

BFG Foray at Wotton Park Estate  
September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Report by Penny Cullington

There were 13 attendees at this our first foray of the autumn season. The day was fine and sunny, though the wooded areas proved very dry and were disappointingly unproductive. Nevertheless the grassy areas kept us suitably interested, and our over-all list of 48 species contained a good number new to the site. This is often a really good site for Inkcaps and Derek was kept busy with a good supply of specimens turning up – in fact a quarter of our total list comprised Inkcaps. I was not so lucky with a complete lack of *Inocybe* species and other common genera conspicuous by their absence were *Amanita* and *Agaricus* (both early season fruiters), with only one species each of *Tricholoma*, *Mycena* and *Lactarius* found, though this last was interesting.



Let's start with a stunning photo of *Hygrocybe conica* (Blackening waxcap) – surprisingly new to the site and fruiting quite prolifically in the lakeside grassy area. The insert (bottom right) shows an older specimen displaying why this species has its common name. It often fruits much earlier in the season than other waxcaps. Just below the waxcaps in the photo can be seen a small coral-like fungus which Derek later

*Hygrocybe conica* and just beneath it *Ramariopsis kunzei* (NW)

identified as *Ramariopsis kunzei* (Ivory coral), similar though much rarer than the common *Clavulina coralloides*, a species we quite often find in woodland litter.



*Coprinellus disseminatus* (NW) was *Coprinellus hiascens*.

Now to Derek's impressive list of Inkcaps, 12 different species in all – some common, some unusual and one extremely rare. I won't list them here as they can be found in the online list, but we have nice photos of a couple. Firstly (right) Joanna's sharp eyes picked out *Coprinopsis friesii* on a dead grass stem near the old bonfire site which provided us with so much fungal interest. The fingers in the photo give a good sense of scale. The burnt ground itself provided several clumps of different inkcaps; one such,



*Coprinopsis friesii* (NW)

The common *C. disseminatus* (Fairy inkcap) was also collected – again the fingers in the photo on the left show the size.

The rarity was *Coprinopsis tectispora* found on woody debris near the bonfire site. I quote from Derek's email telling me about it: 'This is the second European record and the first collection in the natural environment! It was described on a collection on compost in a greenhouse in

Washington State, USA and the first European collection was on wood chip in Alan Hills' garden) – both “alien man-made” sites! I think it is one of the species recorded as *C. macrocephala* when not found on dung and probably not uncommon.’ If anyone can remember collecting it on Sunday and giving it to Derek, do let me know so that I can enter you as the finder for the record. We do not have photos available as yet, but as soon as Derek sends me these I’ll insert them here.



The bonfire site also had several large clusters of a brown cup fungus, and this I suggested was *Peziza petersi* having previously found it on burnt ground at Watlington Hill, and microscopic features confirmed it at home. We have a handful of Bucks records but none since 1997. (As I write the national records database online (FRDBI) is down, so I’m unfortunately unable to check for UK record numbers.)

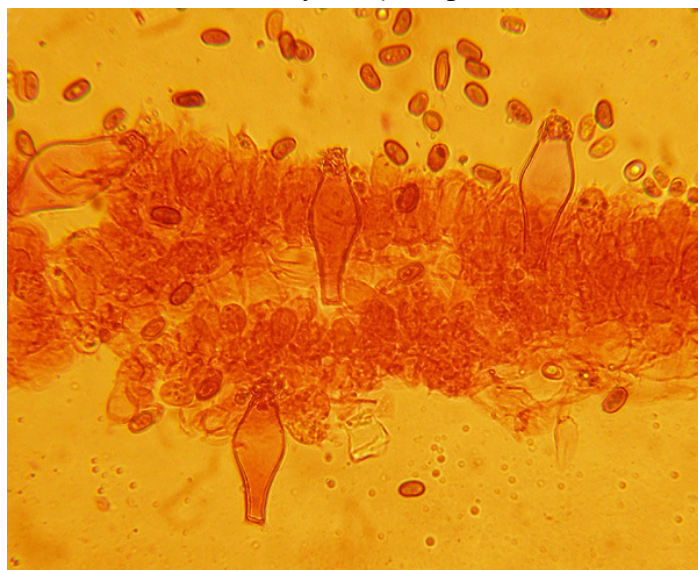
*Peziza petersi* fruiting on the large of patch of burnt ground today (NW)

No early season foray at Wotton would be complete without some nice Boletes, and we were not disappointed. *Boletus radicans* (Rooting bolete) was found, but the star of the show has to be *Boletus satanas* (Devil’s bolete) – regularly occurring here early in the season under the oaks by the lake, though most specimens were well past their sell-by date. Luckily one was photo-worthy, though only a tiny glimpse of the red pores underneath is visible on the left.



*Boletus satanas* by the lake (NW)

Also near the bonfire site I was handed by Justin an LBJ (little brown job) which he suggested might be an *Inocybe*. Not so because the gills and spores were too dark, but I thought possibly a *Psathyrella* as it had a brittle whitish stem, though the brown centre and paler wrinkled outer half was not familiar to me. At home this keyed out to *Psathyrella cernua*, new to me and to the county and I suspect with few British records (though I can't check at present). It may look insignificant in the extreme in the field, but is one of only a few in this genus which has 'metuloid' cystidia (infertile cells on the gill which have thick walls and are topped with a little pile of crystals, like those in many *Inocybe* species).



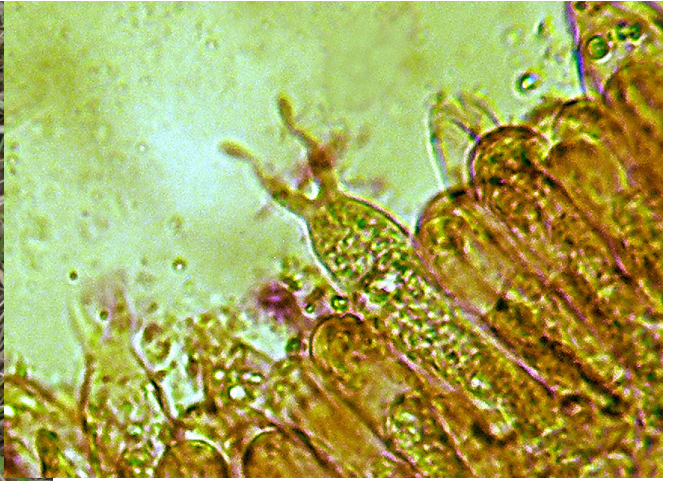
***Psathyrella cernua*, the cap about 2cm across, and its remarkable metuloid cystidia x 400 stained in congo red. The cystidia are the bloated cells sticking out from the gill context, with ellipsoid spores floating around above. (PC)**

I was also handed a smallish pinkish *Russula* (we saw surprisingly few of this genus) which at first I was confused by, but then it rang a bell. *Russula luteotacta* is one which stains bright chrome yellow (like *Agaricus xanthoderma*) but it does this only after several hours and not on the stem but in some part of the gills or cap where damaged. The non-peeling cap, widely-spaced gills and cap colour which I remember as 'strawberries and cream' are the give-away clues before the yellowing occurs. So I gave several parts a scratch to damage it and put in a pot to see if I was correct, and was later rewarded with the tell-tale yellowing. It is not a rare species but not that common either, usually under Oak in clayey soils.



***Russula luteotacta* in the field (above), then several hours later at home (right) showing the chrome yellow staining (PC)**

Our only species of *Lactarius* was an interesting and uncommon one, found towards the end of our foray near the gazebo in thick grass under Oak: a large species with cap about 10cm across, a sunken middle and a pink-beige colour all over, the gills were disinclined to give milk and they tend to fork and be misshapen and brittle. On collection I got to the genus straight away, then Derek remembered the species and between us the name eventually surfaced! *Lactarius acerrimus* (Two-spored milkcap) is so named because it is the only member of the genus having basidia (spore-producing cells on the gill) which have two sterigmata (protrusions to which the spores are originally attached) instead of the normal four. It is therefore a quick check with a microscope to find these cells to confirm the identification.



Left *Lactarius acerrimus* showing the crumbly forking gills, and above an example of its two-spored basidia looking like the prongs of a pitchfork. Most basidia have four less prominent prongs, more like an inverted cow's udder. (PC)

My thanks to all attendees who searched so diligently and made the morning so enjoyable, and especially to Nick White for making his excellent photos so promptly available. Two more of these are below to finish off the report.

As usual see the foray list for more details of our finds.

