

Silky Rosegill *Volvariella bombycina* at West End, Broadway.

Graham Martin
 Wagtails, Broadway Road,
 Aston Somerville, Broadway, WR12 7JF
graham.martin8@btinternet.com
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The occurrence of the fungus Silky Rosegill *Volvariella bombycina* is regarded as infrequent to rare. There are 241 sightings on the NBN Atlas web site. Most of them are “unconfirmed” and less than one third of sightings have been in this century. According to the NBN Atlas there are no records in Worcestershire although there are two in the Shropshire sections of the Wyre Forest (in SO 7477 and 7476), one to the west of the county in Herefordshire near Bromyard (SO 6854), and one beyond the northern edge of the county within the Birmingham conurbation in SP 08. There are none close to Worcestershire to the south and east in the NBN Atlas. However, John Bingham reported to me that he had recorded one at The Mythe just north of Tewkesbury, “many years ago”. The world-wide distribution includes Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America, but it seems that nowhere is it considered common.



01. *Volvariella bombycina* Silky Rosegill.

I first found this specimen on August 26th 2018 but I did not know what it was (01). It certainly looked interesting and I had no idea what it would turn into. One friend suggested it might turn into a Dryad’s Saddle *Polyporus squamosus* but John Bingham suggested it would turn into a fungus with gills, and he was correct. It was growing at a height of about 2.5 m on the trunk of a much battered but standing dead Beech Tree. At the base of the same tree was a large body of *Grifola frondosa* Hen of the Woods (02) and *Ganoderma australe* Southern Bracket (03). So this tree was certainly under attack and starting to return its nutrients to the soil. The tree is situated at about SP 08753683 (Site name: Broadway Coppice, West End, Broadway). Broadway Coppice appears to be a small remnant of ancient woodland, situated on a north east facing steep slope of the Cotswold Limestone to the south west of Broadway. The wood has been knocked about a bit but there is a lot of dead wood some of which is still standing although much is lying.

When I returned nine days later on September 4th the fruiting body was in a pristine state having broken through each of the volvae to show seven toadstools (04). I was able to get one down and take close up photographs (05 & 06) to show the gills and the silky cap from which the common name is derived. John Bingham told me that I was lucky to have such access to this fungus because they are often too high up on the trunk for easy viewing and indeed there was another cluster a further two metres up the trunk. They may also occur inside hollow trees. I t must be a very lucky person who finds them there.



02. *Grifola frondosa* Hen of the Woods.



03. *Ganoderma australe* Southern Bracket.



04. *Volvariella bombycina* Silky Rosegill.

Broadway Coppice may be an important site for other fungi and perhaps also for beetles and I would encourage others to take a look. It is easily reached as the Cotswold Way path runs through it and cars can be parked by the newly created Badsey Brook Flood Alleviation site in West End. There are a couple of unofficial paths off from that main one so wandering is not difficult.

This was a very showy and spectacular fungus. It is fitting that its location has elements of theatre land from both London and New York. Its record has been submitted to iRecord.



05. *Volvariella bombycina* Silky Rosegill.



06. *Volvariella bombycina* Silky Rosegill.

Images

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- 03. *Ganoderma australe* Southern Bracket.
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