

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.00pm THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER



## **Sydney Long Medal awarded to county fungi recorder**

**Norfolk's most prestigious award for naturalists, the Sydney Long Memorial Medal has been awarded to Dr Tony Leech, the county recorder for fungi, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the promotion of conservation.**

The medal was presented during NWT's Annual General Meeting on Thursday 19 November. It is awarded jointly by NWT and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society every two years for an outstanding contribution to the county's natural history.

Nick Acheson, Wildlife Ambassador of Norfolk Wildlife Trust who presented the medal said: "Tony Leech is a rare thing indeed: an enthusiast, an expert and a brilliant communicator, all in one. While his general knowledge of natural history is huge and forever growing, he has devoted himself to the study of fungi, serving for many years as our County Recorder. Through this role he has nurtured and encouraged literally thousands of mycologists, from little children on his fungus forays to eminent experts. For an equal number of years he has lent his time and passion both to Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society and Norfolk Wildlife Trust. There is not a single naturalist in Norfolk - and I say this advisedly - who has not in some way benefited from Tony's love of our county's wildlife. He is the embodiment of the legacy of Sydney Long."

Chairman of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, Carl Chapman added: "The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust begat from the same stock and have the same desires to protect the wildlife in our great county of Norfolk. It is so important that both organisations support one another in research and conservation so that wildlife will be around for our children, and our children's children. The awarding of the Sydney Long Medal is a testament to Tony's involvement in that process and collaboration. A well-deserved reward."

On receiving the medal, Tony Leech said: "I am honoured to receive the medal and having it presented to me at Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Thursford Wood was a bonus. I feel very strongly that the natural world is for everybody and there are so many ways that we can enjoy it. We can make lists, we can pit our wits against evolution and try and identify species, or we can take photographs of plants, animals and fungi. Or we could just say wow, when we see a tree in its autumn glory!"

The medal is awarded in recognition of Dr Sydney Long, founder of the Norfolk Naturalists Trust in 1926, now the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, who died in 1939.

- Ends -

#### **Contact information:**

Rebecca Lyon at Norfolk Wildlife Trust  
Office: 01603 625540  
Mobile: 07761 768872  
Email: [rebeccal@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:rebeccal@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk)

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**1. Dr Tony Leech**

Tony has made an outstanding contribution to natural history and conservation in Norfolk since he came to teach at Greshams School, Holt in 1978. His special interest has been in the study of fungi. In his role as county fungi recorder he has freely given his time and expertise to encouraging others to take up an interest and develop expertise. He has a talent for passing on his enthusiasm for the subject which he has conveyed through leading countless forays and more structured workshops and at events such as Wild About Norfolk. Tony has also played a major part in the continuing success of the Norfolk Fungus Study Group.

Tony has not confined himself to fungi but has also taken a wider interest in nature conservation in the county. Tony has mentored and inspired young people to take an interest in mycology and natural history, including his contribution to the annual sixth form Biodiversity Conference at the Castle Museum. He has sat on the Council of Norfolk Wildlife Trust from 2011-17 and has supported NWT's community projects. For five years he was the Chair of the North Norfolk local group of the Trust and has been a regular speaker and events supporter across all of NWT's local groups. He has also sat on the committee of the highly successful River Glaven conservation group.

Tony has been an officer of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society for many years having been chairman and secretary in the past. He is currently the chairman of the publications committee and involves himself heavily in both editing Society publications and committing to field outings.

Accordingly, the Councils of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society have the greatest pleasure in awarding Dr Tony Leech the Sydney Long Memorial Medal for the year 2020.

2. Norfolk Wildlife Trust was established in 1926 and now manages over 60 nature reserves and other protected sites around the county including ten kilometres of coastline, nine Norfolk broads, nine National Nature Reserves and five ancient woodlands. We seek a sustainable environment for people and wildlife: where the future of wildlife is protected and enhanced through sympathetic management; and people are connected with and inspired by Norfolk's wildlife and wild spaces.

**[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk)**