

Re-amended report on BFG Foray at Wotton Park Estate
November 3rd 2013

Report by Penny Cullington

A good sized group of us, around 14, enjoyed an interesting morning at this picturesque venue which always seems to produce some unusual species. This was our last foray of the autumn season (apart from our Christmas foray and lunch in Brill on Dec 15th) and we benefited from the mild damp conditions which have predominated this autumn and consequently prolonged good fruiting. This is a large site and one which we rarely manage to cover much of on such occasions, due to the slow pace caused by much stopping and discussion of finds. This time we decided to turn left and foray the north end of the lake and soon found things to interest us, the first being on the boathouse roof which was liberally carpeted with little *Mycenas* growing on the rushes and moss – hundreds of them! These we've seen here before, and I'd previously thought were *Mycena arcangeliana*, but a more careful look at home this time showed them to have the typical bristly 'brush cell' cystidia on the gill margin only, not the gill face as well, and this together with some 2-spored basidia pointed to *M. filopes* (Iodine Bonnet), an equally common member of this genus. Both species have a smell of iodine, sometimes only as they dry out after collection, though *M. filopes* – a species of woodland litter, is probably not often recorded from boathouse rooves!

Next came a nice collection of an attractive brown scaly *Agaricus* (Mushroom), superficially similar to *A. silvaticus* (Blushing Wood Mushroom) but unlike that species in that it doesn't 'blush' i.e. redden in the cap or stem where damaged, but only in the gills. This species, *A. impudicus*, is also much less common and lacks the typical 'mushroomy' smell of several of the good edible mushroom species, having a rather unpleasant mouldy nauseous odour. Though I suspect it is often collected for the pot in error for the tasty *A. silvaticus*, this is not considered an edible species, and incidentally please note it is omitted from several of the commonly used handbooks (thus my large photo below.)

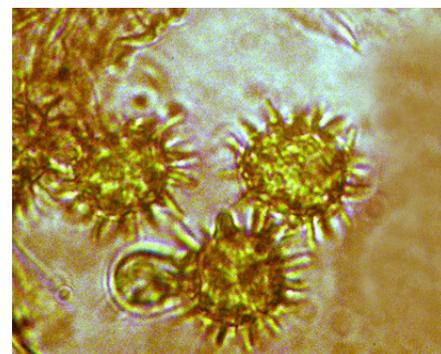


Agaricus impudicus (no common name). Note the lack of reddening where the white flesh of the large right hand cap is showing through, also the lack of reddish bruising on the stems which would be apparent in *A. silvaticus*. The gills, however, are very bright pink when immature for the genus; they bruise even redder on damage, and the smell is unpleasant and not typically 'mushroomy'. (PC)

We came to a halt for quite a few minutes a little further down the path when we came across several circular bare patches of soil sporting quite a few different fungi. It was thought that trees had been uprooted and removed here and the ground at some stage burnt, this confirmed by the presence of *Tephroclybe anthracophila* and *Hebeloma anthracophilum*, both species known to thrive on bonfire sites. There were good numbers of different Inkcaps which immediately absorbed Derek, also numbers of *Pluteus romellii* (Goldleaf Shield), the only yellow-stemmed member of the genus *Pluteus*, one which always occurs on wood which in this case must have been submerged roots. We also found here several *Ascomycetes* - the large group of fungi known as the spore-shooters – there were two clusters of small orange cups, one with a blackish rim formed of tiny hairs and reminiscent of the genus *Scutellinia*, and another similar but with a concolorous rim. (Photos of both these two are now included on the last page of the report.) Neil Fletcher identified the first as *Anthracobia macrocystis* (and also took the excellent photos), and Joanna identified the second as *Anthracobia melaloma*, both species being specific to burnt ground. Another slightly larger orange disc with an undulating edge was *Aleuria* (Orange Peel) (again see added photo at the end) but this proved to be a problem to identify to species because I found the spores were too large for any known British species of this genus. To cut a long story short, several years back I misidentified a very similar collection as the common *Aleuria aurantia* at Stoke Common, only to discover later from a further collection sent to Brian Spooner at Kew that this was a species of that genus new to Britain and hardly known in Europe! This Wotton collection has therefore been sent to Brian as I've hopefully learnt my lesson this time. I'll add more information about this when I hear back from him. [\[See additional note at end of report.\]](#)



Several other things we found defied identification, due to lack of skills and/or time, but one in particular intrigued me. This was a patch of rusty fuzz (right) on fallen wood, possibly a species of *Tomentella*, a notoriously tricky genus belonging to the Corticioids – those rather inconspicuous splodges found on wood, often white and flat and in fact rather dull, but revealing fascinating structures under the scope. Checking in *Fungi of Switzerland vol 2*, my specimen matched *T. bryophila*, having amazing spores measuring 9 microns across with spines up to 3 microns long. However, as that book barely scrapes the surface of the genus I decided to send it to Alick Henrici who has now confirmed the identification. Not rare but with few records as the genus is seldom tackled, this particular species is apparently one of the easier ones to determine due to the remarkable spores.



***Tomentella bryophila*, above right seen through a dissecting microscope, and right its remarkable spores like mini maritime mines, magnified x 1000 and measuring 9 microns across with spines 3 microns long. (PC)**

We had various discussions on edible fungi, the first brought about by a collection of immature 'buttons' of another *Agaricus* species, this one strongly yellowing on handling. Several good edible mushrooms have this character, but also one which it is unwise to eat. Luckily it is easily distinguished from the others if you know what to look for: Picking off a tiny piece from the stem base, the damaged area turns bright chrome yellow in a few seconds. This and other species will often stain yellow on the cap and the stem, but only *A. xanthoderma* (Yellow Stainer) goes this colour at the stem base, as our specimens at Wotton did. (I know I've written about this species before, but felt it was worth repeating.) We found quite good numbers of *Lepista nuda* (Wood Blewit) which were quickly popped into baskets until some specimens of a species with decidedly suspect edibility, *Cortinarius alboviolaceus* (Pearly Webcap), made us realise just how easy it was to mistake this for the edible Blewit. Tips to spot the difference: look at the top of the stem where the spore colour can often be detected, pale cream in Blewits but darker and rusty brown in all species of *Cortinarius* – a few of which are deadly poisonous! Look also in young specimens of *Cortinarius* for the cobwebby veil joining the cap edge to the stem beneath, though this is often lost as it matures. If neither spore colour or veil can be detected, as was the case with a few of ours at Wotton, the only safe way is to take a sporeprint overnight.

The genus *Amanita* was conspicuous by its complete absence, with only one Bolete and very few *Russulas* and *Lactarius* also, though of our list of 84 species over 30 were new to the site. Derek was pleased to see 5 species of his favoured genus, the Inkcaps now split into *Coprinus*, *Coprinellus*, *Coprinopsis* and *Parasola*, and I was equally pleased to see 7 species of my favoured genus *Inocybe*, the Fibrecaps. Of significance were two finds: I collected a largish *Conocybe* (Conecap) with a white stem which made me think it was unusual. This keyed out to *C. pygmaeoaffinis*, with only 64 previous British records, though I was interested to find that it had been recorded here several years earlier by Derek. An unusual species of *Entoloma* was identified by Derek, this was *E. majaloides*, a new county record with only 48 previous British records. Also found was *Rhodotus palmatus* (Wrinkled Peach), a species declining in this country due to the demise of its host tree, Elm. A nice collection of *Otidea bufonia* (Toad's Ear) was collected, this being a rather dark species of this largish cup fungus and also less common.

Neil Fletcher took nice photos of two other common species which I've now added here as they are certainly worthy of inclusion. The first, *Lacrymaria lacrymabunda* (Weeping Widow), has dark purple-black spores and typically moisture droplets on the gills explaining the common English name. The second is another good edible species, *Clitocybe geotropa* (Trooping Funnel), of which quite a few specimens were seen today.

Lacrymaria lacrymabunda (Weeping Widow - right) showing the colour of the mature spores which have dropped onto the stem ring in several places turning it purple-black, also the droplets on the gills of the specimen furthest left. (NF)

A particularly good photo of *Clitocybe geotropa* (Trooping Funnel - below), another good edible found on the day, though not to be confused with similar large whitish funnel-shaped species. (NF)





Two more of Neil's photos, both species of *Anthracobia* growing on soil on a previous bonfire site: left is *A. melaloma*, right is *A. macrocystis*. In each case the individual fruitbodies were about 1cm across. (NF)

To finish with, a magnificent bracket found by Greg, growing at the base of an Oak by the lake.

Inonotus dryadeus growing at the base of an Oak at Wotton today. (PC) [See also the additional photo of this specimen on the final page of the report.]



Many thanks to all who attended. This was our last foray of the autumn season apart from our Christmas foray and lunch to be held at Brill Common on Dec 15th, and afterwards at Joanna Dodsworth's house – thanks to Joanna for her generous hospitality. (More details shortly on the website.) We've had a really good season with lots to find and enjoy. Let's hope for equally good things next year!

[The potentially interesting *Aleuria* was later identified by Brian Spooner as *Melastiza cornubiensis* – a relatively common species.]



These amazing droplets on the large specimen of the bracket *Inonotus dryadeus* were observed by Joanna at Wotton earlier in the year before it had been determined by Derek following our foray. (JD)

Photos © Penny Cullington, Joanna Dodsworth and Neil Fletcher