

The Norfolk Natterjack



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*... Researching
Norfolk's Wildlife*

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Norfolk & Norwich
Naturalists' Society



Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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Cover image: *Wryneck at Wells, 23rd September 2018* (John Furse)

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Toad-in-the-hole....

What a summer we have had and as we enter the autumn the weather continues to be warm and even into October many butterflies were still on the wing.

Excursion reports for the summer are included in this edition and a number of interesting species have been recorded. There are also articles on the unusual and the unexpected from around the county and my thanks to all contributors.

Here's looking forward to next year as it will be the 150th Anniversary of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society and it will be marked by a series of events, which will include a special '*Transactions*' - see page 14 for details. Happy New Year and a 150th birthday celebration to all of the N&NNS membership.

FF

More on Common Broomrape in the Rosary Cemetery

Roger Jones

Natterjack 139 (November 2017) contains some observations I had made of apparently unusual host plants for Common Broomrape (*orobanche minor*) in The Rosary cemetery in Norwich. I revisited the location this summer to see what was there. In the same patch of winter heliotrope there were several spikes of Common Broomrape. These were fewer in number and they were smaller - I put this down to the drought. There was nothing in the ivy on the top of the wall where broomrapes were observed in the previous two years.

What I was not prepared for was a small spike of broomrape growing out of a gap in the brickwork of an old brick wall (see photo). It was about 20 yards horizontally from last year's main patch and 12 courses of brick up from the ground. There is apparently no other plant growing in the face of the wall. No seed could have fallen into the gap and it seems unlikely that it got blown there.

So, what was the host? What's "round the back"? I cannot get to the other side of the wall - it's on private land - but it was easy to spot from afar. The answer was ivy which almost leads me back to where my observations started last year. The wall is old (it bears the date 1873) but is in good condition and is two courses of brick thick. For the avoidance of doubt, it is not the same wall on which I saw broomrapes growing on ivy last year. I suppose it is possible that an ivy root goes deep into the wall. What is the chance of a broomrape seed landing exactly where there is a potential host in a very obscure place?



Common Broomrape on wall in
Rosary Cemetery
Image: *Roger Jones*

A Tale of two Lilies

Cornel Howells

Two members of the Lily family are prospering in ostensibly unsuitable conditions on our heaths. Lilies tend to be associated with moist semi- shaded conditions but the Lily- of- the- Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) on Buxton Heath is present in three swathes, of which two are on the driest and most exposed part of the heath. Similarly the May Lily on Salthouse Heath is doing well in one large patch on parched ground amongst young pines, birch and bracken. These two plants, elegant in appearance but tough as old boots, have very different stories to tell.

Lily- of- the- Valley, with its exquisite scent and delicate nodding white bell flowers, has had a long association with the major passages in life, notably romance and marriage and funereal wreathes. Following a chance encounter with an elderly dog walker on the heath I discovered that its lily had indeed been exploited for these purposes in the past by local inhabitants. The lady, as so often happens when you stop to remark on the fine weather and how well the heath was looking, had been long acquainted with its flora. Of the Lily- of- the- Valley she told me that everyone of a certain vintage could remember cutting the flowers as children which were then transported by steam train to the town. Norwich? I asked. No London she replied!



Lily-of-the-Valley Image: *Cornel Howells*



May Lily Image: *Cornel Howells*

How the May Lily (*Maianthemum bifolium*) arrived on that out of the way spot on Salthouse Heath is something of a mystery. Its status as a native plant is of course in question. It could have been on the roots of imported trees or it might have been introduced by someone with time on their hands. The other known Norfolk site of Swanton Novers and the handful of sites in Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire would seem to have better credentials for being native, but I gather there is now some doubt as to whether it is still to be found at the

former site.

Whilst someone may be able to confirm the antecedents of the May Lily, the cultural history of Lily- of- the- Valley seemed to me destined, like so much of our plant lore, to fade from memory. But then I recalled digitalisation, such as that undertaken by our own Society. If I can read Mr West's account of Norfolk Heaths in 1910 why should someone not read this in another hundred years?

A later visit to Buxton Heath, holding up well under the scorching July sun, revealed a scattering of the bright blue blooms of the scarce Marsh Gentian (*Gentianella amarella*) and the less impressive but intriguing flowers of the Round-leaved Sundew (*Dorsera rotundifolia*). There was no evidence of the Silver-studded Blue butterfly but a Turtle Dove was purring in the adjacent woodland.

A Gall

Derek Leak

While visiting Upon Fen last July I came across a large growth on a Creeping Thistle. It looked gall-like and I was later informed that it is a Thistle Gall and that it was made by a small picture-winged fly, *Urophora cardui*.



Picture-winged Fly (*Urophora cardui*)
Thistle Gall on Creeping Thistle

Image: *Francis Farrow*
Image: *Derek Leak*

Some Observations on Forget-me-not Shieldbug (*Sehirus luctuosus*) in Norwich.

Vanna Bartlett.

The Forget-me-not Shieldbug (*Sehirus luctuosus*) is one of the so-called Burrowing Shieldbugs in the family Cydnidae. It is relatively large and all black except for pale brownish wings. It feeds on Forget-me-nots (*Myosotis* sp.) and is also associated with Green Alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*), both members of the family Boraginaceae. It is probably under-recorded as it tends to stay out of sight around the base of its food plant.

I saw my first Forget-me-not Shieldbug on 4th May 2018 when my husband Jeremy was removing some Forget-me-not plants in our garden that had finished flowering. As he pulled up a plant, he disturbed a large black Shieldbug with brownish wings. We had previously found the much smaller Bordered Shieldbug on our Allotment so he knew straight away that it was a different species. After photographing the bug, it was put back in the garden in another clump of Forget-me-nots.

A few days later on 9th May at 2.30pm I was walking home along Unthank Road then turned into Park Lane when I found two Forget-me-not Shieldbugs. They were on the pavement at the base of a long flint and brick wall that was topped by a steep bank overgrown with Alexanders (*Smyrnium olusatrum*) and Green Alkanet. I picked them up so that they wouldn't get trodden on and placed them amongst the plants above the wall. Two days later (11th May) I was walking the same route and this time found a single Forget-me-not Shieldbug.



Forget-me-not Shieldbug found in the garden
Image: Vanna Bartlett

The following day (12th May 2018) was hot and sunny. As I headed along Park Lane again at 10.40 am I didn't see any Shieldbugs. I came back the same route at 11.15 am when it was a lot hotter and I immediately saw a couple of Shieldbugs. As I walked along I spotted more including several dead ones which I collected and, looking ahead, I realised that the pavement was crawling with them. I went back to the start of the wall and counted as I walked slowly along - 34 live ones and a handful of dead. They were all on the pavement at the base of the wall with quite a few crawling up the bottom of the wall. There were none at all at the top of the wall or amongst the Green Alkanet and other vegetation above.



Some of the dead shieldbugs picked up on Park Lane, Norwich
Image: *Vanna Bartlett*

I observed several going in and out of cracks in the wall in the mortar. The wall is south facing and in a very sunny position. It occurred to me that the Shieldbugs had maybe over-wintered within the crevices in the wall and that the last few warm days had woken them up and today's conditions were perfect for a mass emergence. The vegetation on top of the wall is cut down later in the year so there is limited protection for over-wintering there, which is where I would have expected them to be.

On 8th July 2018 we were just leaving a friend's house on Earlham Road around 6.00pm when I noticed a large dark shieldbug moving awkwardly along the

ground just outside the front door - another Forget-me-not Shieldbug. We crouched down for a better look and also to take some photos. It was moving very oddly with its rear end pointing upwards and proceeding along rather jerkily. It appeared to have something stuck underneath it.

Wondering if it had a parasite, I picked it up and turned it over, at which point the Shieldbug emitted a high pitched squeaking or clicking noise, only audible if you held it close to your ear. The thing underneath it was small, roundish and dark, and looked like a hard lump of soil. It seemed to be stuck to the middle leg. Jeremy succeeded in prising it off and discovered that it was a seed of Green Alkanet, which was growing a couple of feet away.

I put the Shieldbug back on the ground while we examined the seed. The bug moved round in circles, seemingly in distress. We put the seed down next to it and it promptly grasped it with its middle legs and proceeded on its

ungainly way, dragging the seed along underneath it, much in the manner of a dung beetle with dung. I don't know whether the Shieldbug was taking the seed off to cache for later or simply moving it into cover so it could eat it undisturbed. Either way, it was interesting to observe and the Shieldbug's behaviour would potentially aid in seed dispersal if the seed didn't get eaten.



Forget-me-not Shieldbug carrying Green Alkanet seed
Image: *Vanna Bartlett*

As of mid August, the vegetated bank above the wall on Park Lane is completely covered with a lush growth of suckering Elms. Whether these will be cut down later in the year or not as has previously happened with the Alexanders and Green Alkanet remains to be seen. If they aren't, it could impact on the amount of Green Alkanet in later years and therefore the number of shieldbugs.

Another significant ant record for Norfolk

Doreen Wells

The rare parasitic ant *Myrmica hirsuta* (Elmes 1978) was identified from pitfall traps laid on STANTA (Stanford Training Area) in September 2017 by Robert Hawkes, who is carrying out research for a PhD with the School of Environmental Sciences at UEA. Being such a rare ant, second opinions were sought from Phil Attewell and Alex Radchenko. It was in the course of getting this ID confirmed that we learned of the death of the internationally renowned *Myrmica* specialist Graham Elmes, who sadly passed away on Christmas Eve, 2017.

Myrmica hirsuta was first described as a new species from Dorset in 1978 by Graham Elmes, who recorded it from 2 or 3 localities there. However, apart from recording this parasitic queen from Norfolk, only one other record has been recorded outside the Dorset locations and that is from Wales. It is known to be a parasite of the host ant species *Myrmica sabuleti* and it is mostly, but not completely, workerless.

As you can see from the photographs, this ant queen lives up to its name; parasitic ants are typically very hairy.



The 'new to Norfolk' parasitic ant *Myrmica hirsuta*
Images: *Phil Attewell*

The Zigzag Elm Sawfly

Andy Musgrove

In 2017 I took on the role of county recorder for sawflies. These are, it is fair to say, a fairly obscure and often overlooked group of insects and our knowledge of the status of most species in the county is poor. However, shortly after taking on this role, a new and interesting species has appeared which Norfolk naturalists should be in a good position to help monitor.

The species in question is *Aproceros leucopoda*, which also goes by the English name of the Zigzag Elm Sawfly. It is an East Asian species known initially from Japan and China, but has appeared in Europe since 2003, perhaps arriving here with imported trees. I first became aware of its existence in June 2018 when Steve Lane alerted me to some that he'd found near Cambridge (although it has subsequently been confirmed to have been present in 2017 in Surrey and Suffolk).

Steve's find was of several adult insects (mostly black with pale legs, about 6 mm long), but in fact the species is far easier to detect from its larval feeding signs. After hatching the larvae (which look like tiny green caterpillars) feed on the leaves of elms *Ulmus*, cutting out a distinctive zigzag shape as they proceed. This is quite easy to see with the naked eye and so it should be possible for all Norfolk naturalists to look out for the species as it colonises the county. There are not really any potential sources of confusion, although note that the damage is through the full depth of the leaf. Whilst searching for this



Distinctive zig-zag shape made by a feeding larvae of the sawfly *Aproceros leucopoda*
Images: *Andy Musgrove*

species you might also come across leaf-mines (i.e. patterns within the thickness of the leaf) of several micro-moths (*Stigmella lemniscella*, *S. ulmivora*, *S. viscerella* and *Lyonetia clerkella* would all be candidates). After the alert was raised (in particular through the use of social media), a number of interested naturalists starting looking for the ZigZag Elm Sawfly in Norfolk. The first county report was by Andy Brown from Holme on 17th June 2018, with further reports coming in rapidly from Thetford, Norwich, Strumpshaw, Attleborough, North Creake and more. In my home village of Shotesham I first detected the species on 14th July, since when I have found it to be very widespread on elms around the parish. Interestingly, whilst one might normally expect a newly colonising non-native species to appear initially clustered along roads, I have found that *Aproceros* is already present in remote corners of fields and isolated patches of trees. In fact, I've pretty much found it wherever I've looked. One really has to wonder how long it has been in the UK, undetected.

Despite the ravages of the infamous Dutch Elm Disease of the 1970s leading to the loss of almost all mature elm trees in Britain, elms are still very common as hedgerow shrubs and suckers. Elms can readily be identified by their asymmetric leaf-bases (deciding on the precise species of elm is considerably more challenging, although it's not yet clear whether this worries the sawfly all that much). I would ask Norfolk's naturalists to look out for the feeding damage (you might see the little larvae too if you look closely) and send me details of dates and places (grid references please) - see front pages of Natterjack for contact details. I suspect it will be present in 2019 right across the county; an amazing rate of spread for a new arrival.



A Possible First?

John Furse

A male Willow Emerald Damselfly (*Lestes viridis*) turned up at Gramborough Hill, Salthouse on 17 September, 2018.

I believe this may be the first recorded occurrence on the hill for this species, which first appeared in Norfolk in 2009.

Willow Emerald (male)
Image: *John Furse*

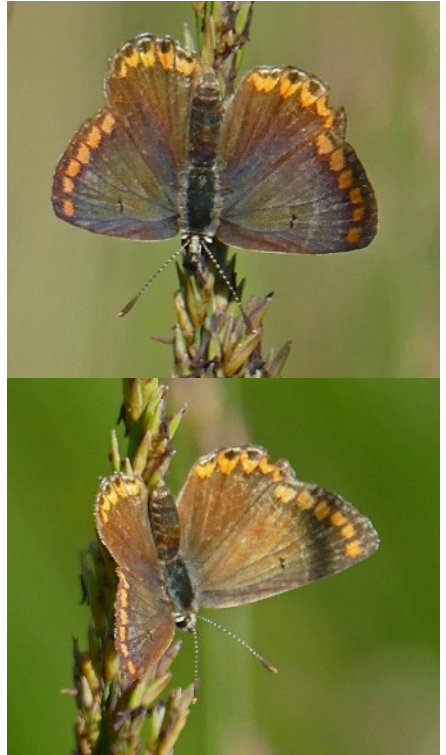
A Trick of the Light

Francis Farrow

I have often thought Brown Argus when I have first seen a female Common Blue but on 2nd September, 2018 on Sheringham Common I thought I was seeing things with a female Brown Argus looking very similar to the blue form of a Common Blue female. I think it is a worn individual and the light was playing tricks. The fact that the orange sub-marginal spots go to the wing tip and show no fading is proof that it is a Brown Argus female and the second picture taken at a different angle shows more typical colouration so it follows that the direction / angle of light was causing the blue effect. I mentioned this in conversation with Dr. Bernard Watts at a Butterfly Conservation meeting and apparently it is a blue sheen (described as similar to the sheen on steel) and he confirmed that the 'blueness' is only visible in certain light conditions and when viewed at a particular angle. This would explain why the 'blue' disappeared when I moved my line of sight. Normally it is noticed on very dark fresh individuals. I have consulted a range of books but can find no account of the phenomenon, however, I did see it mentioned on the website - UK Butterflies.

Brown Argus exhibiting a 'blue sheen' (Top) which disappears when viewed from a different angle (Bottom)

Images: *Francis Farrow*



Mystery Bird?

John Furse was on Gramborough Hill, Salthouse in early September. After getting some great shots of this particular bird in the early morning sunlight it turned its head in an owl-like manor and was caught 'on camera' creating the picture opposite.

If you think you know what the bird is you can check at the bottom of page 22 to see if you are correct.

If you have an image of any species from Norfolk's natural world that would make a mystery pic then please send to the Editor.

Nature Notes

Vince Matthews

1. Wild Bees nest.

A wild bees (*Apis mellifera*) nest was found on 4th March 2017 in an Alder tree beside the Little Ouse at Santon Downham. A visit this year, however, seems to suggest that the bees have moved on.



Wild Bees at Santon Downham

Images: Vince Matthews

2. Sea Aster Mining Bees and parasites at Holme Dunes.

While up at the coast at Holme Dunes (24th September 2018) Joan and I came across 20 to 30 bees flying around and going into multiple holes in a grey sand dune topped with grass located above the high water level. The Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*) in the adjacent salt marsh was in full flower and some of the bees returned loaded with the bright yellow pollen. There were also several flies that were tracking the bees as they approached their burrows and they sometimes followed them in, or went in when the bee was away.



Parasitic fly tracking Sea Aster Bee at Holme

The bees are (*Colletes halophilus*) and the parasitic fly is believed to be *Miltogramma punctata*.



Sea Aster Mining Bee and *Miltogramma punctata* (?)

Images: Vince Matthews

This is one of a group of flies are known as ‘Shadow Flies’ and they are cleptoparasites. The flies enter the burrows of the mining bees and lay their eggs on the pollen store. When the larvae hatch they consume the food store intended for the host bee larva.

3. Moorhens vs Stoat at Thornham

Joan and I were watching a family of Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) in a roadside pond on the village green. This consisted of two adults, a juvenile and three chicks. Suddenly we noticed a Stoat (*Mustela erminea*), about ten feet away, run across the road in the direction of the pond apparently heading for the moorhens. The adults and juvenile immediately responded by facing up to it and moving towards the Stoat which by then had moved into pond-side vegetation. The Moorhens followed it in and after a few minutes so did the chicks. It was not possible to see what was happening but after sometime, all the Moorhens emerged unscathed and calm and there was no sign of the Stoat.



Stoat

SOME LATE SUMMER ADVENTURES

Tony Howes

Its always a pleasure to have a trip up to Cley, there is always something of interest to see and photograph, birds aplenty, with the chance of something unusual turning up.

A recent outing there proved fruitful, good numbers of Black-tailed Godwits were feeding out front of the hide, then a Marsh Harrier came over and the godwits rose en masse, circled a couple of times before landing again, giving the chance of a flying shot as they banked round. Beautiful birds, very elegant.



Black-tailed Godwits unsettled by passing Marsh Harrier at Cley Image: *Tony Howes*



Spoonbill 'freshening' up after flying in Image: *Tony Howes*

Later in the morning three Spoonbills flew in from the West, they were not interested in feeding, just a little walkabout and some preening, they are such strange looking creatures, I find myself marvelling at Evolution, how certain water birds for example vary, the Spoonbill and Avocet use the same method of

feeding, yet the shape and size of their bills is so different.

I also had the company of a Green Sandpiper during the day, these little waders are a great favourite of mine, I first became aware of them many years ago while walking the marshes at Postwick, every so often a small black and white bird would rise up from the edge of a dyke and fly off with a very distinct call. Once I had got to know them I looked forward to seeing them there.



Green Sandpiper

Image: *Tony Howes*

Strumpshaw Fen is only a few miles from home, so I often pop down to see what's about, it's ideal if I only have an hour or so, a short time ago while watching from the Fen hide a half grown Chinese Water Deer fawn went galloping across the shallow open water out front, first from left to right, then in reverse, almost as if it were putting on a show for the photographers present, water and mud flying in all directions, and the light was good, made my day.



A young Chinese Water Deer at Strumpshaw

Image: *Tony Howes*

Up at Tower hide several Snipe were feeding in the near margin, always secretive and reluctant to show themselves well, it was a case of waiting until they got into a suitable position.



Common Snipe in front of the Tower Hide, Strumpshaw Image: *Tony Howes*



Humming-bird Hawkmoth Image: *Tony Howes*

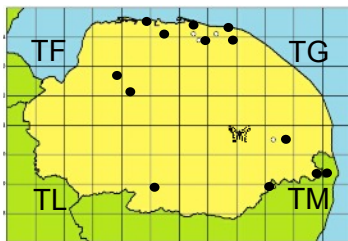
peacocks was the object of my desire, whirring away as it visited the flowers one by one, it was not easy, but eventually I got it in just the right place. Mission accomplished.

One other notable trip recently was over the border into Suffolk, Minsmere is another reliable reserve, so many different habitats to explore, I had enjoyed a walk all round during the day, then on leaving I had a last look round the buddleia bushes near Reception, as a humming bird hawk moth had been seen there earlier in the day, this is an insect that has for many years eluded me despite much looking, and there, among the red admirals, painted ladies, and

Article Request for 150th Year Transactions



The Society's 150th anniversary year is almost upon us. In 2019 our institution will be celebrating a century and a half since it's inauguration. As part of the celebrations for this landmark we would like to make the issue of '*Transactions*' next year a special one. Please email your contributions to the editor, Nick Owens (owensnw7@gmail.com)



EARSHAM WETLAND CENTRE

15th July, 2018

Many members will have known previously this site of over 26 acres by the River Waveney, when formerly dedicated to Phillip Wayre's Otter Trust before closing in 2006, but which has been reopened and is being reinvigorated as a wildlife centre and heritage farm, with new tea room, shop and other facilities. There is now free public access within opening hours to the three-quarter mile riverside walk and our party, kindly accompanied by trustee Ben Potterton, enjoyed the additional pleasure of a walk around the Carp Lake with its large fish of that species, pike - and otters, but currently closed to the public while conservation improvements are carried out. As we were lucky enough to have Pam Taylor as our leader, the main objects of attention were the dragonflies and damselflies flying above and alongside these bodies of water, though there were also many other insects plus birds, plants and other kinds of wildlife to enjoy. Despite the intense heat wave coinciding that day with the Wimbledon men's tennis and World Cup football finals, some dozen or so members had gathered for this morning walk.

We saw 12 species of Odonata in all. In the order I happened to note them they were: Common Blue, Small Red-eyed, Blue-tailed, Willow Emerald and Azure Damselflies and any number of Banded Demoiselles. The dragonfly list



Banded Demoiselles - males

Image: *Hans Watson*



Small Red-eyed Damselfly and Ruddy Darter



Images: Hans Watson

Brown Hawker, Four-spotted Chaser, Norfolk Hawker, Ruddy Darter, Emperor and Common Darter. Pam reports that a second walk she took after lunch also yielded 12 species, but a couple of Black-tailed Skimmers replaced the Four-spotted Chaser. She provided us with much information on the various species as we progressed - as an example, the fact that male Banded Demoiselles like to touch down on little patches of of rougher water to impress the females with their *machismo* and hence suitability as mates - and she deftly netted individuals of various species to use to pass on identification hints: what differentiates the Willow Emerald (rapidly colonising Norfolk) from the Emerald Damselfly, for instance, and the fact that the Common Blue is not strictly a 'real' damselfly, having eyes that are round rather than pear-shaped as with other Blues. We also saw the colour-form of Blue-tailed damselfly featuring a shiny brown rather than blue tip. Butterflies seen included Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral and Comma.



Image: Hans Watson

Members on NNNS field meetings with a general natural history interest do indeed commonly benefit from there being usually specialised experts in the party. Graham Moates for instance pointed out the leaf-mine *Aulagromyza tremulae*, largely overlooked as it occurs only on the lower leaf surface of aspen and poplar, and Robert Maidstone told us of the midge gall *Rhabdophaga salicis*, found on willows.

Nesting boxes and platforms have been provided at Earsham for Barn Owls and Kestrels, and birds seen included Barnacle Geese, Little Egret and both Common and Green Sandpiper. As regards the abundant flora, it is difficult to decide which to select for mention here, but perhaps a small sample will indicate that most of the species typical of waterside and aquatic habitats were present: Purple Loosestrife, Hemp Agrimony, Water Mint, Yellow Water-lily, Branched Bur-reed and Water Forgetmenot.

After our walk, Ben outlined something of the history of the site and developments already achieved, underway or planned, and a number of members took advantage of the refreshments on offer at the tearoom. Many thanks to Pam for arranging and leading a most rewarding visit and to Hans Watson for his excellent species photographs.

Stephen Martin

WARHAM CAMP HILL FORT

Sunday July 29th

Well after six glorious sun-filled weeks the weather returned to 'normal' as three intrepid members (Tim Doncaster, Hans Watson and Francis Farrow) met at Warham Camp. The day had been planned to look at the Chalkhill Blues, the chalk-loving plants and other insects of the area, however, with near gale-force winds and threatening rain clouds no self-respecting insect was going to put its head up over the iron-age fort ramparts. In fact everything was hunkered down in the grass and as we walked along the base of the inner ditch at the fort a number of Chalkhill Blues were disturbed, as well as Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers and a single Painted Lady. A few *Eristalis* and *Helophilus* hoverflies were also disturbed during our walk. At one point Tim



Chalkhill Blue Image: Francis Farrow

kneled down and spotted a small micro-moth, which turned out to be the rare Coppery Longhorn (*Nemophora cupriacella*), a species that I had hoped to see. The moth is considered parthenogenetic as the male is apparently unknown.



Coppery Longhorn
Image: Hans Watson



Stemless Thistle and Wild Parsnip Images: Hans Watson

Among the plants, thistles were showing well and Stemless, Creeping, Spear, Musk and Carlina were all seen as well as Small Scabious, Harebell, and a large stand of Wild Parsnip. While at the fort a Cormorant flew over and in the entrance track Speckled Wood and Red Admiral butterflies were noted. With rain starting it was decided to call it a day and although the duration of the visit was short we all agreed that we had had a very interesting meeting.

HOLKHAM NNR

16th September 2018

This field meeting, on a breezy but pleasantly sunny and warm mid-September Sunday, comprised a walk from that part of Holkham National Nature Reserve beginning at the northern end of Lady Ann's Drive westwards along the track that runs between the coastal belt of pines and the Holkham Estate grazing marshes towards the open dunes and ultimately Gun Hill. The dozen-or-so members were met by our leader, warden Andy Bloomfield, who kindly distributed complimentary parking permits, as a Red Kite circled over the adjacent grazing marshes.

Holkham NNR, 11-miles in extent and England's largest nature reserve, is well known to most members and comprises some 4000 hectares of rich and varied habitats including grazing marsh, salt marsh, woodland, sand dunes and foreshore. It was created in 1967 and in time was designated part of the larger North Norfolk Coast SSSR. Formerly managed jointly by Natural England and the Holkham Estate, the latter has mainly taken over these responsibilities.

We began our walk with the long shelter belt of pines to our right which was planted on a stretch of dunes in the mid-to-late nineteenth century to protect Estate farmland from wind-blown sand. Though these were mainly Corsican Pine, some Scots Pine and evergreen Holm Oaks have also been planted and some mixed deciduous scrub developed on the landward side of the pines. Here we saw Speckled Wood butterflies and Oyster mushrooms, and soon came to a large pool immediately to our left, on which Widgeon, Mallard, Coot and Little Grebe were present. Derek Longe thought he might well have found oviposition scars of the Willow Emerald Damselfly, a recent colonist of south-east England, in the bark of an overhanging willow, but considered at the time of writing that this needed confirmation.

The Estate land to the south of the track up to the main A149 road is closed to the public, but we were allowed access on this occasion. A plant of Sea Spurrey near the gateway was a reminder that the former tidal saltmarshes here became low-lying grazing marshes in the nineteenth century with a series of embankments being constructed. This farmland was initially pasture for grazing sheep (now cattle) though during the Second World War some was ploughed for arable, which has since been reverted. Andy led us to another large but more secluded pool undisturbed by passing walkers where Dunlin, Snipe, Ruff (3), Wood-, Green- (3), and Curlew Sandpiper were seen. Other birds aloft on this section of the walk were two Buzzards, Marsh Harrier, Cormorant, Great White Egret, House Martin and Kestrel, and we saw Migrant Hawker, Common Darter and Small Copper.



Migrant Hawker Image: Francis Farrow

Walking towards Meals House along the track to the rear of the pines, we paused at a fairly open sandy bank to look for Antlion (*Eurolean nostras*) pits, where Jim Froud duly found a pupa case. Andy observed that the species - the adult looking like a lacewing/damselfly/dragonfly cross (some 30mm long with a 70mm wingspan) and very rare in Britain - was first found at Wells in 2005, but can appear now anywhere in the Holkham district in suitable sands. It flies mainly at night except occasionally during warm sunny spells in September and October. Its only known British sites are Holkham NNR and the Dunwich/ Minsmere district of Suffolk. A little further on we examined more of the conical pitfall pits in the dry sandy floor of an open-fronted shed or outhouse, convenient for an insect that elsewhere often chooses to lay eggs on a site under a rock overhang or the like that gives protection from rain. The 'antlion' name comes from the fiercely predatory larval form which digs a conical pit and buries itself at the base save for little but its protruding jaws which seize ants or sometimes other small insects which fall in and cannot usually extricate themselves. There are other Antlion species elsewhere than Britain and it is said that the adult itself can also occasionally be captured and consumed by a larva as it seeks to oviposit in sand already containing occupied pits. The larvae eventually make cocoons of sand and spun silk before developing into flying adults. Andy managed to extricate temporarily a larva from its lair, which all admired, if that's the word! A plant of the rather prettier prostrate Dwarf Mallow grew nearby.



Clockwise: Examining the Ant-lion pits. / Andy attempting to entice an Ant-lion larva out. / An Ant-lion larva showing its fearsome jaws and the sand and spun silk cocoon found by Jim Froud.

Images: Derek Longe



Dwarf Mallow Image: *Francis Farrow*

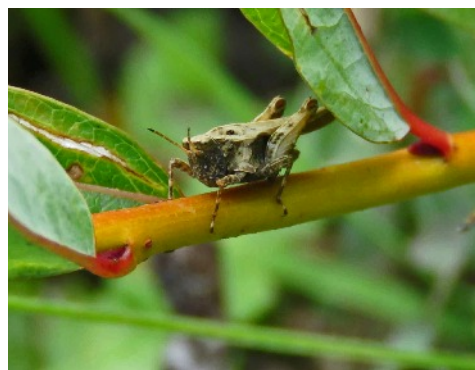


Tiny Earth-star Image: *Derek Longe*

Eventually we reached the point at which the belt of trees gives way to the open dunes, but not before occupying for lunch the slopes of a large, open and more-or-less grassy hollow among the pines which, studded pleasantly with Common Centaury, Ladies' Bedstraw, Mouse-ear Hawkweed and other dwarfed plants, afforded shelter from the breeze without eliminating the sun. Andy enabled us to pass through the gateway in the barbed wire fence into the area of old foreshore dune slacks where Natterjack Toads dwell and breed, some slacks holding water even after a dry summer, lying south of the newer dunes open to the public. Here were a plant or two plus a number of basal leaf rosettes of the rare Jersey Cudweed and there and thereabouts a variety of insects including Small White and Green-veined White, Red Admiral, Small Heath, Brown Argus and Common Blue Butterflies and Hairy or Sloe Shieldbug, Slender Groundhopper and Lesser Marsh Grasshopper.



Brown Argus and Small Heath
Image: *Francis Farrow*



Slender Groundhopper
Image: *Derek Longe*

After lunch the party crossed to the seaward side of the pines for the return to Holkham Gap and saw Treecreeper, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit and Swallow, as well as Wall Butterfly, Tiny Earth-star, Blue Fleabane and the basal rosettes of Creeping Lady's Tresses.

Many thanks to Holkham Estate, and to Andy for leading a most enjoyable walk and letting us benefit from his encyclopaedic knowledge of Holkham wildlife. Thanks also to Derek Longe and Francis Farrow for splendid photographs.

Stephen Martin

Norfolk & Suffolk Bryological Group Meetings 2018 - 2019

Beginners are always very welcome - the only equipment needed is a handlens (x10 or x20) and some paper packets (old envelopes are fine) for collecting specimens. Meetings begin at 10.30am and will only be cancelled if there is snow or hard frost. The Norfolk and Suffolk Bryological Group (a sub-group of the British Bryological Society) is an informal interest group with no formal status or legal identity. All attendees at the events set out in the annual programme participate in those events entirely at their own risk and no responsibility for any injury loss or damage shall lie against the organisers of the events. The distribution of the programme of events is not intended to and does not form any contract or any other legal relationship between the organisers and the participants.

Sunday 25 November 2018 - Saham Mere and Loch Neaton, Watton. Park at the Mere at TF 9013 0179. We will move to Loch Neaton (TF 917013) afterwards, plenty of nearby parking in Watton at TF 9174 0072.

Sunday 2 December 2018 - morning: meet at Wormegay church TF 673 120, and we can also walk down to the northern part of Shouldham Warren. Then at 1.30pm: Carrstone Quarry, Blackborough, home of King's Lynn Field Archery Group. At the southern end of Mill Drove (TF 6724 1428) turn east where there are two rough tracks - take the right hand one and follow the convoy.

Sunday 16 December 2018 - Houghen Plantation, part of Felthorpe Woods. This is an area of wet mixed acid woodland. Turn west at the crossroads at TG 1845 1754 and park in the car park at TG 181 175.

Saturday 5 January 2019 - morning visit to Brinton Grange NR24 2QH: if you approach the house from the centre of the village the house is on the left, BUT continue past Brinton Grange, drive to the next entrance on the left, take the left hand drive and enter a gravelled yard by their walled veg garden to park. In the afternoon we will go to Hunworth Common, parking at Hunworth Village Hall at TG 066 354. This is on King Street; from Hunworth Church head south towards the main village, and the hall is on your right just round the corner at TG 066 354.

Sunday 20 January 2019 - Somerleyton Estate, Suffolk. We will be visiting the eastern end of Fritton Decoy, which includes a large area of sphagnum, and the woods.

Saturday 2 February 2019 - Beeston Regis Common SSSI/SAC, Sheringham. Last visited by the group in 2002, this is a request visit to this famous site, with habitats including fen, scrub, bog, carr, as well as wet and dry grassland. Park in the lay-by at TG 1660 4257.

Sunday 17 February 2019 - Syderstone Common, north-west of Fakenham. Park at the junction of Tattersett Road and Mill Lane in off-road car park at Grid Ref TF 835 315. This is a busy spot for traffic so do not park along the road. Alternative parking along Mill Lane at TF 834 317 just south of the old mushroom farm at Mill Lane Farm and then walk through common to meet us.

Saturday 9 March 2019 - Joint meeting with Cambridge Bryological Group in Forestry Commission woods.

Saturday 24 March 2018 - Honeypot Wood SSSI, west of Dereham, TF 932 143.

British Bryological Society Recorders:

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crs111@talktalk.net (West Norfolk)

Programme: Chris Roberts, 21 The Street, Burgh-next-Aylsham NR11 6TP. 01263 732772 chrisroberts_500@hotmail.com (please note the underscore before 500)
Mobile: 0788 7914047

For the incomplete entries (20 Jan, 9 March, 24 March), more details will be available once finalised. please contact Chris Roberts for more information if you are not on the mailing list.



Great Scented Liverwort

Image: Francis Farrow

Correction to Salthouse Heath Spring Gallery (Natterjack no 142, page 8)

Please note that the image captioned Red-belted Clearwing should have been captioned Large Red-belted Clearwing as I am sure you all knew as you would have picked up on the orange-red suffusion at the base of the forewings - Editor's mistake!

Mystery Bird? Answer: Reed Warbler



The next issue of ***The Norfolk Natterjack*** will be February 2019.

Please send
all articles / notes and photographic material
to the editor as soon as possible by
Jan 1st 2019 to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,
Norfolk, NR26 8QD. Email: francis.farrow@btinternet.com

All photographs / images are very welcome, especially to accompany an article or document a record, occasionally however, because of space limitations, preference may have to be given to Norfolk-based images, or to those subjects depicting interesting or unusual behaviour, or are less commonly (or rarely) seen in print.

Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1st April to 31st March. During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly *Natterjack* newsletter, and annual copies of the Transactions of the Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. A full summer programme of excursions and a winter programme of talks are also organised annually.

New memberships and renewals can be made by credit card or 'PayPal' by visiting the Society's website at www.nnns.org.uk

Alternatively a cheque payable to
'Norfolk & Norwich Naturalist's Society' can be sent to:

Jim Froud, The Membership Secretary, Westward Ho, 4 Kingsley Road,
Norwich NR1 3RB

Current rates are £20 for individual, family and group memberships
(£30 for individuals living overseas).

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