# Norfolk

## Beefsteaks and Blewits

5th November to 8th November 1998

A Greentours Trip Report

Led by Fiona Dunbar and Ian Green

### Day 1 Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> of November The Hedges

We all met up at The Hedges Guesthouse in Coltishall, where after settling into rooms we had a chat and a glass of wine over a tray of assorted fungi which we had brought down with us from Leek Golf Course – i.e. here's some we picked earlier... We ate in the guesthouse for the first night and our hostess Gail cooked us an excellent stuffed shoulder of lamb whilst our host took his children off to the fireworks!

# Day 2 Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of November Smockmill Common and Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham

After breakfast and having been joined by friends Amanda and Annette, we boarded the bus and Colin our driver took us to our old stomping ground, Smockmill Common.

We had quickly noted some common but non-the less interesting species on the first stump — sulphurous yellow Sulpher Tuft and Many-zoned Polypore. The area of acid grassland grazed down by the rabbit population had Common Deceivers, the common puffball *Lycoperdon perlatum*, and the first of many Buttercaps or Butter Tough-shanks. Michael and Suzie called us over to some more fungi — an area strewn with Scarlet Hoods and Snowy Waxcaps, vivid against the turf. Slightly further on was a patch of yellow waxcaps, *Hygrocybe ceracea*. We could hear a Green Woodpecker calling and feeding parties of tits passed overhead, often including Long-tailed Tits. We heard, and then Alan spotted, a Nuthatch.

On into the leaf litter under an area of Turkish Oaks. Here there was a different selection of mushrooms including our first bolete with pores rather than gills – *Boletus subtomentosus* – not *Boletus porosporus* as we stated at the time. There was a cluster of the silky grey Clouded Agarics and a variety of funnel caps; Tawny Funnel Cap, Common Funnel Cap and the Club Foot. Also here were Brown Roll-rim and some delicious lilac Wood Blewits – always a favourite. There was also the rather un-appetising black lumpy jelly of Witches Butter *Exidia glandulosa*. Moving up the hill through mixed woodland, Ian found our first milkcap *Lactarius tabidus*, a rusty-coloured mushroom which 'bleeds' milk when the gills are cut. Tina came across a large tree stump from which were emerging a vast, solid bracket of Artist's Fungus and numbers of blackened and irregular Dead Man's Fingers. A rotting piece of wood nearby was stained the bright green indicative of the mycelial infection of Green Wood Cup. Near the top of the rise a patch of

architectural Shaggy Parasol mushrooms marked the beginning of another fungi rich spot – there were Amethyst Deceivers and a perfect family of Wood Blewits. An encrusting fungi of the family *Stereum* was on a dead tree branch and Amanda caught and identified a beautiful green spider as . Jane and Alan pointed out some extensive rings of Clouded Agarics maybe twenty feet across, and an impressive colony of the puffball *Lycoperdon pyriform*, growing on some decaying logs.

At the beginning of a beautiful avenue of ancient coppiced beeches, one of their number had come down and was covered in all sorts of fungi. These included encrusting black lumps of Tripe Fungus *Auricularia mesenteria*, brackets of Giant Griffola, some outstanding examples of jelly-like Jew's Ears and the unlikely blobs of Brain Purple Drop! Our second toughshanks species was Clustered Tough-shanks, and yellow blotches on decaying wood rather reminiscent of Coral Spot (which was also seen) were in fact *Dacrymyces stillatus*. One of the beeches sported pale brackets of the Oyster Mushroom relative *Pleurotus pulmonarius*, and then it was time to head back to the bus and over the river to have an excellent lunch in the Waterside Inn.

After lunch we drove to the Ted Ellis Reserve at Surlingham, where Phyllis Ellis was waiting to take us round. Under her (firm) guidance we scanned the dry and then wet woodlands for fungi, and talked about the history and conservation measures being taken on the reserve. There were a number of Russulas with brightly coloured caps (yellow, pink or purple and black) and white flesh, gills and stems. One tree stump was overrun with a fleshy bracket with elongate pores – the Maze-Gill. A fallen bole with the bark fallen off clearly showed the destructive black bootlaces of Honey Fungus, and Ian found a single, greenish Aniseed Toadstool. Fi found a specimen of the real Oyster Mushroom Pleurotus ostreatus here. As Phyllis guided us round we picked up more specimens; the Beechwood Sickener – a red and sticky Russula, more gorgeous Wood Blewits, a fresh, bright Amethyst Deceiver and a few glowing Yellow Spindles. Having had sunshine all day, the sun was finally sinking below the horizon, and the temperature cooled as we wandered back to the thatched hide along paths made wet by the heavy rains of the previous week. There were a good variety of ferns, Male, Lady, Harts Tongue, Bracken and in Phyllys's garden, eight foot high Royal Fern. After a quick look at the display in the hide (where Ian heard a Water Rail), Phyllis kindly asked us into her wonderful sitting room for a welcome cuppa and biscuit, a charming end to the visit. Colin had gone for a walk whilst waiting for our return and had seen one of the reserve's Chinese Water Deer.

Back at The Hedges there was time to spruce up and relax before we headed out to the nearby Red Lion for another rather good meal, before being overcome with fungal enthusiasm and returning to the Hedges to pore over the day's collection.

## Day 3 Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> of November Holt Lowes and Cley-next-the-Sea

This morning we drove north to Holt Lowes were some more friends joined us - Ivan, Brian and Audrey. Our first fungus of the day was a spectacular one – the aptly described Orange Peel Fungus. Overhead, a series of Vs consisting of hundreds of Pink-footed Geese flew overhead. Shortly before two other geese had flown over – one Greylag and one White-fronted Goose. The conifer plantation proved a good place to explore. There were Stinkhorns of every stage from jelly 'egg' to wilted, a couple of *Gymnopilus* species growing on soil (*G. hybridus*) and rotting wood (*G. junonia* and *G. penetrans*), and the bright orange mousse colour of False Chanterelles. Moving into the animal kingdom, there was a mystery pile of dung, and the large nest of a bird of prey. Goshawk was mooted as a possibility here and there were the partially eaten remains of

Woodpigeon and Fieldfare not far away. Regaining the ride we were finding *Russulas* and more species of waxcap, the dark Herald of Winter which appears after the first frost and bright yellow *Hygrocybe strangulata*. Two beautiful specimens of the lovely Verdigris Agaric were photographed along here.

A small footpath lead us through bracken and heather heath until we were looking out over a small valley mire and the pools that are the Lowes themselves. Backed by birchwoods, it made for a really beautiful view. A stump on the way to the pool had a fungus that had encrusted the stump so quickly that it had also encrusted a fern leaf lying over it - the pink and orange *Phlebia merismoides*. Immediately around the pool we found numbers of Brown Roll-rims, Ugly Milk Caps (the ones with the milk that has a strong peppery taste after a peculiar eight second time delay!), Yellow Swamp Russulas and Brown Birch Boletes. There were also some oddities here – a Deceiver twice the size it should be, and a *Cortinarius* species. This is the first *Cortinarius* Ian and I had ever found. The family is large but they are all uncommon. We later identified it as probably being *Cortinarius alboviolaceus*. Further into the woods we found some other Boletes. There was the edible and fairly common Orange Birch Bolete and a strange misshapen bolete that Suzy found – probably the rare *Boletus aereus*. Heading back through the woods to the carpark where Colin was to meet us, we found some other strange fungi such as the furry, pink-edged bracket *Hirschioporus abietinus*, more Brain Purple Drops and a Stinkhorn in the peak of condition (and smell) with the dark gelatinous, spore-rich tip covered in drunken flies.

Lunch was at The Bell in Wiveton. Outside, on the village green in front of the old church with its Celtic cross, we examined the turf and found yet more bright wax caps, and a few Magic Mushrooms or Liberty Caps, famous for their hallucinogenic qualities.

We headed to nearby Salthouse to look for the flock of Shorelarks there — with some success — there were around forty of them. These lovely little birds with yellow and black striped heads were most obliging and some stayed only a few metres away from the carpark as we watched them through binoculars and telescopes. Redshank, Greylag Geese and a Curlew were also noted from here. From the sea defences, under a cloudy sky but with very little wind, we looked out to sea at q distant flock of sea ducks (probably Common Eiders) and a Razorbill could be seen with them. Turnstones fed on the pebbly beach below us.

We made the short drive to Cley's main reserve and then walked to Daukes and Teal hides. We spent an hour or so inside watching a variety of duck, many of them very close. There were many Wigeon and good numbers of both Teal and Gadwall. Several lovely Pintail and a small group of Shoveler were amongst them, while pairs of stately Shelduck were always in view. Some Avocets that were about moved off for a time but re-appeared later. Other waders present were Dunlin, Ruff and, in distant flight, a Black-tailed Godwit. A Sparrowhawk caused a rush of excitement as it sped over one of the scrapes, turning upside-down as it tried to strike at some passerine — missing on this occasion! A couple of Hares were noted. On the way back to the car Ian hopped over the fence briefly to collect a specimen of the uncommon *Entoloma porphyrophaeum*, a largish conical grey mushroom which is becoming scarce in pastureland as it can't abide fertiliser — a fate shared by many other pasture-growing species.

Our evening meal was again in the Red Lion, and once again afterwards we studied our collected specimens in the sitting room of The Hedges.

#### Day 4 Sunday 8th of November Buxton Common

Rain! After not rushing through breakfast and packing in leisurely fashion it was still raining, so we delayed the morning's trip and Ian gave an impromptu slideshow of some of our Norfolk Fungi slides. By eleven the rain had eased so we headed over to Buxton Heath. Here the roadsides led straight into woodland and as we walked along the road we found good numbers of Wood Blewits, and Parasol Mushrooms. Fiona headed off along the loop we would have taken if not delayed by the rain to collect specimens from the heath and rather too distant conifer woods. Once onto the paths we examined the leaf littered area under the trees and between us saw a number of interesting species including the earthball *Scleroderma verrucosa*, Velvet Shank and Tawny Grisette, while Suzie found a lovely little Bay Bolete in very edible-looking condition. Many of the gorse bushes sported the festive Yellow Brain Fungus. Fi returned with a slimy *Suillis variegatus*, a Bolete with a near flourescent stem which turned out to be Peppery Bolete and a third, the small pale pinky-orange *Suillis bovinus*. Another unusual specimen was the Bell-shaped Mottlegill, which grows on dung, and as the family name suggests has mottled gills.

Just before we left, Tina found a rather non-descript looking little mushroom. This turned out to be one of the smallest and worst specimens we have ever seen of Death Cap, the world most deadly fungus!

Our final lunch was at the King's Head in Coltishall, which provided a very good Sunday roast after rather a wait.

Finally it was time to say our goodbyes and head off back to our own parts of the country after a very enjoyable weekend of fungi-foraying – around a hundred different species identified in all including a good number of edible species and also many interesting odd-ball species.

## Systematic List Number 1 Fungi

The systematic order followed in this list is taken loosely from Roger Phillips' book on Mushrooms which has also been the main guide used to identify species during the weekend. Where we have some doubt about the identity of a species we have prefixed the comments section with a question mark.

	1		
	Amanita muscaria	Fly Agaric	A poor specimen at Smockmill Common and lots at Holt Lowes
	Amanita rubescens	The Blusher	A few noted from most localities
	Amanita pantherina	Panther Cap	1 at Holt Lowes
	Amanita phalloides	Death Cap	1 very poor specimen at Buxton Common – the
			deadliest known fungus
	Amanita fulva	Tawny Grisette	Several at Holt Lowes. 1 at Buxton Common
	Lepiota procera	Parasol Mushroom	2 on roadside at Buxton Common
	Lepiota rhacodes	Shaggy Parasol	Common at Smockmill Common. Also at Wheatfen
			Reserve, Surlingham
	Lepiota cristata		1 at Smockmill Common
	Armillaria mellea	Honey Fungus	Only the mycelium noted at various sites
	Clitocybe nebularis	Clouded Agaric	Widespread and common
	Clitocybe clavipes	Club Foot	1 at Smockmill Common
	Clitocybe infundibuliform		Several at Smockmill Common
	Clitocybe flaccida	Tawny Funnel Cap	Common at most locations
	Clitocybe odora	Aniseed Toadstool	1 at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham
	Clitocybe sp	ъ.	Many smaller ones not identified
	Laccaria laccata	Deceiver	Widespread and common
	Laccaria amethystea	Amethyst Deceiver	Wheatfen Reserve and Holt Lowes
	Collybia maculata	Spotted Tough-shank	Noted at Wheatfen and Holt Lowes
	Collybia dryophila		Common at Smockmill Common – a bit like a dry-
		D //	looking small whitish Buttercap
	Collybia butyracea	Buttercap	Widespread and common
	Collybia confluens	Clustered Tough-shank Velvet Shank	One clump at Smockmill Common
	Flammulina velutipes	Herald of Winter	Just one group noted at Buxton Common
	Hygrophorus hypothejus	Heraid of Willier	Common on grass at Holt Lowes
	Hygrocybe nitrata Hygrocybe coccinea	Scarlet Hood	One group on grass at Smockmill
	Hygrocybe strangulata	Scarlet 1100d	Extensive patch on grass at Smockmill Small group on grass at Holt Lowes
	Hygrocybe ceracea		Noted at Smockmill and at Holt Lowes
	Hygrocybe nivea	Snowy Wax Cap	Common at Smockmill
	Marasmius spp	Showy wax cap	Many unidentified
		ra False Chanterelle	A few under pine at Holt Lowes
Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca False Chanterelle Micromphale foetidum			?Or similar. Smockmill Common
	Mycena inclinata		In tufts on a twig Fi found at Buxton Heath
	Mycena spp		Many unidentified
	Lactarius turpis	Ugly Milk-cap	Common at Holt Lowes & Buxton Common
	Lactarius quietus	Oak Milk-cap	Common at Smockmill
	Lactarius hepaticus	Liver Milk-cap	Noted at Smockmill Common and at Wheatfen –
		r	large-ish, dark cap
	Lactarius tabidus		Common at Smockmill and Holt Lowes
	Lactarius sp		Other russet-coloured milk-caps about
	Russula albonigra		One collected at Wheatfen
	Russula nigricans	Blackening Russula	One at Wheatfen
	Russula ochroleuca		Scattered – certainly at Holt Lowes
	Russula mairei	Beechwood Sickener	Two seen at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham
			-

Blackish-purple Russula Noted at Buxton Common Russula atropurpurea Russula luteotacta Pink, smells of coconut, one from |Smockmill Russula erythropus Under conifers at Buxton and Wheatfen Russula claroflava Yellow Swamp Russula One or two old ones on v damp ground, Holt Lowes Lepista nuda Wood Blewit Widespread and common ?Possibly a group of this species at Smockmill Enteloma saundersii Common – wrong season, but everything else fits Enteloma porphyrophaeum Two in field at Cley-next-the-Sea Nolanea farinolans Noted at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham Nolanea lucida In grassland at Smockmill Common 2 growing on branch at Wheatfen Reserve Pluteus cervinus Cortinarius alboviolaceus ??Probably this species – a single rather deformed specimen under birch at Holt Lowes Paxillus involutus Brown Roll-rim Widespread and common *Gymnopilus penetrans* Common under conifers at Holt Lowes Gymnopilus hybridus ?Noted at Wheatfen and Holt Lowes Gymnopilus junonius A single clump found at Wheatfen Reserve Pholiota tuberculosa Smockmill Common and Wheatfen Reserve Scattered at all sites Hypholoma fasiculare Sulphur Tuft Stropharia aeruginosa Noted at both Wheatfen Reserve and at Holt Lowes Verdigris Agaric Psathyrella hydrophila On a stump at Wheatfen Reserve Psilocybe semilanceata Also known as Magic Mushroom. Noted on the Liberty Cap Green at Wiveton Just one – by the bins at The Hedges Coprinus comatus Shaggy Ink Cap Panaeolus campanulatus Bell-shaped Mottlegill Common on dung at Buxton Common Pleurotus ostreatus Oyster Mushroom Just one fan at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham ??Possibly this species or one above on beech at Pleurotus pulmonarius Smockmill Common Crepidotus variabilis Common on dead twigs all locations ??Possibly this species at Holt Lowes – the one with Boletus aereus the massive stem and dark sepia cap The one Fi found at Buxton Common with brilliant Peppery Boletus Boletus piperatus yellow flesh and pores Boletus badius Bay Bolete A few each at Holt Lowes and at Buxton Common A couple at Smockmill Common and Fi found one at Boletus subtomentosus Buxton Common Leccinum versipelle Orange Birch Bolete Several noted at Holt Lowes Leccinum scabrum Brown Birch Bolete Several noted at Holt Lowes Suillus luteus Slippery Jack The only specimen was a poor one from Holt Lowes Fi brought some back from edge of the conifers at Suillus bovinus **Buxton Common** Suillus variegatus As for the previous species! Also known as Giant Grifola. Remains noted on *Meripilus giganteus* Giant Polypore beech stumps at Smockmill Common Noted at Smockmill Common and Wheatfen Reserve Ganoderma applanatum Artist's Fungus Piptoporus betulinus Birch Polypore Widespread and common Lenzites betulina One bracket on birch at Smockmill Common Daedalea quercina Maze-Gill Noted on old oak stump at Wheatfen Reserve Hirschioporus abietinus Noted at Holt Lowes Coriolus versicolor Many-zoned Polypore Widespread and common Hairy Stereum Stereum hirsutum Scattered Growing on a fern at Holt Lowes Phlebia merismoides Calvatia excipuliformis Two fruiting bodies at Buxton Common Lycoperdon perlatum Common Puffball Noted on grass at Smockmill Common Lycoperdon pyriforme Very common on rotting logs at Smockmill Common Scleroderma citrinum Common Earth-ball Widespread and common

Scleroderma verrucosum

One picked up in the wood at Buxton Common

Cyathus olla A bird's nest fungus. On rotting wood at Smockmill

Common

Phallus impudicus Stinkhorn Common at Holt Lowes

Clavulinopsis helvola Yellow Spindles Noted at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham

Auricularia auricula-judae Jew's Ear Widespread and quite common Exidia glandulosa Witches' Butter Noted at Smockmill Common

Dacrymyces stillata Small orange jelly blobs on dead twigs common

Calocera cornea On dead wood at Holt Lowes

Tremella mesenterica Yellow Brain Fungus Common on gorse at Buxton Common

Aleuria aurantia Orange Peel Fungus Holt Lowes

Ascocoryne sarcoides Brain Purple Drops Noted from most localities
Chlorosplenium aeruginascens Green Wood-cup Noted at Smockmill Common

Xylaria hypoxylon Candle-snuff Fungus Widespread

Nectarina cinnabarina Coral Spot Fungus Common on dead twigs

Hyppoxylon fragiformeencrusting on the fallen beech, Smockmill CommonXylaria polymorphaDead Man's FingersNoted in some quantity at Smockmill Common

Daldinia concentrica King Alfred's Cakes Several at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham

#### Systematic List Number 2 Birds

The following list follows the taxonomic order found in Lars Jonsson's 'Birds of Europe with North Africa and the Middle East'.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea Several noted when driving between areas Pink-footed Goose Anser brachyrhnychus About 250 flew south over Holt Lowes

White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons 1 flew east over Holt Lowes

Greylag Goose Anser anser Common on the coast. 1 east over Holt Lowes

Brent Goose Branta bernicula A large flock at Cley Shelduck Tadorna tadorna About ten noted at Cley

Wigeon Anas penelope Common at Cley. Heard at Wheatfen

Mallard Anas platyrhynchos A few at Cley
Gadwall Anas strepera A few at Cley
Pintail Anas acuta About 5 at Cley
Shoveler Anas clypeata Several at Cley
Teal Anas crecca Common at Cley

Common Eider Somateria mollissima The large flock of seaduck off Cley were probably

this species

Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus A female at Cley

Kestrel Falco tinnunculus Several as we drove from place to place. Also 1 at

Holt Lowes

Pheasant Phasianus colchicus Common in fields everywhere!
Water Rail Rallus aquaticus 1 heard at Wheatfen Broad (IG only)

Moorhen Gallinula chloropus Widespread and common

Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus 1 at Cley Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta 4 at Cley

LapwingVanellus vanellusCommon at CleyTurnstoneArenaria interpresAbout 5 at Cley

Knot Calidris canutus A flock of about 10 from Daukes Hide, Cley

DunlinCalidris alpina3 at CleyRuffPhilomachus pugnaxAbout 6 at CleyCurlewNumenius arquata2 at CleyBlack-tailed GodwitLimosa limosa1 at CleyRedshankTringa totanusSeveral at Cley

Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus Widespread and Common Common Gull Larus canus Mostly in fields by the A140!

Herring Gull Larus argentatus Common

Razorbill Alca torda 1 offshore at Cley – with the Eiders!

WoodpigeonColumba palumbusCommonFeral PigeonColumba liviaCommonCollared DoveStreptopelia decaoctoWidespread

Tawny Owl Strix aluco Heard at Holt Lowes

Green Woodpecker Picus viridis 1 seen and others heard at Smockmill Common

Skylark Alauda arvensis Common at Cley

Shore Lark Eremophila alpestris About forty at Cley (Salthouse end)

Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis Common at Cley Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba yarellii Common at Cley

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes Noted at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham Dunnock Prunella modularis Noted at The Hedges Guesthouse!

RobinErithacus rubeculaScatteredBlackbirdTurdus merulaCommonFieldfareTurdus pilarisCommonRedwingTurdus iliacusCommon

Song ThrushTurdus philomelos1 at The Bell, WivetonMistle ThrushTurdus viscivorusAlso at WivetonGoldcrestRegulus regulusBuxton Common

Willow Tit Parus montanus Heard at Wheatfen Reserve, Surlingham

Blue Tit Parus caeruleus Common Great Tit Parus major Common

Coal TitParus aterCommon at Holt LowesLong-tailed TitAegithalos caudatusWidespread and very commonNuthatchSitta europaeusAt least 1 at Smockmill Common

Starling Sturnus vulgaris Widespread and common

Jay Garrulus glandarius Noted at Smockmill, Wheatfen and Holt Lowes

MagpiePica picaWidespreadCarrion CrowCorvus coroneCommonRookCorvus frugilegusWidespread

House Sparrow Passer domesticus Noted in Wiveton and Newton Flotman

Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs Scattered

Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis Noted at Smockmill Common