

Notes and Records

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Once upon a time the BMS had a motto, and being an esteemed learned society, its motto was naturally in Latin. It read *Recognoscere notum, ignotum inspice*, which being interpreted reads Recognise the known, examine the unknown. It used to appear on the cover of every issue of the BMS Bulletin until this was superseded in 1987 by *The Mycologist* where it was quietly dropped – one small indicator of the gradual shift of the BMS from a primarily taxonomic society to today's multifaceted organisation. The more fungi I examine, the more I seem confronted with the unknowns, possibly because I am often over-ready to jump to the conclusion that my latest common but atypical find is in fact new and wonderful.

In a somewhat self-indulgent exercise I here present two personal finds made last year in Kew Gardens, each assignable with some confidence to a genus but (at least by me) not to a known species, though duly examined as the motto requires. In a well-ordered world there would be an expert working on a monograph of the genus

concerned, eager to sequence and assess my collections, and with luck describe them as new in a joint publication! In the meantime it seems worthwhile to give them some preliminary publicity in the hope they may be familiar to others. Before turning to these two I have much more to say about one of the 'Readers' Finds' in this issue.

Ionomidotis fulvotingens (Berk. & M.A. Curtis) E.A. Cash

I was pleased to see the photo of this species that now appears on p.68, as this discomycete has two notable features discussed in a basidiomycete context elsewhere in this issue. Firstly, like *Plicatura crispa* (p.61) and like *Laxitextum bicolor* in the previous issue (Henrici, 2018), it is another species with strong evidence for recent unexplained expansion in Britain. Secondly, how come bright green fruitbodies are named as 'tinged fulvous' when the latin *fulvus* means either tawny (as in *Amanita fulva*) or 'dull yellow, with a mixture of grey and brown' (glossed thus



Fig. 1. *Ionomidotis fulvotingens* showing dark brown hues, fruiting on *Crataegus*, Darwin Lakes, Derbyshire. Photograph © Peter Smith.

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in Stearn, 1983). Either seems every bit as inappropriate as the name *Russula rubro-carminea* illustrated by Tortelli & Kibby (p.xx) applied to bright yellow fruitbodies. Both can presumably be explained by minor chemical differences that get expressed in striking colour variation.

I. fulvotagens, as currently understood, occupies an uncertain position in a broad *Helotiaceae*. It fruits in small erumpent clusters through the bark of dead attached hardwood branches from winter to spring, in a similar manner to the better known *Encoelia furfuracea* on alder and hazel at the same time of year. The individual discs are at most 10 mm across, very variable in colour and notable for the so-called 'ionomidotic' reaction of the hymenium to KOH (Greek ion = a violet, otic = of the ear), usually described as 'strong violet' (but 'reddish brown' for Vesterholt, 2000); spores unremarkable, hyaline, aseptate, 5–8 x 1.5–2.0 µm. The type is from Pennsylvania, first found in Europe in March 1964 near Geneva, sent to Dr Dennis at Kew for clues to its identity, who found a match with this American species, a verdict gratefully accepted by the finder (Luthi, 1969).

The first British record was from Dyfed in 1987 by Andrea Romero on hazel and the second by Peter Roberts from Devon in 1997 on gorse. In the present century 14 further British collections have reached Kew made by 9 further collectors in 10 further vice counties and growing on 9 further substrates! These have mainly been southern (though two Scottish), all but two in the three months from mid-January to mid-April. Four of these were also on gorse. Note that, at least in Scotland, there is a second smaller species *Phaeangella ulicis*, illustrated in Dennis (1981), also on gorse with a similar KOH reaction, possibly closely related. A number of further British collections have been posted this year on Facebook, mostly young and ± green. Kerry Robinson has published photos at three stages including old purplish-brown cups "almost unrecognisable as the same species" (Robinson, 2011). A further British collection is shown opposite (Fig.1) and an almost black collection is shown in Breitenbach & Kränzlin Vol.1 pl.202 (1981), consistent with Vesterholt (2000) who describes Danish and Norwegian collections as "reddish brown to olivaceous black".

There are now seven known species of *Ionomidotis*, but only two in Europe, the other being *I. irregularis*, also described from N. America and first found in Europe in Poland's famous Bialowieza Virgin Forest. This has recently been given an excellent write-up by Betak *et al.* (2012) who know of 17 European sites and find it to be "one of the strictest specialists of old-growth forests" and thus "an indicator and flagship species for such forests". It is greyish, considerably larger than our *I. fulvotagens* (15–30 mm diam. when mature) and clearly distinct. It favours beech trunks (not a known host for *I. fulvotagens* in Britain). Recent ongoing work (Pärtel *et al.*, 2017) shows that there are more species involved and that *Ionomidotis* is clearly polyphyletic. A further paper from Baral *et al.* is promised. There is however no evidence that the very variably coloured material being recorded in Britain as *I. fulvotagens* belongs to more than one species. *Ionomidotis* remains a fascinating genus but, like so many others, in need of further study.

***Marasmiellus* sp. under *Fagus* in Kew Gardens**

This was growing in open mossy grass, sometimes mown, near a large *Fagus sylvatica* at the southern end of Kew Gardens. First seen 5 Sept. 2017. Thought to be probably *M. vaillantii* until dug up when, to my surprise, the stipes were mostly almost black with just the apex pale, immediately changing my guess to *Marasmius* sp., but looking wrong for *M. torquescens*, a largely calciphile species unlikely on the river gravels of Kew. The pale caps, 10–15 mm diam., were matt, slightly umbilicate with a weakly striate margin. Examination showed it was a *Marasmiellus* after all (pileipellis a cutis rather than a hymeniderm) and that it had distinctive narrow cylindrical spores 7–8 x 2.5 µm matching nothing in either Antonin & Noordeloos (2008) or Noordeloos (2012).

I was relieved to find further material at this site a fortnight later (20 Sept 2017), now in Kew K(M)236692 (as a search in the intervening week had been unsuccessful. Spores from a print measured 7–9 x 2.5–3 µm (Q approx. 3.0). Terminal elements of the cap cuticle had a few projections up to 2 µm long (weak 'ramealis structure'). Cheilocystidia intricately branched, difficult to extricate from a largely fertile gill edge.

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