

Fungi

Tony Leech

With the revival of the Norfolk Fungus Study Group, records of new and interesting Norfolk fungi continue to be received. Some of the more interesting are described below.

Mushrooms

What is the difference between a mushroom and a toadstool? Toadstool is not a scientific term but usually refers to any cap fungus in an informal fairytale or folklore context. The term mushroom is used in so many different ways that it, too, lacks precise meaning. Americans use the term in a wide sense, applying it to any macro fungus; using, for example, the term 'shelf mushroom' instead of 'bracket fungus'. Increasingly, in Britain, 'mushroom' is used to describe any agaric (including boletes) but in its narrowest sense is applied to only those fungi in the genus *Agaricus*. There are over 40 of these in Britain and with the advent of Geoffrey Kibby's guide (2011) attempts at identification are often successful.

Mushroom surprise of the year appeared in Joseph Hubbard's polytunnel at Hindolveston (TG0329) in the form of *Agaricus gennadii*, a medium-sized mushroom with a swollen stipe and distinctively pointed base. There are barely 20 records for this species in Britain, mostly, but not in this case, associated with conifers. The fungus was first seen in June and has fruited regularly since. This was Joseph's introduction to the fascination of fungi and with his keen eye he soon picked out Rosy Wood Mushroom *A. dulcidulus* and *A. phaeolepidotus* at the Dinosaur Adventure Park Bioblitz (TG1017) in August. Both of these species had previously been found only twice in Norfolk. Also on its third appearance was *A. porphyrocephalus* in a Holt (TG0839) garden. Its occurrence in

March was remarkable because only one of the 80 or so other British records were made outside the period between July and December. Curiously, this was also the only one, like the Holt specimen, found under Yew *Taxus baccata*.

Pink dung fungi

Literally hundreds of fungus species occur on herbivore dung – usually as their only substrate. But most are small – and some minute (see Table 1). Not so *Bolbitius coprophilus*, an inkcap-like fungus up to 75mm high with a conical cap. It was not so much their size as their abundance which impressed when thousands appeared on dungy-straw in two open-sided cattle shelters at Briston (TG 0533) in May. Their identity was a puzzle until the delicate pink flush was noted on the caps of young specimens. This fungus is not new to Norfolk as it was seen by Anne Andrews on a dung heap at Honing, Norfolk in 2004 when she observed that the dung appeared pink at a distance. Just three other British records for *B. coprophilus* are documented, all from the Surrey/ Berkshire area since 1998.

Nail fungus returns

And on to pony dung. The Nail Fungus *Poronia punctata* was formerly widespread in Britain but is now very uncommon. It is listed as 'Endangered' in Red Data Book edn.2, and is a Biodiversity Action Plan species. Since 1970, almost all records have been from the New Forest area. With the exception of a doubtful record from Holme in 1982 (Leech *et al.* 2011), the fungus has not been recorded in Norfolk since 1944 when it was found at Horsford Heath (by Ted Ellis). Since then, a second species, *Poronia erici*, has been described from



The scarce mushroom *Agaricus gennadii* appears regularly in a polytunnel in Hindolveston. Tony Leech.



Above and left. Only young specimens of *Bolbitius coprophila* show the pink flush of this fungus which occasionally appears on dungy straw. Tony Leech.



Rabbit dung but is now known also to occur on pony dung (Leech *et al.* 2011). With this knowledge it was assumed that the *Poronia* sp. collected by Jonathan Spencer and Andy Palles-Clarke (Forestry Commission) on Hockwold Heath (TL7589) in March would be *P. erici*. The small spores established, however, that the fungus was in fact Nail Fungus *Poronia punctata*.

References

- KIBBY, G. 2011. *The Genus Agaricus in Britain*. Privately published.
- LEECH, A.R. *et al.* 2011. *Poronia erici*, a small nail fungus, recently recorded in Norfolk and Suffolk, and notes on the distribution of Nail Fungus *Poronia punctata*. *Trans. Norfolk Norwich Nat. Soc.* **43**: 58-60
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Table 1. New records for some scarce Norfolk fungi (in addition to those described in the text). ARL = Tony Leech

Species	Place	Collector [Identifier if different]	Previous Norfolk sites	Habitat
Agarics				
<i>Clitocybe agrestis</i>	Watermill Broad TF7795	ARL	1	Sandy field
<i>Coprinopsis cordispora</i>	Lenwade (Dinosaur Park) TG1017	ARL	1	Wallaby dung
<i>Cortinarius cinnamomeoluteus</i>	Sutton Fen RSPB. TG3723	ARL	1	Carr woodland
<i>Parasola schroeteri</i>	Felbrigg. TG1939	ARL	0	Grassy ride
<i>Pluteus aurantiorugosus</i>	Bayfield. TG0440	Andrew Cannon [ARL]	1	Dead elm
<i>Psilocybe subcoprophila</i>	Lenwade (Dinosaur Park) TG1017	ARL	0	Manured grassland
Gasteromycetes				
<i>Battarrea phalloides</i>	Watermill Broad TF7795	ARL	9	Bank under pine
<i>Geastrum corollinum</i>	The Nunnery Reserve (BTO). TL8680	Dave Leech [ARL]	7	Woodland bank
Spindle fungi				
<i>Ramaria abietina</i>	Lynford Arboretum. TL8293	ARL	1	Under conifer
Jelly fungi				
<i>Guepiniopsis buccina</i>	Ken Hill Woods, Snettiahm. TF6734	ARL	0	Fallen oak branch
Discomycetes				
<i>Lasiobolus ciliatus</i>	Lenwade (Dinosaur Park) TG1017	ARL	0	Wallaby dung
<i>Thecotheus pelletieri</i>	Sheringham Park TG1341	ARL	0	Cow dung
<i>Thelebolus microsporus</i>	Watermill Broad TF7795	ARL	0	Muntjac dung