

BFG Foray at Wotton Park Estate
September 11th, 2016

Report by Penny Cullington

A group of 10 met up for our first fungi walk of the autumn season – 7 members and 3 friends from nearby Brill. Fortunately the previous day's constant rain had passed through and though this had probably not had time to affect fruiting, it did mean that most of what we found was looking fresh and moist. We set off towards the south end of the lake and though the large grassy area and burnt sites here were not as productive as we sometimes find, there was plenty to keep us interested and puzzling over. We were pleased to see two of the regular Bolete species fruiting well though *Boletus satanas* (found in its usual spot by Toni) had clearly suffered from having to struggle up through the hard dry clay soil and was not looking its best.



Boletus satanas (Devil's bolete) found today (CS)

In last year's report for this site (on Sept 13th) I mentioned a pink and white capped *Russula* species which we recorded here for the first time then; this was *R. luteotacta* (surprisingly with no common name) and it was fruiting again quite well today in several places under the oaks. The tell-tale chrome yellow stains which develop where the fruitbody is damaged (the reason for its Latin species name) did not appear convincingly till several hours later, but I had no doubt about its identity in the field: once you get to know it the cap colours together with a cuticle which hardly peels and quite widely spaced and rubbery gills give it away. (See last *Boletus radicans* (Rooting bolete) found today (CS) year's report for a photo.)



Boletus radicans (Rooting bolete) found today (CS)



Several other interesting species were found under the oaks where the *Boletus satanas* fruits, and all needed work at home to identify. Firstly a greyish brown *Lactarius* with copious milk I wrongly suggested was *L. fluens* in the field, but when I opened the pot at home the milk – white at first - had turned bright pink! This straight away eliminated all the Milkcap species found in the UK except for six, making identification a bit easier. I soon cut these down to just one: *L. fuliginosus* (Sooty milkcap) having a dry uniform

coloured cap, mild milk and flesh, a concolorous stem and spores with an almost complete reticulum of warts and ridges to 1 micron high. We have just two previous county records on our database, so this was a nice find.

Left *Lactarius fuliginosus* above on collection (CS) and below later at home (PC)

Next, a species of *Tricholoma* which in the field Nick suggested might be *T. ustaloides*. Very similar to the rich chestnut brown *T. ustale* (Burnt knight) – a species we have become familiar with in the Chilterns as it grows exclusively under Beech – I discovered at home that *T. ustaloides* grows mainly under Oak on clayey or calcareous soil and differs in appearance from *T. ustale* by having a mainly brown stem but with a clearly delimited white zone at the top (this feature absent in *T. ustale*). More interestingly, in the Fungi of N. Europe volume on the genus I learnt that it is 'generally rare in N. Europe and more or less confined to habitats with other rare mycorrhizal fungi like *Boletus satanas*'. If I needed any further



Left *Tricholoma ustaloides*, the specimen on the left showing the white zone at the top of the stem. (CS)

confirmation of the identification surely this was it! We have a few county records for this species though I now wonder if all are correct as in a couple of them the habitat given was under Beech.

In this same productive spot under Oak Paul found a couple of specimens of a *Russula* having bright orange gills – always a sign of something out of the ordinary in this genus. This keyed out very nicely to *Russula decipiens*, having a pink cap with coral tinge (not unlike *R. velenovskyi*) which is sticky after rain, a bright orange-yellow sporeprint (merely cream in *R. velenovskyi*), and with a microscope one finds numerous clavate cystidia on the cap surface. It is a rare species with under 50 UK records, found only in the south usually under Oak. The only previous county record was from Mousells Wood (where we visit next week) a few years back where it was found and identified by Geoffrey Kibby. (Sadly there's no photo of today's collection.)



Abortiporus biennis looking somewhat strange (NF)

We came across several specimens of *Abortiporus biennis* (Blushing rosette) the first of which was found in long grass and had therefore produced somewhat atypical long growths not unlike some species of club fungus. This had us fooled until it was collected and studied more carefully.

Four species of *Pluteus* were found, the first looking just like a small *Entoloma* (Pinkgill); it was growing in a grassy area but must have been on submerged wood and once collected revealed its free gills (thus proving yet again how tricky identification can be unless one picks a fungus to look at all its features). The smaller species of *Pluteus*, of which there are quite a few, nearly always need a microscope to identify, and this one turned out to be *P. podospileus* and new to the site. Another one which I thought looked interesting turned out to be just a small *P. salicinus* (Willow shield).



Panaeolus fimicola with gills affected by the galls of a fly. (NF)

Of interest was a collection of a species of *Panaeolus* which had strange swellings on the gills. This I'd seen before in this genus and recognised as the galls of a fly. There's an article in *Field Mycology* (Vol 4(3) 2003) by Brian Spooner (then Head of Mycology at Kew) about this occurrence with a photo on the back cover, also a follow-up note by Alick Henrici in the next edition. The fly responsible was proving difficult to trace and as far as I know is still to be identified. The gall had been found on just three species of *Panaeolus*, one of these being my collection on *P. fimicola* from Penn Wood. Our collection today also proved to be that species.

Not many species of *Mycena* (Bonnets) were fruiting, though we did find several species of *Marasmius* / *Marasmiellus* (Parachutes). The common *Marasmius rotula* (Collared parachute) was readily identifiable at the time but both *M. curreyi* (Grass parachute) and *Marasmiellus vaillantii* (Goblet parachute) needed a microscope to confirm.

Right *Marasmius curreyi* showing its rather few gills and horsehair stem though not visible is its golden cap; and below it *Marasmius vaillantii* with more crowded gills, a stem reddish black at the base but white at the top and a white cap. Both species are have caps under 1cm across and are seen here sitting on my hand. (above NF, below CS)



In all we recorded just over 40 species of which 14 were new to the site. There are still a couple of Inkcap for Derek to check when he has time. Looking at last year's report for this site at almost the same date, I see we listed 48 species so a very similar number was found this time though surprisingly only 12 species appear on both lists! This surely goes to show how we merely tickle the surface of what fungi are actually present at any one site at such events. Two Inkcap photos in that report show a remarkable similarity to those we found this time, so I suspect we will have *C. hiascens* and *Coprinopsis friesii* to include in our list.

Many thanks to all attendees, and also to Neil and Claudi for their photos, more of which I've included below for your interest. For further details of what we found see the complete list.



Daedalea quercina (Mazegill) still fruiting on the same Red Oak where we find it every year. (NF)



Phellinus populicola, a rare bracket found only on Poplar and first identified here by Martyn Ainsworth in 2009. We have recorded it on every visit since then. (NF)



A collection of young and fresh specimens of *Psathyrella candolleana* (Pale Brittlestem). Just visible are the typical flocks of veil hanging from the edge of the cap. As it matures the gills will become almost black, the colour of the mature spores, but at the stage of this collection it is much harder to recognise in the field. (CS)



We found many example of *Bolbitius titubans* (formerly *vitellinus* – Yellow Fieldcap) looking fresh after yesterday's rain. (NF)



Lacrymaria lacrymabunda (Weeping widow) was also nicely moist and showing its characteristic gill droplets. (NF)