# **Fungi**

## Tony Leech

Members of the Norfolk Fungus Study Group continue to improve their skills in identifying fungi collected on recording forays throughout the year. Naming specimens can be difficult and is sometimes impossible, sometimes due to less than clear boundaries between the range of variation of one species and that of an 'adjacent' one. Whether this is a consequence of fungal evolution or ignorance on the part of mycologists is not clear; probably both. The use of DNA sequencing techniques by taxonomists has provided welcome clarity but has thrown up other complications. Now, we amateurs can reap some of the fruits of these advances by preparing DNA from fungal specimens and sending it to be sequenced. During the year, a small team from the Group has been trained to do this in the workroom at the Ted Ellis Trust, Wheatfen. More details will be given in the 2022 report.

#### Oddballs and mutants

Victorian naturalists were fascinated by fruiting bodies with gross abnormalities. They called them fungal monstrosities and described different manifestations. Most mycologists will have encountered strange forms including conjoined fruiting bodies and cap inversion. Causes are rarely ascertained but by analogy to other organisms these are likely to be varied, including mechanical chemical and interference with development, genetic infection. More subtle mutation and identification aberrations may make problematic or even impossible but early successes of the Norfolk fungus DNA team solved two of these problems.

The first concerned a group of gill fungi collected by Ian Senior on woodchips in Earlham Cemetery in September 2021. Each



An aberrant specimen of Rootlet Brittlestem, Earlham Cemetery. Ian Senior. Insert. Tony Leech.

was tall (ca. 50 mm), slender, uniformly yellowish-buff and with a relatively small (20 mm diameter) cap which was wavy and grooved. The deeply decurrent gills were irregular; some anastomosing and others reduced. Despite the strange appearance, several suggestions were made as to their identity, none of them convincing. DNA sequencing, however, provided the answer; they were aberrant forms of the widespread Rootlet Brittlestem *Psathyrella microrrhiza*.

The second strange fungus was a tall (ca. 40 mm) slender, yellowish fungus with decurrent gills found by Gill Judd on a stump at Upton Fen in September 2021. It did not look abnormal but neither Norfolk mycologists nor experts from further afield were able to propose a convincing



Aberrant specimen of Bark Bonnet. Upton Fen. Gill Judd. Insert. Tony Leech.

identity despite microscopic examination. Its DNA sequence however established that it was in fact Bark Bonnet *Mycena speirea*. This common fungus on mossy trunks is normally smaller and grey-brown but its microscopic features supported this identification.

## **Holly death at Swanton Novers**

A worryingly large number of *Phytophthora* species have appeared in recent years to cause serious diseases in native British trees. Although no longer considered to be members of Kingdom Fungi, these organisms are sufficiently fungus-like to remain recorded on fungus databases. One

that has received relatively little attention is *Phytophthora ilicis* which attacks Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, probably because it often causes no more that slight dieback of the lower branches. There is only a single record of its occurrence (Yorkshire, 2013) on the national fungus record database but many more descriptions on horticultural websites.

in January 2021, Frances Jenkinson, a local resident with a permit to walk in Swanton Novers Great Wood NNR, reported that the holly trees in the wood were dying. In some parts of the wood these form a dense shrub layer which virtually eliminates herb species. Investigation suggested that Phytophthora ilicis was responsible and this was confirmed by Dr Joan Webber at the Forestry Commission research station at Alice Holt where the spread of *Phytophthora* tree diseases is being monitored. In its early stages, the disease gives rise to black patches on leaves which spread to the whole leaf before it dies and falls. This is usually restricted to the very lowest branches but in one compartment at Swanton Novers it had killed branches to head height and in some cases whole trees.

This occurrence was the first documented for the organism in Norfolk but it is almost certainly widespread - gardeners and plant pathologists rarely send records to the national fungus database. Later in the year it was recorded from Baconsthorpe,





Left. Holly understory attacked by *Phytophthora ilicis*, Swanton Novers Great Wood.

**Above.** Affected Holly leaves. *Tony Leech.* 

Horsford, Martham Broad, Roydon and Ingoldisthorpe.

# Dark spindles and tiny spindles

Most British spindle fungi (also known as club fungi) and their branched relatives, the coral fungi, are pale-coloured but the Dark Club *Clavaria greletii* found by Ash Murray at Roydon Common in October is one of three dark, almost black, species found in Britain. Although there are only a dozen or so records across England, and not hitherto in East Anglia, it is also the commonest of the three.

Imagine a pin shrunk to 1 mm high to get some idea of the appearance of another spindle, *Typhula brunneola* which Stewart Wright somehow found on the dead leaves of Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* at Broadland Country Park in November. There appear to be only three previous British records, all from Scotland (1983 and 1993, the latter from two nearby sites on successive days).

## Smuts in novel places

Smut fungi are microfungi that are parasitic on plants but more closely related to gill fungi and brackets etc. than they are to the ascomycetes which form the bulk of parasitic microfungi. Like most parasites they display a very high degree of host



The smut fungus Microbotryum pinguiculae on the anthers of Common Butterwort. Beeston Common. Mark Joy.

specificity and when Stewart Wright heard of a smut (*Microbotryum pinguiculae*) which occurs on the stamens of Common Butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris* he wanted to find it. This plant is far from common in Norfolk but the first population he examined, at Beeston Common, included infected plants. The smut has been recorded widely north of the Great Glen and in south Wales but in all probability this is the first English record.

If you think that smuts always have black spores and occur on leaves and flowers, you would be wrong. Stewart found *Entorrhiza aschersoniana* at Ashmanaugh, a species that forms white galls on the roots of Toad Rush *Juncus bufonius*. There are very few British records but finding the fungus necessitates digging up the plant so it is not encouraged.

# First Norfolk records of larger fungi

Size is in the eye of the beholder. Here, 'larger' means that details of the spore-producing bodies are clearly visible to the naked eye. Species described elsewhere in these notes are omitted.

#### Gill funai

Arrhenia onisca One of two small agarics with decurrent gills collected from sandy areas at Roydon Common TF6822 by Tony Leech in November. This species is widespread in Britain.

Conocybe siennophylla A small brown agaric which is widespread in Britain but probably under-recorded as it is difficult to distinguish from related species. Found by Yvonne Mynett at Broadland Country Park in August.

Conocybe dentatomarginata This conecap was found by Anne Crotty in compost in a plant pot at Whitlingham in December 2021. Whether such specimens have arisen in the county or arrived from elsewhere is never clear.

*Coprinellus pellucidus* A small inkcap found on pony dung at Hickling Broad by

Yvonne Mynett in February. Widespread in Britain *Coprinopsis pseudonivea*. Another small inkcap but hitherto only recorded occasionally from the London area and further south. Found twice in Norfolk on cow dung in 2021: by Yvonne Mynett at East Walton Common TF7316 in June and by Jenny Kelly at Ken Hill TF6734 in October.

Flammulina elastica Very similar to the widespread Velvet Shank *F. velutipes* but apparently restricted to *Salix* sp. Found by Yvonne Mynett at Martham TG4319 in January. Most of the previous records are from Scotland.

### Bracket fungi etc

**Bicolored Bracket** *Gloeoporus dichrous* Found and identified by Jenny Kelly at Ken Hill TF6734 in March. Only a few scattered records from Britain.

Resinous Bracket Ischnoderma resinosum
This large brown bracket fungus on deciduous wood is very similar to the much commoner Benzoin Bracket Ischnoderma benzoinum which is found on conifer wood. When a foray led by Tony Leech found it at Broadland Country Park TG1817 it was thought to be a new county record but, sometime later, Anne Crotty found a photograph of it that she had taken some years earlier at a different location at the same site.

Chromocyphella muscicola Not a bracket



Chromocyphella muscicola on a tree trunk at Thursford Wood. Rob Yaxley.

but a cyphelloid fungus which looks more like a cup fungus. Cyphelloids are small basidiomycete fungi which have 'lost' their gills. This fungus was found by Rob Yaxley on a moss-covered Alder trunk at Thursford Wood TF9733 in January. None of the fifty or so British records are from further east than near Oxford.

### Cup fungi and other ascomycetes

Smaller, less significant, cup fungi are listed under first Norfolk records of microscopic fungi, below

Melastiza contorta There are a number of conspicuous orange cup fungi including





Melastiza contorta. Dersingham Bog. Upper photo showes spores; measurements in micrometres. Mark Joy.





**Haw Candlesnuff,** Norwich. *James Emerson*.

the widespread *Melastiza cornubensis. M. contorta* is superficially similar but with very different 'knobbly' spores. These were noted by Mark Joy who found the fungus at Dersingham Bog TF673288 in December. It is widely recorded in northern Scotland (an earlier name for it was *M. scotica*) but only rarely elsewhere.

Lachnum salicariae This small, pale, gregarious cup fungus looks like many other species but its growth on dead Purple Loosestrife Lythrum salicaria stems facilitates identification. First found by Tony Leech at Beeston Common TG1642 in May and later by Stewart Wright at Hoveton Hall in June.

Scutellinia hirta One of a number of eyelash fungi which challenge the would-be identifier but Yvonne Mynett found it at Ashwellthorpe Lower Wood TM1397 in May. The relatively few British records are mostly from northern Scotland again.

Haw Candlesnuff Hypoxylon oxyacanthae This relative of Candlesnuff Fungus occurs on old hawthorn berries and was recorded by James Emerson in Norwich in June.

# First Norfolk records of microfungi

Microfungi is an informal designation here used to describe fungi, details of which are not readily distinguished by the naked eye. Many are the anamorphs (asexual forms) of ascomycetes and some (Oomycetes) are not fungi at all. Many produce spots or dots on living or dead plant material; others appear as a white 'mould'. They are grouped here for convenience rather than on a strict taxonomic basis. The finding and identification of these species is the passion of Stewart Wright (ASW) who is responsible most of the records listed in Tables 1 to 4. Many of his records are from cultivated plants and some have only recently been distinguished (often as taxonomic splits on different hosts) so have not yet been officially recognised as British (at least under this name).

Table 1. Ascomycetes (including asexual forms) new to Norfolk in 2021.

**Abbreviations:** [0] No records on UK databases [1] Only other record from Brit. Is., Cork 1883. [X] Not (yet) on British list. \* Recorded subsequently again in 2021.

**Recorders:** ASW Stewart Wright; AB Andy Beaumont; ARL Tony Leech; IS Ian Senior; JE James Emerson; YM Yvonne Mynett.

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Rec- order	Note
Alternaria raphani	08/09/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Raphanus sativus fruit	ASW	[0]
Anthostomella rubicola	25/02/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Rubus fruticosus dead stem	ASW	
Asteroma coryli*	23/09/2021	Barton Turf	Corylus avellana leaf	ASW	
Asteroma impressum	03/11/2021	Acle, Roman Wood	Tussilago farfara leaf	ASW	

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Rec- order	Note
Asteroma padi	04/09/2021	Upton Fen	Prunus padus leaf	ASW	
Belonopsis iridis	16/10/2021	Scottow Enterprise Park	Iris pseudacorus dead leaf	ASW	
Blumeriella jaapii	20/06/2021	East Walton Common	Prunus avium leaf	ASW	
Botryotinia narcissicola	05/05/2021	Winterton, Low Road	Narcissus sp. leaf	ASW	
Camarosporium oreades	27/12/2021	Norwich, Earlham Ceme- tery West	Castanea sativa dead leaf	JE (ASW)	
Capnodium footii	27/12/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Hedera helix leaf	ASW	[1]
Cephalotrichum micro- sporum	01/05/2021	Shropham, Manor Farm	Muntjac dung	ARL	
Cercospora apii	09/10/2021	Wheatfen, Surlingham	Apium nodiflorum leaf	ASW	
Coniothyrium ilicis*	07/06/2021	Norwich, Earlham Ceme- tery East	- Ilex aquifolium dead leaf	IS (ASW)	
Coniothyrium phormii	10/06/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Phormium tenax dead leaf	ASW	
Diaporthe corni	09/03/2021	Catfield	Cornus sanguinea	AB	
Didymella holosteae	18/01/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Stellaria holostea	ASW	
Dothidea sambuci	29/12/2021	Buckenham Wood	Sambucus nigra	ASW	
Drepanopeziza salicis*	25/08/2021	Barton Turf	Salix fragilis	ASW	
Drepanopeziza sphaerioides*	01/09/2021	Potter Heigham	Salix x sepulcralis	ASW	
Ellisembia leptospora	29/12/2021	Buckenham Wood	Sambucus nigra	ASW	
Entyloma cosmi*	08/09/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Cosmos bipinnatus	ASW	[X]
Epichloe mollis	16/06/2021	Norwich, Earlham Road	Holcus mollis	IS (ASW)	
Erysiphe baptisiae	11/09/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick		ASW	[0]
Erysiphe buhrii*	09/08/2021	Norwich, Earlham Road	Silene dioica	IS	
Erysiphe capreae	20/11/2021	Roydon Common	Salix caprea	ASW	
Erysiphe cotini	16/09/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Cotinus coggygria living leaf	ASW	
Erysiphe hypophylla	09/10/2021	Wheatfen, Surlingham	Quercus robur	ASW	[0]
Erysiphe knautiae	16/09/2021	Norwich, City	Knautia macedonica	JE	
Glonium nitidum	18/09/2021	Holme Dunes	Pinus nigra subsp. laricio cone	ASW	
Gnomonia comari	18/08/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Fragaria x ananassa dead leaf	ASW	
Golovinomyces vincae	17/05/2021	Norwich, Earlham Road	Vinca major living leaf	JE	
Kabatia periclymeni	17/11/2021	Waxham	Lonicera periclymenum living leaf	ASW	
Leptosphaeria macrocapsa	17/07/2021	Gawdy Hall Big Wood	Mercurialis perennis dead stem	ASW	
Leptotrochila medicaginis	27/10/2021	Barton Turf	Medicago arabica living leaf	ASW	
Lophiostoma origani var. rubidum	22/05/2021	Beeston Regis Common	Epilobium hirsutum dead stem	ASW	
Lophodermium juniperinum	22/07/2021	Three Hammer Common	Juniperus squamata dead leaf	ASW	
Minimelanolocus subulifer	25/02/2021	Catfield	Euonymus europaeus dead fruit	AB	
Morenoina minuta	03/06/2021	Catfield	Juncus effusus live stem	AB	
Mycosphaerella brunneola	09/10/2021	Wheatfen, Surlingham	${\it Convallaria\ majalis\ } senescent\ leaf$	ASW	
Mycosphaerella elodis	20/11/2021	Roydon Common	Hypericum elodes living leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella escalloniae*	15/02/2021	Hoveton Hall	Escallonia living leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella euphorbiae	11/12/2021	Hoveton Hall	Euphorbia cyparissias dead stem	ASW	
Mycosphaerella fagi	18/12/2021	Snettisham, Ken Hill Estate	Fagus sylvatica dead leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella latebrosa	22/07/2021	Three Hammer Common	Acer campestre living leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella plantaginis	15/11/2021	Hoveton Hall	Plantago major living leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella pomi	09/08/2021	Hoveton Hall	Malus domestica living leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella primulae	03/12/2021	Hoveton Hall	Primula auricula dead leaf	ASW	
Mycosphaerella recutita	22/04/2021	Catfield	Dactylis glomerata living leaf	AB	

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Rec- order	Note
Mycosphaerella salicicola*	10/07/2021	Wheatfen, Surlingham	Salix caprea living leaf	ASW	
Ophiobolus ulnosporus	10/01/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Ballota nigra dead stem	ASW	
Paraphaeosphaeria vectis	23/06/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Iris foetidissima dead leaf	ASW	
Parascedosporium putredinis	07/08/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Brassica oleracea dead stalk	ASW	
Passalora dubia	17/11/2021	Norwich, Sleaford Green	Chenopodium album living leaf	JE	
Penicillium digitatum	10/01/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Citrus x sinensis fruit	ASW	
Peyronellaea obtusa	01/06/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Malus domestica living leaf	ASW	[0]
Pezicula houghtonii	01/02/2021	Hoveton Hall	Prunus laurocerasus dead branch	ASW	
Phacellium alborosellum*	08/03/2021	Hoveton Hall	Cerastium glomeratum living leaf	ASW	
Phoma sambuciphila	13/12/2021	Hoveton Hall	Sambucus nigra decorticated wood	ASW	
Phyllosticta argyrea	18/05/2021	Hoveton Hall	Elaeagnus pungens living leaf	ASW	[0]
Phyllosticta chaenomelina	16/09/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Chaenomeles japonica living leaf	ASW	[0]
Phyllosticta epimedii		Hoveton Hall	Epimedium alpinum living leaf	ASW	[0]
Phyllosticta eupatorii*	15/07/2021	Barton Turf	Eupatorium cannabinum living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta impatientis	10/07/2021	Wheatfen, Surlingham	Impatiens capensis living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta japonica*		Hoveton Hall	Mahonia japonica living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta lonicerae	06/11/2021	Broadland Country Park	Lonicera periclymenum living leaf	IS (ASW)	
Phyllosticta mahoniicola	09/05/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Mahonia aquifolium living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta polygonorum	19/06/2021	East Walton Common	Persicaria maculosa living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta prunicola	03/11/2021	Acle, Roman Wood	Prunus domestica living leaf	ASW	
Phyllosticta sorbi	16/10/2021	Scottow Enterprise Park		IS (ASW)	
Phyllosticta ulmi	02/11/2021	Hoveton Hall	Ulmus procera living leaf	ASW	
Podosphaera senecionis*	02/10/2021	Thetford, Barnham Cross Common	Jacobaea vulgaris living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia agrestis	21/03/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Viola arvensis living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia aplospora	24/02/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Alchemilla ellenbeckii living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia bellunensis	27/03/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Tanacetum parthenium living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia coleosporii*	22/07/2021	Three Hammer Common	Coleosporium tussilaginis uredinia	ASW	
Ramularia coriandri	10/06/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Coriandrum sativum living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia crassiuscula	04/10/2021	Hoveton Hall	Aconitum carmichaelii living leaf	ASW	[X]
Ramularia dispar*	04/09/2021	Upton Fen	Eupatorium cannabinum living leaf	ASW	[0]
Ramularia epilobiana	31/05/2021	Potter Heigham	Epilobium hirsutum living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia erodii	01/02/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Erodium trifolium living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia major*	02/09/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Petasites hybridus living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia menthicola	27/09/2021	Hoveton Hall	Mentha aquatica living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia rosea*	01/09/2021	Potter Heigham	Salix alba living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia triboutiana	22/07/2021	Three Hammer Common	Centaurea nigra living leaf	ASW	
Ramularia tricherae	03/11/2021	Acle, Roman Wood	Knautia arvensis living leaf	ASW	
Rosellinia britannica	29/03/2021	Acle, Damgate Wood	Ribes rubrum twig	YM	
Septoria alnicola*	04/09/2021	Upton Fen	Alnus glutinosa living leaf	ASW	
Septoria cymbalariae	22/11/2021	Hoveton Hall	Cymbalaria muralis living leaf	ASW	
Septoria erythraeae	20/11/2021	Roydon Common	Centaurium erythraea living leaf	ASW	[0]
Septoria ficariae	17/05/2021	Hoveton Hall	Ranunculus ficaria living leaf	ASW	
Septoria lycopersici	07/08/2021	Repps-with-Bastwick	Lycopersicon esculentum living leaf	ASW	[0]
Septoria phlogis	01/06/2021	Hoveton Hall	Phlox paniculata living leaf	ASW	[0]
Unguicularia costata		Barton Turf	Juncus effusus dead stem	ASW	

Table 2. Rusts and smuts (parasitic basidiomycetes)

Abbreviations: [0] No records on UK databases

Recorders: ASW Stewart Wright; AB Andy Beaumont; IS Ian Senior.

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Recorder Note
Melampsora salicis-albae	03/11/2021	Acle, Roman Wood	Salix alba living leaf	ASW
Microbotryum scabiosae	22/08/2021	Marlingford Estate	Knautia arvensis anther	IS
Pucciniastrum areolatum	11/10/2021	Catfield	Prunus padus living leaf	AB
Sphacelotheca reiliana	18/01/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Zea mays ear	ASW [0]

### Table 3. Zygomycetes on insects

Abbreviations: [0] No records on UK databases. [X] Not (yet) on British list. \* Recorded subsequently again in 2021.

Recorder: ASW Stewart Wright.

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Record	er Note
Entomophaga tipulae*	18/09/2021	Holme Dunes	Tipula paludosa dead insect	ASW	[0]
$Entomoph thora\ schizophorae^*$	16/09/2021	Ashmanhaugh	Delia sp. dead insect	ASW	[X]

### Table 4. Oomycetes (downy mildews)

Abbreviations: [0] No records on UK databases. \* Recorded subsequently again in 2021.

Recorder: ASW Stewart Wright; CDP Chris Preston; IS Ian Senior.

Species	Date	Place	Substrate	Recorder	Note
Albugo laibachii	16/04/2021	Hoveton Hall	Arabidopsis thaliana living leaf	ASW	[0]
Bremia taraxaci	15/07/2021	Barton Turf	Taraxacum officinale living leaf	ASW	[0]
Bremia tulasnei	16/10/2021	Scottow Enterprise Park	Senecio vulgaris living leaf	ASW	[0]
Peronospora conferta	22/07/2021	Three Hammer Common	Cerastium fontanum living leaf	ASW	
Peronospora flava	02/10/2021	Thetford, Barnham Cross Common	Linaria vulgaris living leaf	ASW	[0]
Peronospora hyoscyami f.sp. tabacina	26/07/2021	Hoveton Hall	Nicotiana alata living leaf	ASW	
Peronospora knautiae	19/06/2021	Narborough, railway cutting	Knautia arvensis living leaf	ASW	[0]
Peronospora obovata	02/10/2021	Thetford, Barnham Cross Common	Spergularia rubra living leaf	CDP	
Peronospora stigmaticola*	09/08/2021	Hoveton Hall	Mentha aquatica stigma	ASW	[0]
Peronospora tomentosa*	12/04/2021	Houghen Plantation	Cerastium glomeratum living lea	fASW	
Plasmopara muralis*	01/10/2021	Hoveton Hall	Parthenocissus quinquefolia living leaf	gASW	[0]

Dr A.R.Leech 3 Eccles Road, Holt, Norfolk

NR25 6HJ

tonyleech3@gmail.com