

FUNGI WALK at WOTTON PARK ESTATE on Sunday October 15th 2023

Penny Cullington

This report is going to be a bit different from normal because I was unfortunately somewhat immobile today and therefore unable to accompany our group of 13 for much of this visit though was around at either end of the morning to help Derek as best I could with identifying specimens. It was a chilly day but clear and the lake was looking stunning as always. It was good too to be joined for the first time by the owner's son and friends for part of our visit also.

As is often the way on our walks the list was started off with bits found in or around the car park. The first of these was a nice cluster of an uncommon Oyster species on Ash and, as Bob recalled and our records show, we'd found *Pleurotus dryinus* (Veiled Oyster) in this area on Ash on our previous visit here in 2021. This is a chunky whitish species with a dry and roughened cap surface – less smooth than found in other Oyster species; it tends to occur in faults or wounds on various standing deciduous trees.

Right: *Pleurotus dryinus* in the car park today. (SE)



The Limes adjacent to the car park are often a good source of mycorrhizal species (those which grow on tree roots forming a mutually beneficial relationship with their tree host). Several Fibrecap species were found here today, also *Hebeloma aestivale* (no common species name though the genus name is Poison Pie!).



Left above: the Fibrecap *Pseudosperma umbrinellum*, uncommon – this will be sent for DNA sequencing. (PC)



Right above: *Hebeloma aestivale* (PC)

The large Red Oak on the far side of the first grassy area here is often productive for fungi, and today was no exception. We admired the many brackets of *Daedalea quercina* (Oak Mazegill) which were dotted about all over this tree as usual.

Right: *Daedalea quercina* on *Quercus rubra* (SE)





Also spied on the mossy trunk of this tree were the tiny fruitbodies of the unusual *Arrhenia retiruga* (Small Moss Oysterling) – one of ten species new to the site list today. These tiny pale stemless cups grow on moss and here were less than 5mm across, found and identified by Sarah.

Left: *Arrhenia retiruga* – easily overlooked and seldom recorded. (SE)

In soil under this same Oak I noticed some small pale pink mushrooms and strongly suspected they would turn out to be *Russula luteotacta* (a

Brittlelegill with no common name). This unusual species favours damp clay soils and we've found it here several times before. Initially it is pretty similar to many of the red/pink-capped Brittlelegills but often has pale cream or white patches and can even be entirely cream (I tend to remember it as 'Strawberries and cream'). It has two redeeming features: unusually the cap cuticle refuses to peel at all, also if you are prepared to wait several hours (sometimes overnight!) any damaged parts turn bright brassy yellow – hence its species name meaning yellow when touched. The photo here shows two separate collections made yesterday – mine tiny and cream, the others larger and rose red – which by mid afternoon (on my lawn at home) were beginning to show the telltale yellowing just visible on the upturned gills.



Right: *Russula luteotacta*. (PC)

I turned back at this stage so missed looking for *Rubroboletus satanas* (Devil's Bolete) which is often found a bit further on under the Oaks by the lake. Sure enough it was found there



today but sadly was well past its sell-by date. A pity because this is an impressive beast and also rare - we have just two other confirmed county sites. I include a photo here taken several years ago at this spot so those of you who've not seen it before can see the distinctive combination of pale cap, red pores and very chunky squat reddish clavate stem which typify the species.

Left: *Rubroboletus satanas*, found today – the photo taken here several years ago. (PC)

I was shown some small rather broken specimens of an

Ascomycete we've seen very little of this season though often it is quite common, hence it has not featured in this year's reports as yet. *Helvella crispa* (White Saddle) is quite large for an Asco – up to 10 cms tall or so when mature – and has a white distinctly grooved stem (similar to some Morels) with a smooth though sometimes misshapen 'saddle' on top, the fertile part.

Right: *Helvella crispa*, found to day – the photo taken several years ago in Common Wood. (PC)



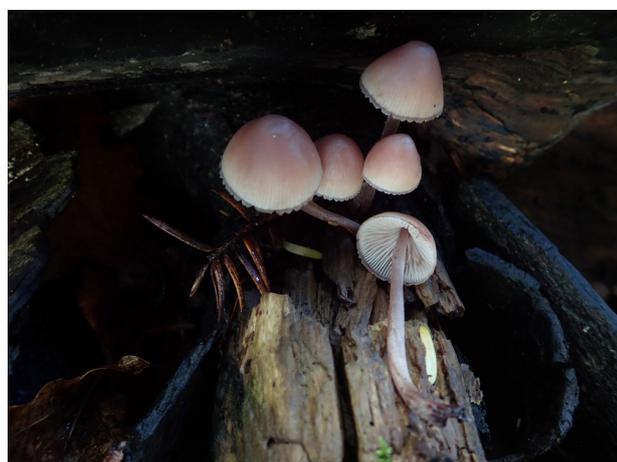
As the group continued and I returned slowly and mooched about looking for other things I found several fungi worth a photo. In a dark corner with piles of fallen mossy logs there was a small cluster of brilliant white *Mycena*-like



mushrooms which had extremely crowded white gills. This was *Hemimycena cucullata* (no common name), later confirmed by Derek. We have a handful of sites where this has been recorded and we found it here on our previous visit two years ago.

Left: *Hemimycena cucullata* (PC)

Nearby was another cluster in a dark corner, the pink cap colour and dark brown/red juice exuded by the stem confirming this was *Mycena haematopus* (Burgundydrop Bonnet). This species is common, always fruits on fallen deciduous wood and was also found elsewhere here this morning.



Right: *Mycena haematopus*. (PC)

Also here on a rotting stump, presumably conifer – there were many Yews in the area – was another

common species: the brightly coloured *Calocera viscosa* (Yellow Stagshorn). Apologies for the photo taken from above – I couldn't get myself near enough for a better angle!

Left: *Calocera viscosa*. (PC)



Another to share with you. At one point someone handed Derek a small yellow-capped mushroom with a strikingly yellow stem, and this we discussed later in the car park. He suggested it was a species of *Pluteus* (Shield) though *P. romellii*, which does indeed have a distinct yellow stem but more

often than not has a dull brown cap like many of the genus. I worked on this at home and microscopically it fitted *P. romellii* perfectly, and amongst online images of this species there are many with varying degrees of yellow caps. Furthermore we have several records of this species from this site though not many from elsewhere. (If you read this and realise it was you who found it and would like the recognition, do let me know!)

Right: *Pluteus romellii* (PC)



Finally to a rare species of *Clitocybe* (Funnel) which is

exceptional in growing on fallen deciduous wood rather than in soil or litter. *Clitocybe truncicola* (Trunk Funnel) was found on fallen wood, possibly Beech and was identified at home later by Derek. This is new not only to the site but also to the county. (Once again, if you read this and realise it was you who found it and would like the recognition, do let me know!)



Above: *Clitocybe truncicola*, found today and the photos taken at home once it had been identified. (DJS)

Our final list is around 60 species – quite modest compared to our visit in 2021 when we found well over 100 species but only a small area of the site was able to be covered today. Nevertheless we added 10 to the overall list for the site, also one apparently new to the county. Many thanks to all attendees and my apologies that I was not able to take a more active part today. For more details of what we found see the separate complete species list.

Photographers:

DJS = Derek Schafer; PC = Penny Cullington; SE = Sarah Ebdon (thanks, Sarah, esp for this one below!)

