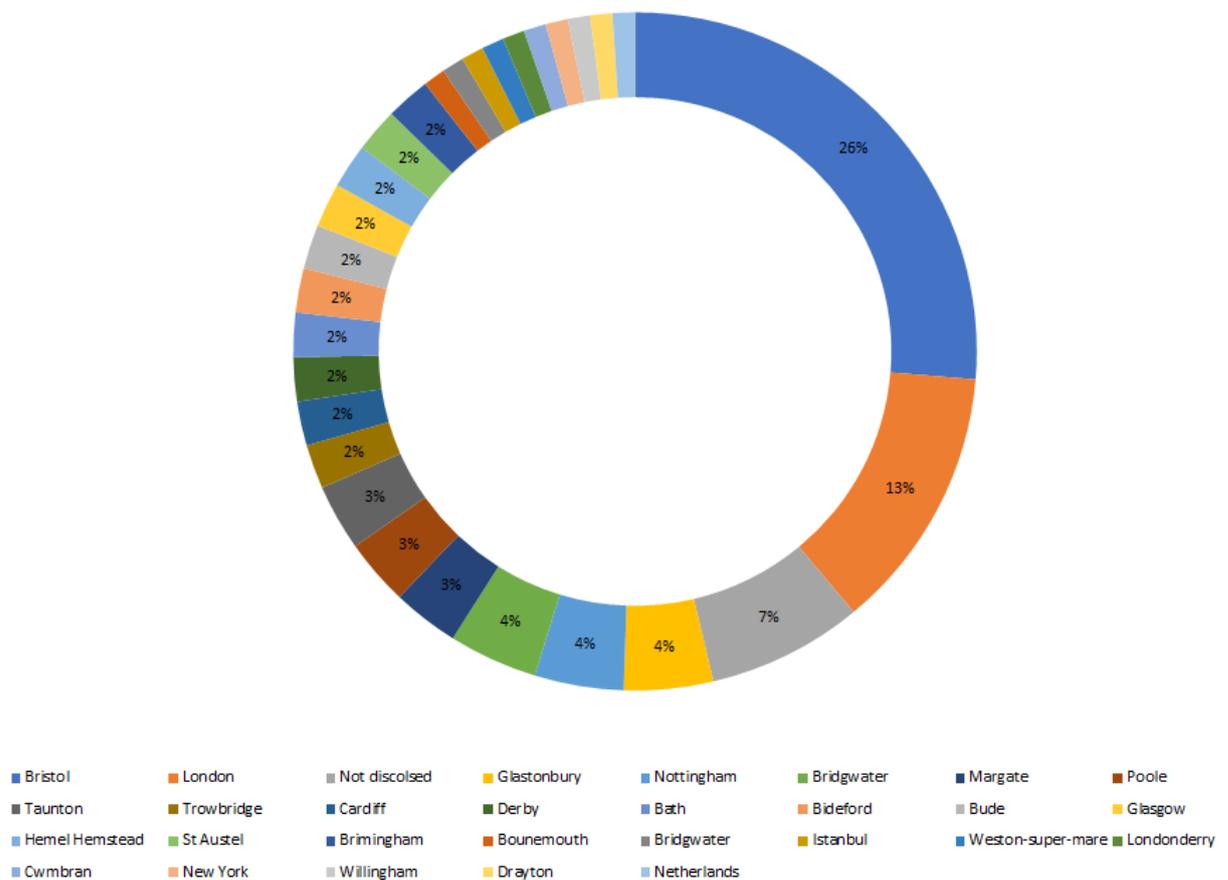


Figure 1: Locations attendees reported coming from.

People responded

32% Men 68% Women

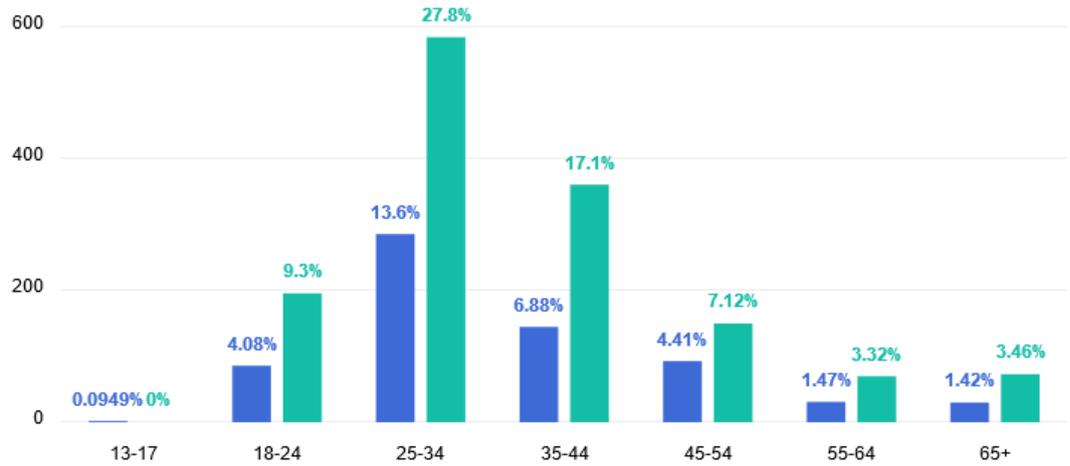


Figure 2. Percentages of responses to the Facebook event (like, love, etc)

People reached

38% Men 62% Women

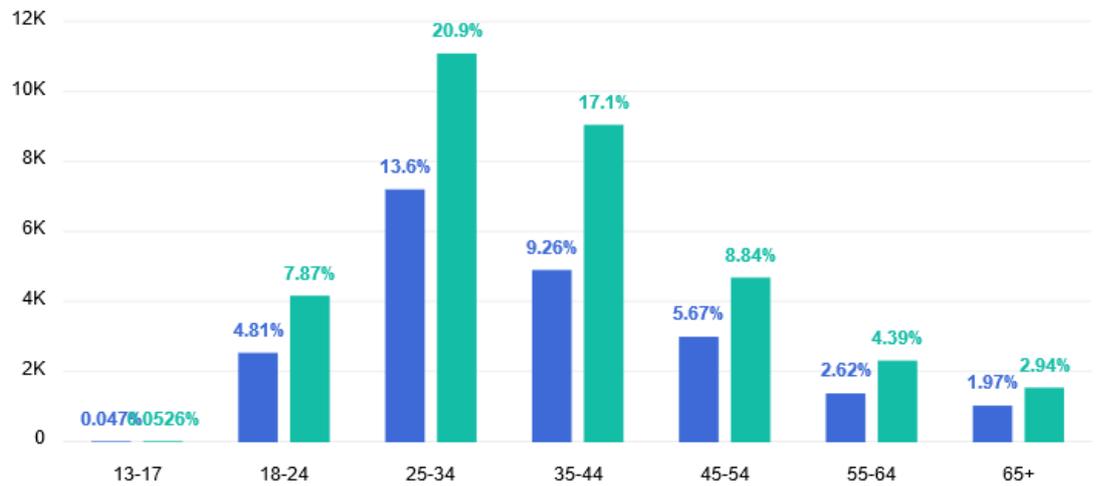


Figure 3. Percentages of people reached through promotion of the Facebook event

Volunteer hours and roles:

The event was run by a core team of 6 passionate fungi fanatics, and supported by a further 23 volunteers, who were recruited via Facebook posts and word of mouth. There were 27 contributors (e.g. speakers, charities, activity leaders, etc), who took part in the event in return for travel expenses, meals on the day and material costs.

The pre-event organisation took the core team around 450 hours to deliver, with members also on site for 9hrs to facilitate running the event on the day. The core team were assisted by a team of volunteers working between 2 and 5hr shifts in various roles including site build/break down, registering public attendance and collecting feedback, and stewarding.

Our estimate on the overall volunteer time for the core team, support team and contributors to prepare and host the event is between 750 and 800 hours.

Breakdown of core team roles/hours:

Rich Wright - 320 hours - Funding bid writing, site booking, admin and booking systems, project management, contributor selection and coordination, event planning, health and safety, volunteer coordination, graphics and materials design, event promotion, social media management, post writing, bookings management, lead event coordinator on the day.

Kat Lyons – 40 hours event planning, co-ordination and transportation, health & safety, promotion, performance and children’s area organisation and facilitation, area co-ordinator on the day.

Matt Wainhouse – 20 hours Funding bid writing, contributor selection, volunteer coordination

Esme Worrell - 30 hours - Event coordination, health and safety, event administration.

Promotion and Marketing:

The event was promoted through traditional and social media, as well as through posters, flyers and word of mouth.

Social media:

The Facebook events page reached 54.5K through event discussion and promotion, with 2.2K responding to posts inside the event and 1.8K responding as ‘interested’. Although 363 responded as ‘attending’, the actual number of attendees that were recorded on the day were much higher at 605 attendees. There was a total of 4.2K views on the event page (Figure 4).

Traditional media:

In the week leading up to the event Rich Wright was interviewed for an online video interview by the BBC, this was released on the day.

Rich also spoke briefly about the event on BBC Radio Bristol on the morning of the event.

Esme Worrell spoke on Ujima Radio, a Bristol community radio station that celebrates African and Caribbean culture- communities who lie outside of the usual target for ecological education events.

Other: The core team also undertook flyering and postering throughout the Bristol area, focusing on areas such as libraries and community centres, as well as local shops, pubs and shops in different areas in order to reach members of as many diverse communities as possible.

54.5K
People reached

4.2K
Event Page views

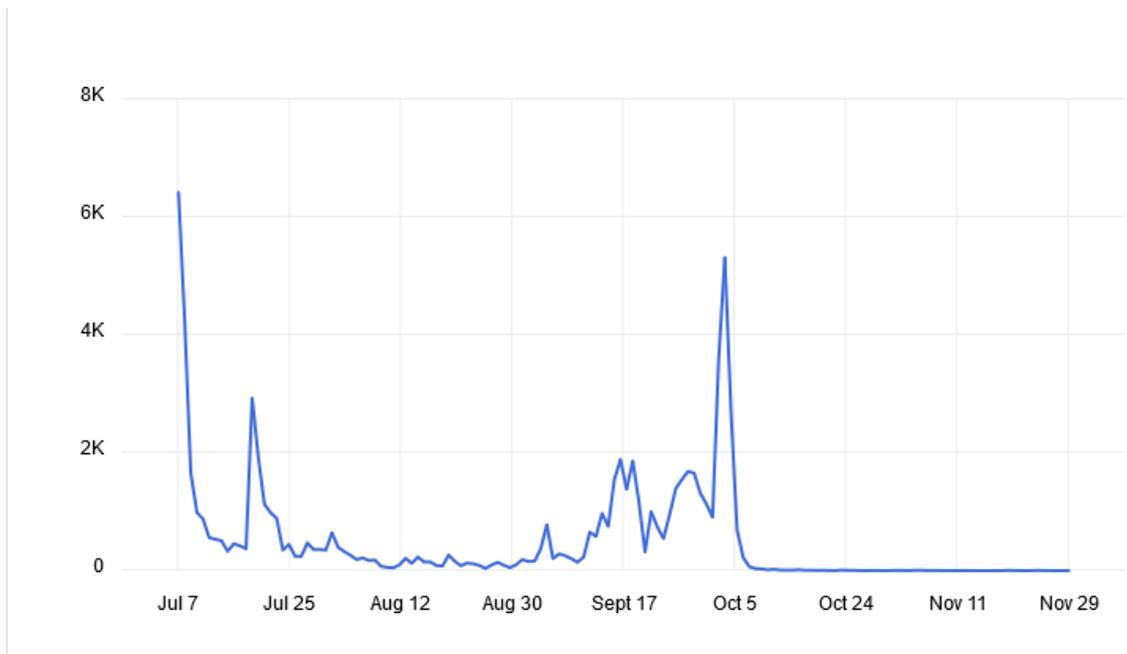


Figure 4. Timeline of social media activity since from the beginning of the campaign to the event day

Questionnaire feedback and Summary:

The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive (Figure 5). We delivered 2 separate surveys to attendees- one during the event and one afterwards via the event bookings list and Facebook events page. The purpose of this before/after survey was to see how the attendee's perception and understanding changed as a result of the event. This was done by asking attendees to list the words they associated with fungi (Figure 6 and 7). The questionnaire on the day was carried out by volunteers approaching attendees and asking them to fill out hard-copy surveys, while the post-event survey was all online.

Pre and post event responses to those surveyed seem to indicate a widening scope of associations with the word Fungi post event, with 'symbiosis' and 'medicines' seeming to be especially strong. We attribute this to two of speakers talking on these subjects and others contributors on the day. 'Mushrooms' and 'decomposition' were strong before and after, and there was also quite a strong showing from 'microorganisms'. Interestingly, word associations with negative connotations (mould/contamination/mycosis/poisoning) and loose associations (amoeba/ bacteria/photosynthesis) were selected less in the post-event questionnaire, suggesting more positive associations with fungi and a better understanding of them by attendees after the event.

In terms of the 5 areas of the event we asked respondents to comment on, 'quality of activities', 'quality of contributors' and 'stewards' were all rated as very good by the majority, with the other two areas- 'event promotion' and 'talk booking process'- rated as majority good.

Comments from form responses:

- “I came with my 2 children aged 5 and 10 and we all just feel in love with all things fungus. Heard about it as we saw a leaflet stuck up in our local Sainsburys. Did the fungi walk, blown away by the man's knowledge. Everyone was so lovely.”
- “I loved fungus day! I hope you get funding for future events. Thank you to all contributors x”
- “Overall, I thought it was really informative, fun, and the groups running the stalls were really friendly and approachable. Very well organised and promoted.”

Please rate the following general aspects of Fungus Day

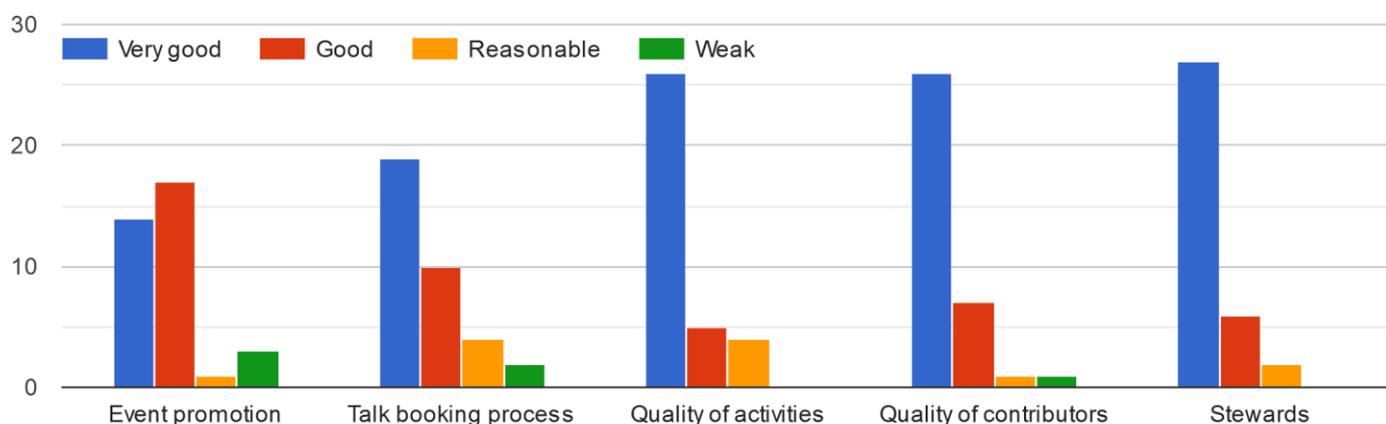


Figure 5. Feedback from attendees responding to the questionnaire

Which of these words come to mind when you think of 'fungi'?

71 responses

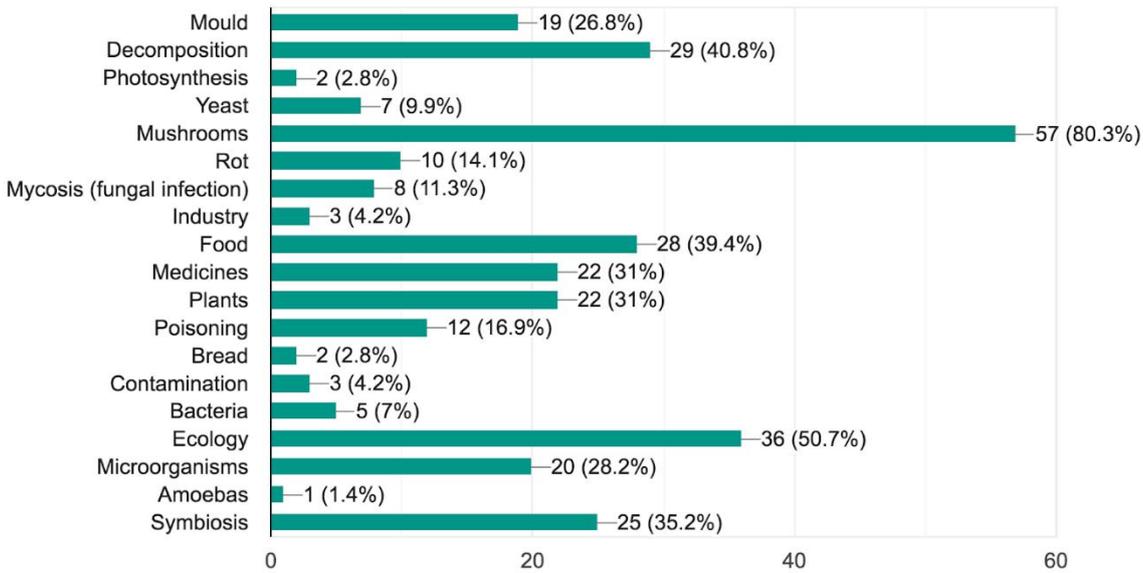


Figure 6. Responses from fungi association questionnaire before the event. More than 1 category could be selected. Numbers show the total number of associations and percentage shows the proportion of people responding to that category.

After:

Now that you've been to the event, what 3 words come to mind when you think of 'fungi'?

35 responses

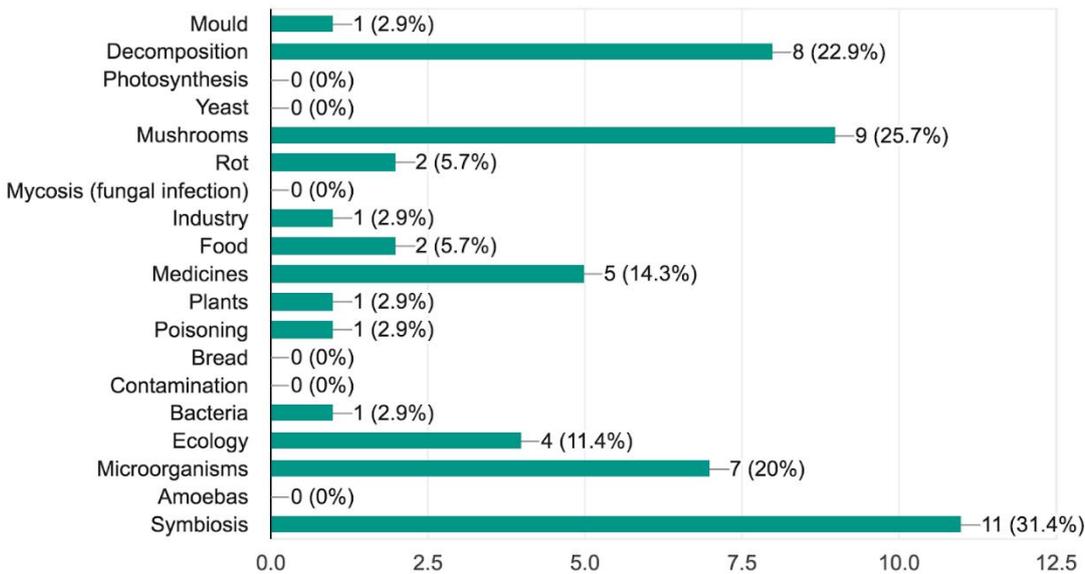


Figure 7. Responses from fungi association questionnaire after the event. More than 1 category could be selected. Numbers show the total number of associations and percentage shows the proportion of people responding to that category.

Selected social media feedback:

“Thank you to everyone who helped put this excellent event together. We had a really great day, fun and informative. Looking forward to next year already! 😊”

“It was a great event and it was an honour to be part of. Thank you so much for all of your hard work behind the scenes!”

“Thank you to everyone involved for an excellent day, we had a great time and loved the food and the venue. The talk on medicinal mushrooms was excellent and the effort that MGUK put into their amazing array of mushrooms, mycelium and products really made it worth trekking up from Cornwall for the day.”

“Brilliant day, thank you to all the speakers, volunteers, stalls, walking tours guides and to Arnos Vale (brilliant site for it!) ❤️”

Other outcomes

Documentation:

Thanks to some additional funding from the British Mycological Society we were able to hire Black Bark Films as videographers and documenters of the day. The footage gathered from the day is currently being edited, but this will result in a 1.5 minute showreel for the event for use in future promotion and fundraising. We also captured 3 of the talks (Prof. Lynne Boddy, Prof. Martin Bidartondo and Attila Fodi), with permission from the speakers to distribute for ongoing educational use. We hope to have the edits released early next year and intend to share them with the British Ecological Society.

Conclusion

The funding kindly provided by British Ecological Society was fundamental to the delivery of the event at this scale. We are delighted with the reach and positive responses to the days event, perhaps most by the number of highly engaged children, some of whom we have seen since and are now fungi fanatics spreading the word to their friends in the playground at school. The questionnaires also suggest a shift away from negative associations with fungi and a greater understanding of their overall role.

We exceeded our own goal of 500 attendees and more than doubled the highest number of attendees from our previous event. We are especially pleased of the number of visitors that travelled to the event from across the country. The site was perfect in many ways and the staff at Arnos Vale Cemetery made our setup and strike-down comfortable.

We are very proud of the immense amount of time our core team, stewards and contributors gave to the event. In a post event meeting the time taken to deliver the event by unpaid volunteers was a subject of concern from all parties. Rich Wright in particular took on an unmanageable amount of responsibility to deliver the event. This is a strong factor in our decisions about how to deliver the event in 2020. We hope to be able to secure extra funding to create some paid positions or alternatively charging for entry or reducing the scope of the event, both of which we would like to avoid.

Fungi have been rightly called ‘the hidden Kingdom’, partly due to their ubiquitously present but unseen structures, but also due to the lack of general awareness of their vital roles in our environments. We are proud to say that our event has delivered on raising awareness and appreciation of Fungi, from those that had no knowledge on arrival through to those that already had a good understanding but had the opportunity to learn from leading researchers.

We would like to extend enormous thanks to British Ecological Society and British Mycological Society for making this event possible.

Appendices

1. Total number of talk attendees.
2. Event budget and spend
3. Event line-up
4. Selected event photos
5. Organisations involved

Appendix 1.

Talks: (Total 100)

○ Matt Combes	43
○ Prof. Lynne Boddy	71
○ Attila Fodi	98
○ Prof. Martin Bidartindo	78
○ Prof. Patricia Wiltshire	80

Appendix 2.

Funding	
BES Funding	£1,970
BMS Funding	£535
Total	£2,505

Costs	
Venue Hire	£528
Performers fees	
Arkem Walton	£150
Kat Lyons	£150
Jules Varndoe	£40
Spike	£40
Total	£380
Tables and Displays	
Scarlett Macguire printing	£26
Geoffery Liddell printing	£25
Rich Wright printing	£18.78
BCM backdrop printing	£35.00
FF Backdrop printing	£35.00
Poster boards	£18
Display shelving x 2	£109.98
Click counters	£8.99
Buckets x4	£7.64
Clipboards	£13.75
Jute	£6.99
Scotch Tape	£4.99
Drawing pins	£4.59
Cable Ties	£6.99
Pin board	£13.46
Cardboard specimen trays	£10.50
Name stickers	£1.58
Event Stickers	£42.10
Bulldog clips	£4.47
Total	£394
Fuel and Travel	
Chris Morris Fuel	£30.65
Event day Fuel	£40
Cardiff Pickup Fuel	£40.00
Patricia Wiltshire Fuel	£20
Hotel - Patricia Wiltshire	£85
Total	£216
Marketing	
Facebook post boost	£20
Poster print A4 x 100	£30.78
Spawn packs	£89
Facebook event boost	£45
Total	£185
Volunteer Food and Drinks	
Food for contributors	£180
Plates and cutlery	£16.98
Paper cups	7.99
After event gathering	£100
Total	£305
Documentation	
Black Bark Films	£400
Children's Area	
Emmy (Kids)	£60
Gazebo	£40
Total	£100
Total spend	£2,507

TALKS IN THE ANGLICAN CHAPEL



Understanding Ash Dieback Disease

Matthew Combes – 11:00am

Ash dieback disease is causing mortality in *Fraxinus excelsior* (European ash) across Europe. The disease was first noticed in Poland in the early 1990s, and its detection in the UK in 2012 caused widespread concern due to the ecological and cultural significance of the host. The causal agent of the disease has been identified as the invasive Asian ascomycete *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, and its lifecycle has allowed for dispersal across much of the European continent. The disease presently ranges from as far north as Finland, to as far south as Montenegro and as far west as Ireland. This talk will discuss our current knowledge of the disease based on research which has been conducted throughout Europe.

Fungus Wars!

Professor Lynne Boddy – 12:00pm

Decomposer fungi are rarely found growing alone in nature but usually in communities of several other fungi. Intense competition for space and resources occurs, and fungi deploy antagonistic mechanisms to obtain these – fungi fight each other! They ‘attack’ and ‘defend’ their territory using a variety of mechanisms: (1) antagonism at a distance; (2) mycoparasitism; and (3) gross mycelial interaction. Their chemical arsenal includes enzymes, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and diffusible organic compounds (DOCs). The overall outcome of their battles can be deadlock – where neither fungus makes any headway; replacement – where one fungus takes the territory of another; and also, partial and mutual replacement. There is a hierarchy of combative ability rather like a sports league. The victors vary depending on the opponents, their environment, food sources and the presence of other organisms. These battles are illustrated with studies on decay fungi in wood and soil.





Medicinal Mushrooms in a Nutshell

Attila Fodi – 1:00pm

Fungi have formed an important part of human medicine for many millennia, from the ancient Egyptian uses of *Penicillium* moulds to traditional Chinese medicinal uses of bracket fungi. Many of our modern antibiotics are produced by fungi, along with other ground-breaking drugs such as statins, immune suppressants and more. This talk will cover a general introduction of the main medicinal mushrooms, their active compounds, their role in folk medicine and modern evidence-

based mycotherapy.

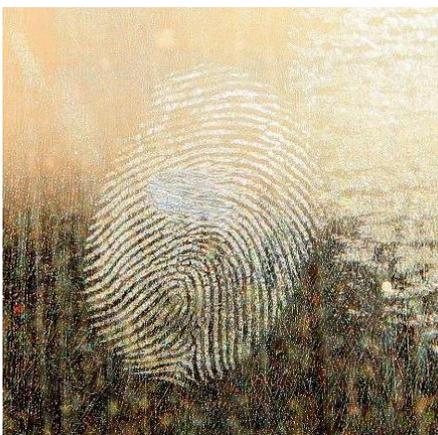
Fungi and plants working together in a changing world

Prof. Martin Bidartondo – 2:00pm

Around 95% of the world's plants have limited root systems that are supported by mycorrhizas (or fungus-roots). These partnerships with fungi are the interface between the plants and the soil. They are also the interface between the carbon and mineral cycles - which we are rapidly transforming across the whole world. Where do these partnerships come from? Where are they now? Where are they going? These are crucial questions to answer if we want to understand and manage terrestrial ecosystems so we can have a future. In this talk, Martin will discuss his recent breakthroughs about origins, networking, cheating and pollution.



Forensic Mycology - an important addition to the forensic armoury



Professor Patricia Wiltshire – 3:00pm

This talk will give a brief outline and definition of forensic science and then go on to discuss the requirements and the role of a forensic mycologist. The various classes of evidence which interweave with mycological evidence will be presented, especially the field of palynology (pollen and plant spore analysis). Together, they can provide meaningful and powerful trace evidence. The same sample is used for both palynology and mycology so that two distinct classes of evidence are obtained from the same material. Fungi also enable the investigator to time event, and examples will be given to demonstrate this. A number of case histories will be presented so that a grasp will be gained of the way basic mycology has been used in complex criminal and civil investigations. A range of cases will demonstrate the various ways in which mycological evidence has been pivotal in solving crime.

DISPLAYS, POSTERS AND EXHIBITS IN THE SPIELMAN CENTRE



Are slime moulds intelligent?

Dr. Richard Mayne – University of West of England

Slime moulds were recently demonstrated as being able to navigate their way through mazes and do various other apparently 'intelligent' things. But, how can a brainless, single-celled organism be clever? Dr. Richard Mayne, from the University of the West of England, will be presenting some live slime mould experiments in his attempts to answer this question.

Fungi of the Future- Researching fungi in a "sci-fi forest" experiment

Aileen Baird

The Birmingham Institute of Forest Research is a group of scientists in Birmingham dedicated to global forest research. Our most exciting experiment is located in a native oak woodland in Staffordshire, where we have created a "sci-fi forest"! This means we are spraying patches of the woodland with extra carbon dioxide (CO₂), mimicking what the CO₂ concentrations will be like in around 50 years' time.



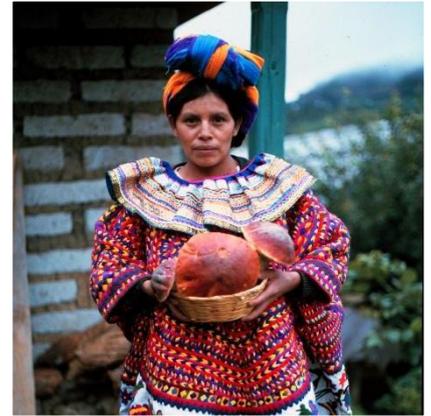
This CO₂-spraying technology is called a Free Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment (FACE) experiment and is one of only two in the entire world. Our sci-fi forest enables us to study the effects of future climates on the oak woodland- which is essential for understanding how forests, and the Earth respond to climate change.

There are lots of scientists working at the "FACE" experiment, including Aileen our resident mycologist! Aileen will be on the stand ready to explain more about our sci-fi forest but also to chat all things fungi- thinking about how forests, climate change and fungi all link together. Aileen is doing a PhD and is investigating how the increased CO₂ concentrations affect the fungal populations in the forest, and what this could mean for the forest as a whole.

Fungus Among Us - Ethnomycology

Lee Davies – Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Fungarium

Humans have been making use of fungi and fungal products for thousands of years; from drugs and baskets, to Percy Pigs and Cheese. We will have a range of objects from RBG Kew's collections demonstrating our unusual and varied relationship with fungi over the past 9000 years



Fearsome Fungal Foes: Fungal Diseases and why they're important

Scarlet Maguire – Bristol City Mycology

Fungal diseases play essential roles in our ecosystems but are often only viewed as problem causers in agriculture and forestry. The table display will contain information on a range of fungal diseases, the problems they cause and what we can do about them as well as highlighting their beauty and our human involvement with creating the problems.

Let's Talk About Lichens!

Theo Llewellyn – RBG Kew

Lichens are an association between a fungus and an algae or bacteria. There are at least 20,000 species of lichen and they can be found all across the globe, from the icy tundra of Antarctica to the scorching deserts of Namibia. Even the pavement outside your front door!

Come and find out all about this fascinating group of fungi. Learn about how they grow, where they are found and why they are so important to us and all life on earth.



Grow Your Own Furniture

Myco-materials with Ashley Granter from Natura Studios

Natura Studios will have their latest collection, 'From spoon to bowl' on display; it is an exploration within the industry of traditional craft. With this project, they created objects that redefine the ancient techniques of spoon carving by redirecting the lost potential from wood waste to create a product with a history and a new lease of life. Forget flat-pack furniture, this is grow your own chair! Come and check out their display of mycelium furniture products, living

cultures and substrates.

Wood Decomposers

Geoffery Liddell

Different species of fungi behave in very different ways just like animals and plants. Some search for twigs on the woodland floor using long thin tendrils and others might prefer to travel to their next food source by air, or maybe the foot of a beetle, through spores. Check out this poster and chat with Geoffery on the day.



Mushroom Medley

Rich Wright and Matt Wainhouse

Come and find out about our exciting new group Bristol City Mycology and the planned projects over the coming year. Chat about conservation and cultivation with Kew mycologist Rich Wright (Forever Fungi) and find out about how fungi can transform veteran trees into diverse habitats from Matt Wainhouse from Cardiff University. You'll be able to find out about local course and events, plus we'll have some interesting artefacts and oddities to share!

Justin Smith Foundation

Lucy Wallis Smith and Suzanne Zilka

This Bristol based foundation promotes and supports students in the study of fungi. They'll have new and second-hand books and other small fungi related items for sale.

CULTIVATION, PERFORMANCE AND FORAYS AT THE UNDERWOOD CENTRE

Mushroom Growing UK

Zsuzsanna Török and others

This exciting and dynamic display will be demonstrating the different stages of mushroom cultivation as practiced by home growers. Come join these grass routes educators and learn how to produce your own delicious and medicinal fungi at home. They will also be selling cultivation supplies, like cultures, materials, and equipment.





Explore the fungi at Arnos Vale Cemetery

Join us for 1-hour forays through the woodland on site, finding fruiting bodies and finding out about the hidden kingdom beneath your feet!

Forays will begin at the Underwood Centre.

Emma Williams – 11:00am

Emma has been studying fungi since 2012 and has quickly become a recognised name in South Wales and in online fungus groups. Her core interests are Coal Spoil Fungi, Recording, Ecology and Conservation, and she is a strong believer that mycology is accessible to all!

Fabio Godinho – 1:00pm

Fungi first caught his attention shortly after he started to learn about wild edible plants. In the beginning he was only mildly curious about the most popular (edible) fungi. But as he started learning some details about these mysterious life forms he was hooked. Soon it didn't matter if the fungi were edible or not, spotting them became a joy, identifying them a challenge and learning more about them a desire. He's only been looking at fungi for a few year's but they are on his mind almost daily: even holidays are planned with fungi seasons in mind. The diversity, ecology and all the secrets that they still hide, all fascinates him. His favourite group of fungi? It has to be the Boletes!

Chris Morris – Spores for Thought – 3:00pm

A mushroom-nut since his first giant puffball up a welsh mountain aged 17, Chris of Spores for Thought, a nomadic boat dweller based loosely in London, has guided himself on a decade-long journey into the mystery of mushrooms, weeds and trees; and will happily guide you along too, on a journey that will deepen your connection to the places you inhabit and their connections to the magical, interconnected drama of nature, in which fungi play an integral role.

PERFORMANCES



Fungal Folklore and Mushroom Magic

Kat Lyons- Spoken Word & Storytelling 12:00pm and 2:00pm

What is a mushroom? How do they grow? And what do dragons have to do with it? Join storyteller Kat Lyons as she investigates all these questions and more in an all-ages interactive performance mixing mycology, social history and storytelling.

The Poetry of Fungi

Sarah Watkinson – 3:00pm

A fungal poetry reading by acclaimed poet mycologist Sarah Watkinson, author of 'Dung Beetles Navigate by Starlight' and 'The Fungi'. Listen to the highs and lows of life as a honey fungus, the whirlwind journeys of spores, how genomics unpicks the recipe for digesting wood, and the terrifying 'enemy within' that rewrites an animal's brain.



The Myco-Lounge

Jules Varnedoe and Rosy Prowse

The Myco-Lounge is a wonderful suite of mushroom-shaped furniture and sculptural information signs that teach about the wonders of fungi in a fun and accessible way.

The Fun Guy!

Arkem Walton

Come and be transformed into a fungus by the magical and mysterious Fung Guy! An activity for children and adults involving songs, games and craft.



Live Fungi Street Art!

Fatcap

Our brilliant Bristol based aerosol and street artist, Fatcap, will be producing a fungal themed artwork before your very eyes! Specialising in geometric structures and calligraphic forms he's going to produce us a mycological marvel!



Wildfire Puppets

Emmy Broughton

Puppet-making and Story-craft. We will collectively build fungus creatures and other woodland animals, and then explore the surroundings as a group and gradually develop a story together. Children can make any kind of puppet they imagine, and we will then play games with them, exploring the woods in Arnos Vale, and discovering weird and wonderful fungi as part of the story.

Fungus Face Painting!

Fern Elias-Stagg

Fancy yourself as a Fly Agaric? Or maybe the tropical colours of a Parrot Waxcap are more your style? Come and find fern to get yourself looking the part at our celebration of all things fungal!

Appendix 4.











Appendix 5.

- Forever Fungi
- Bristol City Mycology
- Justin Smith Foundation
- British Ecological Society
- British Mycological Society
- Arnos Vale Cemetery
- Cardiff University
- University of West of England
- Bristol University
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Imperial College London
- Back from the Brink
- Natura Studios
- Mushroom Growers UK
- North Somerset and Bristol Fungus Group
- Birmingham Forest Research Centre
- Avon Wildlife Trust