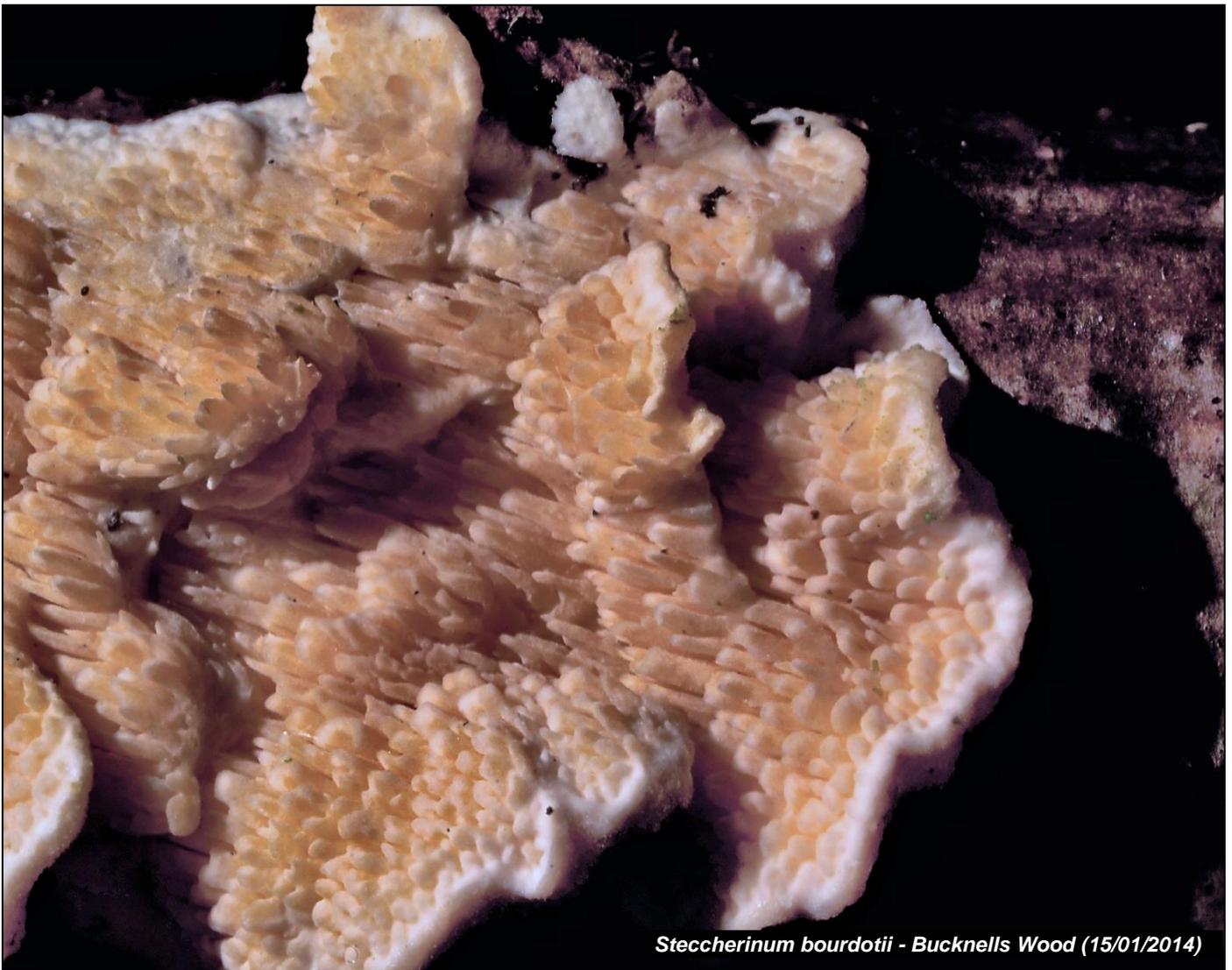




*Herefordshire Fungus Survey  
Group*

# *News Sheet N° 28: Autumn 2014*



*Steccherinum bourdotii* - Bucknells Wood (15/01/2014)

<b>President:</b>	Ted Blackwell
<b>Recorder:</b>	Jo Weightman
<b>Chairman:</b>	Roger Evans
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mike Stroud
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[Welcome to the Autumn 2014 News Sheet](#)

This is the first of the 'abbreviated' Autumn News Sheets, which I mentioned in the previous issue. It only contains the Recorder's Report - as always, most ably put together by Jo.

In case some of you are wondering why we are doing this, it is that there just does not seem to be enough material (eg articles, photos, etc.) coming in to the Editor to justify the two full issues per year we have always had in the past. Should this change, of course, then we can always go back to the old format.

There has recently been a suggestion that, as some other foray groups do, we should pass around pictures of

interesting finds to each other. In principle, this seems to be an excellent idea. However, in practice it would entail

**either** all email addresses being available to all other HFSG members - something that several of you have in the past said you did not want;

**or** the Secretary acting as a 'sorting office' to relay the mail - something I am afraid I have not the time to do at the moment.

I think, for the time being at least, we should continue as we are, at present.

I should, though, as Editor be delighted to receive these photographs for use in the News Sheets! Don't forget that I am always looking for **your** contribution(s) and the deadline for the next issue is March 20<sup>th</sup>. I shall do my best to send it out it expeditiously, but it does help if you can send me your articles, photos, etc. as far as possible in advance of the deadline!

Happy reading!

Mike Stroud

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## STOP PRESS

### SARCODONTIA CROCEA - AN EXCITING NEW HEREFORDSHIRE RECORD



Viv Geen, the local Representative of the Countryside Restoration Trust set out to find a rare fungus known to occur on old apple trees - an ideal project for someone working at the CRT farm at Much Marcle where there are several traditional orchards.

She searched all the trees in all three orchards – and on just one of the trees she found a splendid example. Typically, for a fungus which lives on the heartwood of the tree, it was emerging through a crack, in this instance filling and over-spilling at intervals from a long cleft. It started, conveniently for the photographer, at eye level in a patch eighteen or so inches long and popped out again

in fist-sized fruiting higher up. This is a soft, yellow fungus, covered in spines a centimetre or more long. It is said to strongly smell fruity, some say of pineapple, but by the time I saw it, it was managing the “strongly” but was not so good on the “fruity”.

The FRDBI shows that *Sarcodontia crocea* has been recorded from only 14 counties in England (mostly southern) and 1 in Scotland since 1903, many as single occurrences, some probably as repeat fruiting at the same site. It is designated as Vulnerable on the 2006 Red Data List and is a BAP species. The main host is *Malus* but it has been recorded on other fruit trees and even on *Fraxinus*.

THE FORAYS

**Black Hill, Malverns 02. 04. 2014**

This was the Group's first spring foray at this site.

Among the 40 species recorded were two common vernal species which required a second look. A Scarlet Elfcup, after microscopic examination, proved yet again to be *Sarcoscypha austriaca* (blunt ended spores and curly hairs on the outside of the cup). We never seem to find *S. coccinea* – not that we are alone in this – and it would be very interesting if this complex were DNA tested. But alas, such examination only too often results in more species rather than a simplification!

The second *Psathyrella spadiceogrisea* – this spring fruiting toadstool is easily confused with *P. candolleana* - a summer and autumn species. Both can be prolific on rotting wood and debris but *P. spadiceogrisea* lacks the veil which is a prominent feature of *P. candolleana* when young.

Among the ascos, *Eutypella scoparia* and *Hydropisphaera* (= *Calonectria*) *erubescens* are both County firsts and the latter species has few national records (36). The former is a pyrenomycete. The perithecia is immersed in the woody host but its locality is betrayed by the numerous 'necks' which protrude above the surface. *H. erubescens* occurs as tiny reddish-orange spheres which collapse forming a cup.

**Credenhill Park Wood 30. 04. 2014**

Ten years have passed since we last looked at this site in the spring. Inevitably, microfungi featured largely in the list and ten were new site records. Among these *Marssonina daphnes* was a County first. This is a rarely recorded species, visible as brownish pustules on the underside of still attached but fading spurge laurel leaves. K.

*Plagiosphaera immersa* is a second County record for a probably overlooked species - one of the many 'black dots' in the world: in this instance a hand lens reveals the protruding neck of a species buried in the substrate.

*Pyrenochaeta ilicis* is hard to see even with a hand lens but, if skeletal holly leaves are looked at under a dissecting microscope, it becomes possible to see the sea urchin-like fruitbodies. Not surprisingly, there are few national records for what is likely to be an under-recorded rather than rare species.

The few agarics included *Coprinellus domesticus*, *Coprinopsis marcescibilis* and *Clitocybe vermicularis*, the last rarely recorded in Herefordshire. This is a vernal species with a brown cap, rhizoids at the stipe base and small spores. There were no unusual Aphylls but good material of *Polyporus durus* and *Trichaptum abietinum*.

**Merrivale Wood 21. 05. 2014**

Most of the site comprises broad-leaved woodland – mainly ash, oak, cherry and sycamore with an understory of hazel and holly. There are few fungal records for the site – all, bar 3, of the existing records were collected



~ 10 mm

*Eutypella scoparia* - Black Hill (2/4/14)



~ 100 µm

*Hydropisphaera erubescens* - Black Hill (2/4/14)



~ 200 µm

*Pyrenochaeta ilicis* - Black Hill (2/4/14)

during a foray in 2005 and at a Botanical Society meeting last year. Most foraying was on the plateau above the fearsomely steep slope, but even here the soils were very dry.

No spring specials, such as morels, were found and few agarics – the best being good material of the diminutive grey *Resupinatus applicatus* growing as usual in close tiers along a fallen branch.

Among the Ascos recorded, the most interesting/unusual/rare were *Godronia ribis* on dead red currant *Ribes rubra*, a 4<sup>th</sup> VC36 collection, *Lophiostoma fuckelii* on bramble 2<sup>nd</sup> VC36 - uncommon nationally - and two cyphelloid fungi (cross-dressers) *Flagelloscypha minutissima* and *Episphaeria fraxinicola*. These last look

like tiny, white and remarkably hirsute cup fungi (ie Ascomycetes) but are actually Basidiomycetes. The first has been recorded 16 times in Herefordshire – all in the twenty-first century – and occurs on fallen woody and sometimes herbaceous debris. The second, however, is a first for the County and has few national records. It occurs on the living bark of deciduous trees, usually on ash and, in this instance, on a pyrenomycete.

**Brilley Green Dingle 11. 06. 2014**

This site was last recorded by the Group in June 2009, when conditions were very dry. This time twice as many species were recorded, including some surprisingly common ones, eg *Pluteus salicinus* and *Mycena rorida*, proving yet again how unpredictable fruiting can be. The rains a few days previous to the foray had favoured the latter species which is not uncommon in wet conditions, especially on bramble. Its prime identifying feature, a transparent body stocking, soon slips off .

It was interesting to compare *Pluteus phlebophorus* and *Pluteus thomsonii*. In the field the water-soaked caps of both were unremarkable, but after a few hours on the windowsill the characteristic crumpling of the first and the veining of the second became distinct.

Several eyelash fungi were collected– the smaller and paler one on rotten wood was *Scutellinia setosa* (no spore ornament), whilst those on damp soil were all *S. trechispora* (prominent ornament). *Marasmius hudsonii* was new to some members who will now never forget this tiny species on holly leaves with the frightened hairstyle.

We are indebted once again to Shelly Stroud for the identification of a good number of microfungi, including a second VC 36 record for *Anthostomella appendiculosa*. This rarely recorded species is confined to bramble, where it appears as shining black patches which on closer examination have whitish spots with black dots.

*Phaeohelotium italicum*, a tiny pale yellow disc occurring on the dead wood of a range of broadleaf trees, is a County first and appears to be rare nationally.

**Bucknells Wood 09. 07. 2014**

This was the Group`s first visit to the wood, which is mainly comprised of ash/hazel coppice on damp soils. As it is managed for pheasantry, there are fairly open grassy, sometimes muddy rides, making access easier. The most rewarding area for foraging proved to be a more or less clear central area which is probably always seasonally flooded, but the generally damp conditions rewarded us with a clutch of agarics which can be elusive in July. Memorable among these were:

*Bolbitius reticulatus* - a sticky, grey species occurring on wood which was a first record for Herefordshire and rarely reported nationally.

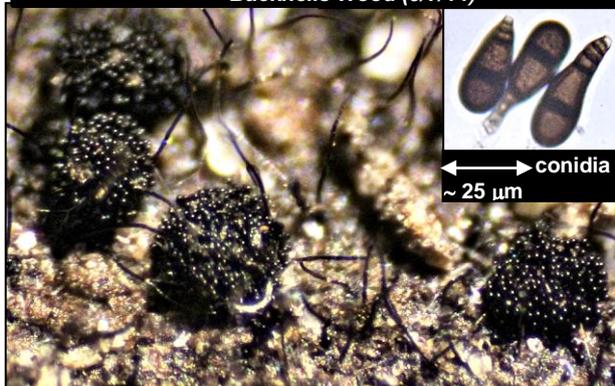
*Laccaria tortilis* is much smaller and much less common than the otherwise similar, very familiar *L. laccata*. It grows in close, often crowded and deformed clusters on bare, damp ground.

*Pluteus podospileus* and *P. romellii* - both brown-capped species, the first with a grey stipe and the second with a striking yellow one.





*Pluteus podospileus* (left) & *Pluteus romellii* (right) - Bucknells Wood (9/7/14)



*Bactrodesmium obovatum* - Bucknells Wood (9/7/14)  
~ 100 µm



*Steccherinum ochraceum* - Bucknells Wood (15/1/14)

'Specials' among the Ascos were:

*Anthostomella rubicola* - a fourth County record for a seldom recorded and probably much over-looked species. Restricted to dead bramble stems.

*Ascotremella faginea* occurs on dead wood as a curdled mass of dark purplish-brown jelly (evocative of a *Tremella* species) but is actually an Ascomycete – hence the generic name. This fungus is not often recorded nationally and represents only the fourth for the County.

*Euepixylon* (formerly *Hypoxylon*) *udum* – there have been only three relatively recent VC36 records of this fungus which forms a black stroma flush with the wood surface and has just one or a few prominent perithecia. This, and the large spores with a short germ slit are characteristic. Nationally scarce or under-recorded.

*Lophiostoma angustilabrum* – occurs as an elongated black dot with a narrow slit along its middle occurring on dead branches or herbaceous stems. This is the second County collection for an infrequently recorded species.

*Bactrodesmium obovatum* is a hyphomycete found on the dead wood of a range of broad-leaved trees and is visible as a tightly packed cluster of shining black pinheads. The spores are striking to look at as they resemble striped skittles. Not recorded in VC36 before the millennium – this is now our third record of a species with few national records.

On an earlier visit, in January, to 'recce.' Bucknells Wood, two species of *Steccherinum* were found - both the quite common *S. ochraceum* (316 records on FRDBI) and the not common *S. bourdotii* (24 records on FRDBI) - see photograph on front cover.

#### Moccas 06. 08. 2014

It cannot be said that Moccas was 'on song'. Conditions were dry and fungi of all kinds few and far between. However, the location had been carefully chosen for this August meeting so that members could concentrate on the Oak Polypore, *Piptoporus quercinus* and in this we were well rewarded. Indeed the very first find was for this speciality. Specimens were found emerging through the bark of living trees, on a large fallen branch and on stumps. The numbers of the host trees were duly noted – two were repeat fruitings on the same tree, two were new locations. These numbers of course relate to fruiting only, the fungus itself is likely to be flourishing unseen within the heartwood of many, even all of the oaks, – the bracket will only emerge when a suitable fissure is available. As most of the sightings were of young specimens it was fortunate that a fallen mature bracket and some *Laetiporus sulphureus* were found, so completing the learning curve.

This excitement apart, it was a relief to find a few brave, albeit common boletes and some Russulas, including a pure lemon yellow form of *R. violeipes*.

Surprisingly, the usually ubiquitous beefsteak fungus *Fistulina hepatica* was seen only once during the day, but there was fine long-handled material of the much less common lacquered bracket *Ganoderma lucidum*.

Moccas has been the scene of many surveys, so it was rewarding to have two new site records given the dry conditions:

*Laetinaevia carneoflava* has only been recorded at three other locations in the County and is uncommon nationally. It occurs as minute flesh-coloured discs with dark edges and is restricted to dead stinging nettle stems.

*Hemimycena mairei*, a small, white, grassland species with distant, decurrent gills is recorded from only three other Herefordshire sites and is not common (or is under-recorded) generally.

**A NEW EARTHSTAR?**

In November 2013 one of our members reported the presence of some of some earthstars under a yew in the churchyard at Cusop. Identification proved tricky, as the specimen I subsequently collected had an irreconcilable set of macro characters and small spores. When examined at Kew, it was confirmed that this specimen was indeed puzzling. Comparison with herbarium material revealed that it was a match with a few voucher specimens kept as 'possible' *Geastrum campestre* or *G. quadrifidum*.

Earlier in 2013, I had followed up a report of some earthstars under yew in the churchyard at Ashperton which I had been unable to identify satisfactorily. The specimen I had kept proved to be the same as the Cusop material, and the dried specimens from the Kew Herbarium and matched no other British species. Neither was there a match with any known European species. DNA data have confirmed that this earth star appears to be new to science.

**OUT OF COUNTY**

On a spring 2014 visit to the churchyard in Ashford Carbonel (Shropshire) to enjoy the ancient yews, I found further material of the mystery *Geastrum* reported above.

*Dinemasporium cf strigosum*, under a hedge, mostly of hazel, Cwmdu, Powys, 09.02.2014, coll. S Stroud, det. Dr E. Punithalingam and Dr B. Spooner.



~ 500 µm *Dinemasporium cf strigosum* - Cwmdu, Powys (9/2/14)

*Postia guttulata* Mortimer Forest (most of this Forest is in Herefordshire but a sliver in the north is in Shropshire) 30.08.14 coll/det. Jo Weightman. Shropshire appears to be the third British county in which this bracket fungus has been found – see the Half Year Report for Sept-Dec 2013 for details of the collections in Herefordshire. The Shropshire collection differed in that it was not on a conifer stump but close to the base of a living larch *Larix decidua*, perhaps on buried dead wood.



~ 200 µm *Laetinaevia carneoflava* - Moccas Park (6/8/14)

**A COUPLE OF PHOTOS TO FILL IN WITH**



*Stemonitis fusca* - Brilley Dingle



A rather nice clump of *Psathyrella candolleana* - Bucknell's Wood