

**A note on old meadow fungi surveying  
in the Middle Sussex and South East Surrey Wealds,  
2013, with some records from 2012 and 2011**

***churchyards, commons, greens and ex-common,  
meadow, pasture and sports grounds***

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**This note is dedicated to the many mowers, loppers, strimmers and rakers who do such extraordinarily valuable work maintaining our superb archaic churchyard lawns**

## **1 Introduction**

This autumn has been an exceptionally good one for old meadow fungal fruiting, probably the best since the two seasons of 2004 and 2005.

This gave me the opportunity to survey some of the sites – chiefly churchyards - which were not covered by Peter Russell's superb 2004 report on the survey work of the West Weald Fungus Recording Group<sup>i</sup>.

In total, this autumn's survey covered 40 sites<sup>ii</sup>.

**Churchyards.** 22 sites visited. The core sites in my survey have been the seven medieval churchyards of the Lower Greensand ridge between the River Adur and the River Ouse in the Sussex Low Weald (*Henfield, Woodmancote, Hurstpierpoint, Keymer, Ditchling, Streat, and East Chiltington*). I also looked, but only once in season, at their equivalents on the Surrey Lower Greensand ridge (*Bletchingley, Godstone, Tandridge and Oxted*).

I looked, too, at a number of churchyards on the Wealden Clay (*Sayers Common, Shermanbury, Plumpton Green, Albourne, and, in Surrey, Blindley Heath*) plus one on the Lower Chalk (*Westmeston*) and one on the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (*Newick*).

Lastly, I used four of the best local churchyards surveyed by the WWFRG (*Staplefield, Slaugham, Lower Beeding and Colgate*) as controls, visiting them once each. They are all on the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand.

**Commons, greens, and ex-commons.** 10 sites visited. My chief interest was in looking at the fungi of two Surrey sites, *Blindley Heath* and the mish-mash of common and ex-common at *Frogit Heath*. I treated the latter as one site for my purposes. In Surrey I also looked at *Broadham Green*, *Hurst Green*, and *Tandridge church green*. In Sussex I visited *Henfield Common*, supplementing work I had done there earlier and the work of the WWFRG on the cricket pitch. I also looked at *Slaugham village green*, *Staplefield Common*, little *Roeheath Common* in Chailey, and a tiny ex-waste of the manor *bank in Chapel Lane, East Chiltington*, opposite the church (which used to be called a chapel).

**Meadow and pastures.** Five sites visited. My chief interest was in continuing my survey of *The Steep*, a superb St Leonard's Forest site erroneously de-designated as an SSSI, circa 1987. I also looked at *The Moors* in Woodmancote, *Vixengrove meadows* and a *pasture on Townings Farm*, both in Chailey, and at *The Plough pub meadow* in Plumpton Green.

**Cricket and football pitches.** Within the last two categories above were six sports grounds I was keen to look at. Five of these were for cricket: at *Henfield*, *Blindley Heath*, *Frogit Heath*, and *Staplefield Commons*, and *Wiston Cricket Ground*. One was for football: at *Roeheath Common*.

## 2 What I looked at

I chiefly looked at what are known as the 'CHEG' species, as these have been identified as of special collective importance in judging the conservation value and ecological continuity of unimproved grasslands. They all tend to like the same conditions: short, mossy, well drained turf without ANY history of agro-chemical applications.

The CHEG group is made up of:

- 'C': **Clavariaceae**, Fairy Clubs, (mostly little, often yellowy tongues),
- 'H': **Hygrocybe**, Waxcaps (often yellow and red and often lubricous gill fungi),
- 'E': **Entolomataceae**, Pink Gills (mostly small, often black and brown, sometimes bluish),
- 'G': **Geoglossaceae**, Earth Tongues (little, mostly blackish tongues).

They are a beautiful and charming group. The impressionists would have liked their bright colours. In good years and prime spots they can make displays as good as summer meadow flowers.

I am pretty competent at identification of Waxcaps by the naked eye (using Boertmann<sup>iii</sup> and knowledge gained from Peter Russell) and have some competence with Fairy Clubs. I can only identify a few Pink Gills to species, and only identify Earth Tongues to genus (*Geoglossum*, *Trichoglossum*, *Microglossum*). I don't have the will or the

microscope to identify the very many difficult species. I count them as separate species only when they are quite distinct to the naked eye.

I only casually noted other grassland fungi such as Mushrooms, *Agaricus* (which I mostly did not identify to species), Parasols, *Macrolepiota* and *Lepiota*, Puffballs, chiefly *Bovista*, *Lycoperdon*, Bonnets, *Mycena*, dung fungi, et al.

We never met anyone else who was there to enjoy these Waxcap CHEG fungi, although I was able to introduce one interested and well-informed member of the church at Streat to them.

At one site I found a heap of large Horse Mushrooms, all neatly cut and discarded at the edge of the car park. At another site we said hallo to two forager couples. One couple went off to plunder nearby countryside, but the others were quartering this particular grassland site...without obvious collecting equipment. I suspect they were looking for Magic Mushrooms...of which there were only one or two.

It is because of such predatory activity that I can't refer to most finds I made of culinary or psychedelic interest. In any case, they were a small and often absent component of the mycota on the survey sites. Many such species are most prolific in more enriched conditions.

### 3 My results

#### 3.a THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DISPLAYS

One November dawn Henfield Churchyard, TQ 212 161, was hoary with frost and all the Waxcaps had turned to coloured icicles, which thawed as the sun crept above the rooftops and lines of beautifully clipped Yews. A little troop of **Pink Ballerina Waxcaps**, *Hygrocybe calyptriformis* - of both pink and white varieties - tottered on tiptoe, and one had fallen. There were big swarms of **Parrot Waxcap**, *H. psittacina*, of many colours, and when I crouched down on the wet turf I could spot troops of tiny black imps - three species of Earth Tongues - poking through the moss between the yellow lichen covered table tombs.

Tandridge Churchyard and its adjacent green, TQ 374 510/1, (which together make one site, really) was probably the most colourful, though not the richest site, with large numbers of **Meadow Waxcap**, *H. pratensis*, under its gigantic Yew, and a similar plenitude of **Golden Spindles**, *Clavulinopsis fusiformis*, nearby...and **Pink Ballerina** and **Honey Waxcap**, *H. reidii*, to boot.

Sayers Common Churchyard, TQ 269 186, proved endlessly exciting, with eight different Fairy Clubs, including the writhing tentacles of **Smoky Spindles**, *Clavaria fumosa*, and a big swarm of **Handsome Club**, *Clavulinopsis laeticolor*, with (I think)

**Small Orange Coral**, *Ramariopsis crocea*, glowing in the gloomy shade of a Box clump...and the rare **Straw Club**, *Clavaria straminea*. One day I found a single **Scarlet Hood**, *H. coccinea*, and another, a single **Pink Ballerina**; one day the first of the season's **Slimy Waxcap**, *H. irrigata*, and another a troop of **Yellow Foot Waxcap**, *H. flavipes*.

### 3.b THE RICHEST SITES

For their CHEG assemblages the outstanding sites, with over 15 species, were: **Sayers Common Churchyard** (26), **The Steep** (20), **Henfield Churchyard** (18), **Henfield Common** (15), and **Keymer Churchyard** (15).

**Sayers Common Churchyard** is my overall favourite site this year. I counted 12 Waxcaps and two Earth Tongues, as well as the fine Fairy Club assemblage. I must have under recorded the Pink Gill assemblage. The churchyard is beautifully maintained, with a rich old meadow flora, including Adder's Tongue Fern and much Ox Eye Daisy. I was put on to it by a man who saw Green Winged Orchis there decades ago.

**The Steep, St Leonard's Forest**, TQ 242 312, keeps its old grassland fungal secrets well hidden, with an abundance of the smaller and less colourful species. The only one that makes a real display is the **Cedarwood Waxcap**, *H. russocoriacea*, which is widespread across the site. It has the **Goblet Waxcap**, *H. cantharellus*, **Yellow Foot** and **Honey Waxcaps**. My favourite species there is the **Indigo Pink Gill**, *Entoloma chalybeum*, and I spotted two other violet-blue *Entoloma* species, including the rare *E. Mougeotti*. I have tentatively identified eight Pink Gill, *Entoloma*, species. I suspect that the Pink Gill assemblage is the main fungal treasure of the site. This site's most glorious display is its sheets of Wild Daffodils in early spring...as good as Farndale or the Gloucestershire Daffodil country...thanks to the good management it receives.

**Henfield Churchyard** is a cornucopia on its north and east sides. The south side has a rank sward, and one spot on the west side has been spot treated with hormone weedkiller. **The Slimy**, (possible) **Earthy**, **Pink Ballerina** and **Yellow Foot**, *H. irrigata*, *fornicata* (?), *calyptiformis* and *flavipes* are its best **Waxcaps**.

**Henfield Common's**, TQ 219 156, CHEG assemblage (as I have seen it) is good, but hard to find and mostly thin on the ground, partly because such large, rough sites often fruit sparsely, but mainly, I think, because the management is very inadequate for old meadow fungi. The WWFRG found nine Waxcaps on the cricket pitch, but I have not been so fortunate. The best species on the pitch that I found was **Moor Club**, *Clavaria argillacea*. Has the cricket pitch been damaged in the past decade? There was a bit of **Scarlet Hood Waxcap** by the old village school, though the sward is too long and rank for it, really. My best find was **Scarlet Caterpillar Club Fungus**, *Cordyceps militaris* – always a treat!

**Keymer Churchyard**, TQ 314 152, was great, with good fungi right by the church south door and on all sides, though the northern extension is kept too long for them. I am sure there are many more species to be found there. I really enjoyed finding the scarce **Beige Coral**, *Clavulinopsis umbrinella*, and much **White Spindles**, *Clavaria fragilis*.

### 3.c REGIONALLY IMPORTANT

All five sites above are of regional importance, if we take the method for assessing the fungal conservation value of grassland sites “devised by Rald<sup>iv</sup> (1985) and adapted by Vesterholt et al (1999)” based on the number of Waxcap, *Hygrocybe*, species present. By this method a site is of regional importance if six to ten Waxcaps, *Hygrocybe*, are recorded in a single visit, or nine to sixteen Waxcaps as a total for all visits.

Additionally, Roeheath Common, Newick Churchyard, the Lingfield Cricket Club Ground sub-site on Frogit Heath Common, and Tandridge Churchyard and Green (taken as one site) are of regional importance.

It is interesting to note that under the assessment of Waxcap Sites by English Nature (Evans 2003<sup>v</sup>) the provisional level for *national* importance for Fairy Clubs, *Clavariaceae*, of seven taxa, is met by Sayers Common churchyard, though the levels for national importance of the other three CHEG components are not met so far by that site (which I have visited for fungi four times).

Lastly, three of my four control sites, Staplefield, Slaugham and Colgate Churchyards, all met the criteria for regional importance of having 6-10 Waxcap, *Hygrocybe*, species recorded in single visits (though the WWFRG have recorded very many more species there).

**Roeheath Common, Chailey**, TQ 398 191, has the rare and beautiful **Fibrous Waxcap**,<sup>vi</sup> *H. intermedia*, amongst a total of seven Waxcap species, which also include the **Goblet Waxcap**, the **Honey Waxcap** and the **Blue Edge Pink Gill**, *E. serrulatum*. The Common is the last tiny fragment of the once-huge and long-enclosed Roeheath and Cinder Commons, and would bear much more recording work. It is the south side of the lane, managed as an informal kick-about pitch by its parish council owners, which is of interest. The north side is under-managed meadow (cut and the hay left to mulch) and is relentlessly losing wildlife value by eutrophication.

**Newick Churchyard**, TQ 421 208, also has seven Waxcap species, including several troops of **Scarlet Hood**. Green Winged Orchis was present last spring. It is lovingly maintained, though much long grass greatly reduces the area available for CHEG species.

**Lingfield Cricket Club Ground's outfield, a sub-site of Frogit Heath Common**, TQ 356 420, showed six Waxcaps over three visits, including **Glutinous Waxcap**, *H. glutinipes*, likely **Vermilion Waxcap**, *H. miniata*, and **Goblet Waxcap**. With its Heath

Grass, Heath Bedstraw and Tormentil on the pitch, and the Devil's Bit and Betony on its boundary bank, this site's flora and fungi is the only substantive relic of the lost heath of the mostly-enclosed Frogit Heath Common.

**Tandridge Churchyard and Green**, which run together, have **Pink Ballerina** on both sub-sites, with a combined total of six Waxcaps. The site has many mature trees with heavy leaf fall, not to speak of the ancient Yew and its huge canopy, and this, together with a rather loose mowing regime, makes the site rather lush. Perhaps this is why my count was smaller than I expected...but further recording may expand my totals greatly.

### 3.d LOCALLY IMPORTANT

By Rald and Vesterholt's method a site is of local importance if the number of Waxcap species recorded is three to five on a single visit or four to eight as a total of all visits. By this method the following of my sites are of local importance: Ditchling Churchyard, The Woodmancote Moors, Wiston Cricket Ground, Slaugham Green, and, in Surrey, the horse paddocks sub-site of old Frogit Heath, Quest Cottage meadows sub-site of old Frogit Heath, Blindley Heath Common, Hurst Green, Oxted Churchyard and Godstone Churchyard. Additionally, one of my control sites, Lower Beeding Churchyard, met the criteria for being of local importance (though the WWFRG has recorded many more species there).

**Ditchling Churchyard's**, TQ 325 152, interest was puzzlingly patchy. It was best on the mossy slope to the north of the church, where the outstanding feature was several large troops of **EarthTongues**, both *Geoglossum* and *Trichoglossum*. The tongues are large and obvious to the eye (which they usually aren't). The troop of **Scarlet Hood** nearby was lovely and gaudy. There were five Waxcaps (plus possible *fornicata*) but I have recorded only one *Clavariaceae* species, **White Coral**, *Clavulina coralloides*, which isn't a grassland fungus.

**Woodmancote Moors**, TQ 225 155, are a superb site, with the best population of Meadow Thistle in Sussex and many other rarities. However, the drier part of The Moors, which is where the CHEG interest would be, is probably still suffering from past damage from before the present owners (who also own the excellent Swains Farm Shop) took over. We only recorded small quantities of four Waxcap species, with **Silky Pink Gill**, *E. sericeum*.

**Wiston Cricket Ground**, TQ 152 135, home of the Steyning Rebels Cricket Club, is on the north side of the Washington Road, almost opposite the Lodge of Wiston Park. A previous late season visit was unproductive, but this year the northern outfield proved a treat, with seven CHEG species, including five Waxcaps and an Earth Tongue...and the **Scarlet Caterpillar Club**. I don't understand the history of this Ground, which, it is said, was probably made in the late 1960's. It is crossed by the line of the Roman Greensand Way and was later crossed by the old alignment of the Steyning-Horsham Road, via Buncton, before the construction of the Washington Road Turnpike (now the A283).

**Slaugham Green**, TQ 257 280/1, should probably be considered a sub-site of Slaugham Churchyard, with which it runs. I counted five Waxcaps, including the **Cedarwood Waxcap**.

**The horse paddocks sub-site of old Frogit Heath**, TQ 357 422, consists of an improved, floristically banal patch of an equally banal close within the footprint of the enclosed part of the old Frogit Heath Common. For some reason this patch has four Waxcaps, Yellow Club and a Pink Gill. Very odd.

**The Quest Cottage meadows sub-site of old Frogit Heath**, TQ 352 417, consists of two nice and well-managed small MG5a meadow closes within the footprint of the enclosed part of the old Frogit Heath Common. On a drier hillock in the centre of the south meadow there is a patch with three Waxcaps, a Fairy Club and a Pink Gill.

**Blindley Heath Common** is a favourite site of mine, with heart warming restoration of the SSSI moor going on, TQ 367 446/7. It is, however, the Cricket Ground, TQ 364 451, which lies outside the SSSI, which has the bulk of the CHEG interest (seven species) that I noted in two visits. The Ground has four Waxcaps, including *var. pallida* of the **Meadow Waxcap**, and **Pink Domecap**, *Rugosomyces carnea*, an old meadow species that is not in the CHEG system. Like Lingfield Cricket Club at Frogit Heath the Ground also has much Tormentil and Heath Grass, as well as Spring Sedge. By contrast, I only noted one Waxcap on the SSSI moor, *H. pratensis*, *var. pallida*, again. The management of the Cricket Ground is unsympathetic to the Waxcap fruiting, for it was mown and spiked just before my second in-season visit, which probably depressed my result. If the SSSI designation had taken into account the Cricket Ground's equal interest to the moor, then nature conservation would have more input there.

**Hurst Green**, TQ 398 512, is a place of amenity lawn and lollipop trees and bushes. However, one higher patch of shorter and more mossy ground had a little cluster of commoner CHEG species. **Butter Waxcap**, *H. ceracea*, was the nicest thing.

**Godstone Churchyard**, TQ 357 515, and **Oxted Churchyard**, TQ 390 529, *should* have been good, for they seem unimproved, but they had just been cut, leaf-blown and possibly raked, so almost all of the fungal fruiting bodies had been swept away. Only three Waxcap species recorded in each place.

### 3.e SOME INTEREST

Nine sites displayed some CHEG interest, below the levels of local or regional importance. It may well be that further recording will increase my totals, and - much more importantly - so will ongoing sympathetic management. These sites are: Streat Churchyard, Shermanbury Churchyard, Hurstpierpoint Churchyard, Church Lane bank East Chiltington, Staplefield Common, Vixengrove Meadows, Townings Farm pasture, and, in Surrey, Broadham Green and Bletchingley Churchyard.

**Streat Churchyard**, TQ 350 151, *should* be rich in species, because one little bit *is*, north east of the church, by the path. Certainly the rest of the yard is too long for these special fungi. Perhaps that is a sufficient explanation ? The good bit is mossy, slightly raised, and cut short. Four of its five species have scarcity value, including the **Slimy Waxcap**, **Spangle Waxcap**, an **Earth Tongue** and the **Apricot Club**, *Clavulinopsis luteoalba*.

**Shermanbury Churchyard**, TQ 214 188, is unimproved, I think, and lovingly maintained, I know. However, the church warden tells me that the arisings are not lifted after mowing, and that may be the reason why the old meadow fungi are almost absent. Perhaps, too, there was some past application of an agri-chemical ? In any case, the only cluster of CHEG fungi I found was by the north hedge and its bench, where there were small troops of **Golden Waxcap**, *H. chlorophana*, and **Parrot Waxcap**, with **Meadow Coral**, *C. corniculata*, and **Yellow Club**.

**Hurstpierpoint Churchyard**, TQ 279 164, only had a small bit of **Parrot Waxcap**.

**Chapel Lane bank, East Chiltington**, TQ 370 151, is a lovingly mown tiny bank outside a one story wooden bungalow, opposite the churchyard. It has an **Earth Tongue** and **White Spindles**. It gives a hint of what has been lost from the churchyard opposite.

**Staplefield Common**, TQ 275 281, was looked at by the WWFRG and two Waxcaps found, which is also what I found, with the addition of **Yellow Club** and a small Pink Gill. It must once have been lovely, and the Wild Chamomile on the cricket pitch still is, but there are, apart from that, only the tiniest hints of what has been lost...little bits of Betony on the outfield and some Devils Bit by The Victory pub.

**Vixengrove Meadows, Chailey**, TQ 400 203, are beautifully maintained. They have a mixture of unimproved and semi-improved sub-sites. We only found a small patch of CHEG interest near the top of the slope at the south end, with **White Spindles** and **Cream Pink Gill**, *E. serrulatum*, and **Blackening Waxcap**, *H. conica*. Not much for such a lovely and rich place.

**Townings Farm pasture**, TQ 383 203, along the west side of Bineham Wood, seems to me to have been only recently and incompletely improved. The mossy grass alongside the footpath by the wood and along the north hedge has **Yellow Club**, **Golden Waxcap** and **Orange Moss Cap**, *Rickenella fibula*, amongst Gorse, Tormentil and Heath Bedstraw. Townings Farm is such a great place !!

**Broadham Green**, TQ 388 512, Surrey, is very similar to Hurst Green...mown amenity grass and trees. All I found was a tiny bit of **Yellow Club** and a Pink Gill on some drier, mossy ground.



**Bletchingley Churchyard**, TQ 327 508, showed nothing except a bit of (probably) **Snowy Waxcap**, *H. virginea*. I know it is sympathetically managed because I've seen the meadow flowers in summer, with Meadow Cranesbill and a riot of colour in one patch, later mown short and the arisings lifted...all exactly as it should be. I suspect that it suffers from a lack of recognition of its old meadow fungi, and they have been mown and blown away.

### 3.f NO SHOW

I drew a blank at seven sites, despite making two visits to five of them. In one case (The Plough meadow) I know that the site does have CHEG interest, so I was just unlucky this year. In another (East Chiltington Churchyard) I think the sward is left too long and rank for old meadow fungal fruiting. I cannot account for the others. Perhaps there were past episodes of agri-chemical usage ?

**Woodmancote Churchyard**, TQ 230 149, has value for higher plants, with several sedges and other archaic meadow species, and WWFRG noted three Waxcaps. To be sure, the northern churchyard is very rank and neglected, but the southern, mown, part is by far the largest.

**Westmeston Churchyard**, TQ 338 136, was also looked at by WWFRG who noted two Waxcaps. Again, the northern part is left rank and long, but that is a minority part of the churchyard, which is obviously loved and cared for.

**East Chiltington**, TQ 369 151, is one of my favourite churches, with its walls made of fossil paludina rubble, and its giant Yew. It is sad that the labour can't be found for more regular mowing, if that is the reason for its neglect.

**Plumpton Green Churchyard**, TQ 364 168, is another beautiful churchyard, with fine Spotted Orchis displays and much loving care. I can't account for its lack of CHEG interest.

**The Plough meadow, Plumpton Green**, TQ 364 181/2, is a delight, with Saw Wort and other special species. There are **Cedarwood** and **Snowy Waxcaps**, and **Yellow Club**, and I'll bet I was just unlucky this year in my visit. Perhaps it's because I didn't stay and buy a drink this time !!

**Albourne Churchyard**, TQ 256 161, is likely too wet and a bit too shady for CHEG species.

**Blindley Heath Churchyard, Surrey**, TQ 360/1 458/9, may be too lush and shady for CHEG species.

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## **4 Some thoughts**

**Old meadow fungi may be the most important wildlife interest on an archaic grassland site.** I think this is undoubtedly the case at Sayers Common and Henfield Churchyards, as well as the already-recognised Slaugham and Staplefield churchyards. I would argue that it is also likely to be true at many other churchyard sites, and may prove to be so at The Steep, too. The 12 regionally important and one nationally important (Slaugham Churchyard) sites in this study area attest to that. Several of these sites deserve SSSI status and one (The Steep) was once part of an SSSI, and should be again.

**Neglect of regular mowing means the extinction of this interest.** Traditional mowing and raking up of the hay is crucial. The band of churchyard mowers are a huge force for nature conservation. Some neglected churchyards, like East Chilington (and old Plumpton and Twineham Churchyards outside of this study) seem to have lost all fungal interest.

**Permanently leaving tall ‘flower meadow areas for wildlife’ is bad practice and can do real damage.** Leaving some areas tall is fine for the spring and early summer, but they must be *cut right back hard and managed like all the rest of the site* for the rest of the year. Bletchingley Churchyard provides a model of good practice in this respect, for its tall flower meadow is indistinguishable from the rest of the churchyard after its summer cut. By contrast, Henfield, Woodmancote and Westmeston’s tall flower meadow areas remain rank even after their late season cut, with a eutrophic and simplifying flora, in which Nettles and Hogweed take over. Staplefield, Slaugham and Colgate Churchyards seem to suffer from this practice particularly, though Staplefield does have a rich higher plant flora alongside its old meadow fungi.

**Late mowing, raking and leaf blowing during the fungal fruiting season on rich sites is damaging.** This season is at its height through October and November, though it may start earlier and finish later. If cosmetic mowing is important in some areas, then the locations of fruiting fungi should be identified and mown around (just as orchids are often left during spring mowing). At Bletchingley, Godstone and Oxted Churchyards late mowing probably accounts for the poor showing of CHEG species.

**Moss is wonderful.** The best places for these fungi are mossy and well-drained and short-mown.

**Agri-chemicals mean extinction.** I only saw one small example of agri-chemical use – around Henfield Churchyard west door, but one single application could destroy many centuries of ecological continuity.

**Victorian Churchyards can be just as good as the best medieval churchyards.** Slaugham may be medieval and the tops...and medieval Henfield may be superb...but Victorian Sayers Common, Staplefield, Colgate and Lower Beeding Churchyards have

fine assemblages, too, as do (outside the study area) Victorian Turner's Hill and Danehill churchyards. Danehill Churchyard, indeed, is equal tops with Slaugham, having 21 Waxcap species.

**Some sites are a puzzle.** Why is Ditchling Churchyard so patchy for these fungi ? And why is there such a relentless 'no show' at Woodmancote ?

**Geology doesn't seem to be crucial on Wealden sites, though drainage does.** My hypothesis was that the Folkestone Beds and Upper Greensand ridge churchyards may be richer than the rest, but I think the case is unproven. Sayers Common Churchyard, on the Wealden Clay, was the best new site to me in this survey. However, the overall best churchyard in this study area is on the Tunbridge Wells Sand of the High Weald (Slaugham) though other excellent sites, like Staplefield and Colgate Churchyards and The Steep are partly on clay bands within the TWS. Poorly drained sites like Albourne Churchyard and parts of other sites seem hopeless for old meadow fungi, though.

**Commons and cricket.** For old meadow fungi cricket pitches and sports grounds can be the best bits of the commons they are sited on, as at Blindley Heath and Frogit Heath in Surrey, and Roeheath in Chailey. However, if their managements do not know and value this conservation interest their actions may be damaging, as, in the past, at Staplefield Common and, possibly recently, at Henfield Common ?

**Commons and enclosure.** My comparison of unenclosed Blindley Heath with mostly-long-enclosed Frogit Heath showed that fairly good old meadow fungi assemblages can survive in new land uses (cricket pitches, horse paddocks, hay meadow) providing the commercial imperative does not operate, and provided the post-enclosure land use pattern is fragmented and diverse. However, this survival is *fortuitous*, not *deliberate*, and remains constantly vulnerable.

**Commons and churchyards.** When churchyards run alongside commons and greens the assemblages operate as one, as at Tandridge and Slaugham Churchyards and greens. Indeed, the best sites may owe their heritage of fungi to their location next to other archaic grassland (as - outside this study - at Walstead Cemetery on the lost Walstead Common, Staplefield Churchyard bordering Staplefield Common, St Wilfred's Churchyard on the lost Hayward's Heath, and North Chailey Churchyard on Chailey Common).

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<sup>i</sup> "Waxcap Grasslands in Sussex", by Peter Russell, in "Sussex Botany" journal, Issue One, March 2004, edited by P.A. Harmes and N.J.H. Sturt. The WWFRG survey was in response to a call for such surveys by the British Mycological Society in 1996.

<sup>ii</sup> I have many records for other Wealden archaic grassland sites from previous years which I have not written up.

<sup>iii</sup> "The genus *Hygrocybe*", by David Boertmann. *Fungi of Northern Europe* Vol. 1. Superbly colour illustrated, simple and highly usable.

<sup>iv</sup> "Old Meadow Fungi on National Trust Lawns and Parks in SE England", page 14, by Peter Russell and Dave Bangs. National Trust (2005)

<sup>v</sup> Page 14, op cit above: National Trust (2005)

<sup>vi</sup> In the uplands sometimes known as the Juniper Waxcap for its association with that species.