Slide 1 – Title slide - this presentation will be me presenting my research so far. I have undertaken this research in preparation for putting together a booklet to show what mushrooms and fungi were growing in Lampeter in late November. I will only be able to show you a few of the ones I have found. I won't be talking about the Meadow Waxcap pictured here, but I wonder if it is interesting that I wouldn't eat it because it grows in a graveyard.

The booklet I create will be for my personal record of what is growing locally but could also be used in the

local library for information purposes. In the future, it could be used as part of a study to see what fungi species may be declining or rising in the area. The booklet's intended audience is myself and like-minded people. I aim for the finished booklet to contain maps showing the 5 locations I have covered and more information about the mushrooms and fungi I have found. The booklet will be printed in English; however, it could be translated into Welsh should there be interest in it.

There may be an accompanying scrapbook that will show more of the process I have gone through in order to create the booklet. The scrapbook will contain recipes (including one which involved rehydrating jelly ear mushrooms in gin). It will also include some research into the ethics of picking wild mushrooms and fungi.

Slide 2 – Jelly Ear (auricularia auricula-judae). The first and last mushroom I will be showing you is the Jelly Ear. (Just need to quickly put one in water…) It is also known as the "Wood Ear" and originally the "Jews Ear". It is believed that Judas Iscariot hung himself from an Elder tree, the tree that the Jelly Ear grows from most hence it becoming known as the "Jews Ear."[1] It is now most commonly known as the Jelly or Wood Ear.[2]

I have only had a few interactions with this mushroom… the first was not pleasant. I was first introduced to the Jelly Ear last year by an experienced friend. I took some home and decided to fry them up with the rest of the mushrooms we collected that day, they didn't seem to appreciate being fried and spat out of the pan and into my face. Then I proceeded to overcook them to the point they were basically inedible, and I wondered what all the fuss was about. These weren't nice! I decided after that I would stay clear of them.

Doing this module, however, I knew I would stumble (almost literally stumble, actually) upon this mushroom again as it grows year-round and is an incredibly resilient mushroom (as you will see soon with the one in water). They can survive frost and heat. In very hot weather, they can dry and shrivel up, but when rehydrated, they return to the same form they had. This one was dried on my kitchen radiator, and hopefully, by the end of the presentation, it will look a bit more like the Jelly Ear instead of a weird crisp. There is a similar mushroom that grows in China (the Cloud Ear) that the Jelly Ear is a suitable replacement for, and it is also good in soups.[3]

That will be my next experiment with the Jelly Ear. We will check back with the Jelly Ear at the end of the presentation.

[1] Josephine Bacon, *Mushrooms of Britain and Northern Europe.* (United Kingdom: John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, 2021). P80. And Patrick Harding, *Mushrooms.* (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2020).P203.
[2] Josephine Bacon, *Mushrooms of Britain and Northern Europe.* (United Kingdom: John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, 2021). P80.
[3] Rodger Phillips, *Wild Food*. (London: Pan Macmillan, 1983). P39. And Joesphine Bacon, *Mushrooms of Britain and Northern Europe.* (United Kingdom: John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, 2021). P80.

Slide 3 – Glistening Inkcap (coprinellus micaceus). This mushroom is fun. There are a few different inkcap mushrooms, and they make ink when they decompose. I have heard of this before and seen a friend make it. From a different kind of inkcap mushroom. This mushroom I did not realise was a species of inkcap until I left it overnight to do a spore print… when I checked it the next morning, I had a lumpy inky splotch of a mushroom. I

now know to only leave the inkcap for a couple of hours to obtain the spore print.

When they are young, they taste really nice, but I didn't eat the ones I collected (both batches seeing as the first ones turned to mush before I could do anything). After identifying this as a Glistening Inkcap, I decided to make ink - but on purpose. Making mushroom ink turned out to be really easy. I looked at a few ways online and found that the worst thing about the ink is the smell, so I don't recommend opening this jar.[4] (Show jar). The hardest part of the whole ink experiment was realising that I do, in fact, have no idea how to make a quill with a feather. It is not something you just dip into ink and write with. I feel misled by movies. After finding out how to make a feather into a quill, I found that I still have absolutely no skill in writing with one… so this is what I have achieved (show papers with ink). I then decided that stamps may be better.

As can be seen from my prints of mushrooms with mushroom ink, there is still work to be done on making this a really useful ink. It was very watery, so I added some gum Arabic. This seemed to stop the wateriness, but it didn't make it any darker. Or the smell any better. I think I need to do some more research on the ink-making process.

[4] Nick Neddo, (2015), *Making Ink From The Inky Cap Mushroom (Coprinopsis Altamentaria)* [Blog] Nick Neddo Eartharts. Available at: https://www.nickneddo.com/blog/2015/1/9/making-ink-from-the-inky-cap-mushroom-coprinopsis-altamentaria Accessed: 03/12/2022.

Slide 4 – This is still the Glistening Inkcap, but you can see the different stages of its life, from when it is young and tasty to when it decomposes into ink.

Slide 5 – Birch Polypore (piptoporus bitulinus). Another interesting fungi (or technically parasite).[5] This one was growing quite high up in a tree and getting it down was… interesting. Unfortunately, I am no longer able to shimmy up and down trees as I please, but luckily there was a big stick nearby that we managed to use to knock it down. A few days after collecting this one, I found a tree covered in them… all growing very low down.

The Birch Polypore was also known as the Razorstrop, this is because barbers used to use this fungus to sharpen their cutthroat razor blades.[6] It was also used medicinally (and still is) by some people that believe it has qualities that help fight of colds and other things.[7] In order to preserve the Birch Polypore, it can be dehydrated. This is what I have done (show jar), I did this before I discovered that my oven was broken and keeps heating up once it gets to temperature… so I may have cooked it rather than dehydrated it, but here it is all the same.

I still need to do more research on this mushroom before I can say more about it for the booklet I plan to create.

[5] Patrick Harding, *Mushrooms*. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2020). P192.
[6] Josephine Bacon, *Mushrooms of Britain and Northern Europe.* (United Kingdom: John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, 2021). P121.
[7] WildFoodUK., (N.D), *Birch Polypore*, Available at: https://www.wildfooduk.com/mushroom-guide/birch-

polypore/. Accessed: 02/12/2022.

Slide 6 – Amethyst Deceiver (laccaria amethystine). I found this one by pure luck, and I love it. I wasn't expecting to find it, and I haven't done much research on it. I just really wanted to put it here because it's so purple, and I am not quite ready to look at the Jelly Ear yet. I found this on campus by the Canterbury building when I was looking for a replacement of a different mushroom because I had accidentally cooked it whilst drying it…

Despite its very bright and vibrant colour, this mushroom is edible and really tasty.[8] Out of every single mushroom of the many species I have found (at least 50) this is the one that smells the most mushroomy. After drying it, it becomes a lilac colour, but the gills underneath are still quite bright. (show mushroom) really pretty, and I can't wait to find more.

[8] Josephine Bacon, *Mushrooms of Britain and Northern Europe.* (United Kingdom: John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, 2021). P42.

Slide 7 – Back to the Jelly Ear. Now (hopefully), the weird tiny crisp has regained some of its original shape. It hasn't finished rehydrating yet, but I think you can see how it would.

That is all I have for you today on my research so far on mushrooms and fungi of Lampeter.

Questions and comments.

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