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The Norfolk Natterjack



The quarterly bulletin
of the
Norfolk & Norwich
Naturalists' Society



Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Founded 1869

Reg. Charity No. 291604

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Hon. Independent Examiner: M. Benstead

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Cover image: *Hawfinch* (Tony Howes) - See page 5

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Toad-in-the-hole....

With this edition of '*Natterjack*' a 2019-20 Programme Card is enclosed, which will show many of the events organised to celebrate the Society's 150th Anniversary. One of the more social events is Members Day at How Hill on 8th June. Part of this occasion is the chance to enjoy a buffet lunch, however, this part of the event is bookable and if you haven't done so already a handy booking form is reproduced on page 17.

My thanks to all contributors and again we have a varied selection of brilliant birds, smart-looking bees, industrious hornets and historical toads! Also check out the invitation to the Bodham Ponds bioblitz and the plans for a new NNNS library at Wheatfen. By the time you are reading this we may have lost the cold winds and enjoyed some spring warmth, if so I trust you have been out and about in the countryside recording Norfolk's wonderful nature. Please share your discoveries and send a note/picture to '*Natterjack*'

FF

The well-groomed bee

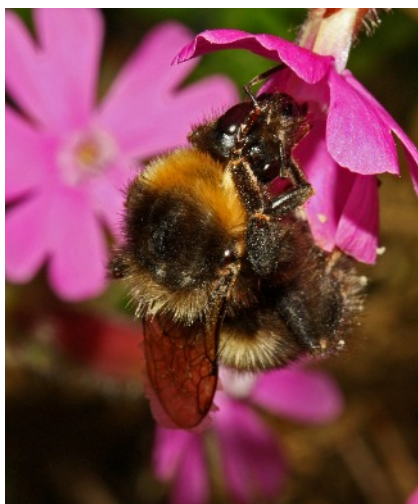
Nick Owens

The images below show the behaviour of a Garden Bumblebee queen in Wales, cleaning Foxglove pollen from its body, starting with its tongue while on the Foxglove, then transferring to a Red Campion flower to finish the job. She is able to reach all parts of her body using all her legs, sometimes using more than one leg at a time! Bees are the only insects with feathery hairs, which are used for collecting pollen. Female bees generally sweep the pollen into specialised pollen-collecting areas, usually on the hind legs and/or the underside of the body. Some pollen is unsuitable for feeding larvae or perhaps the bee has not yet established a nest and needs to clean itself.



Garden Bumblebee (Queen) cleaning foxglove pollen from its tongue

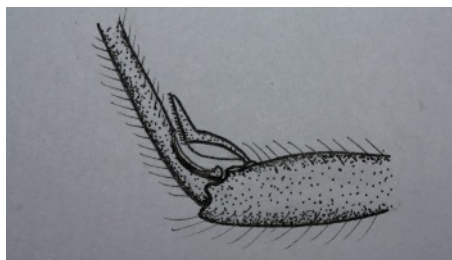
Images: *Nick Owens*



Garden Bumblebee (Queen) continuing cleaning pollen from its body using one or more of its legs at the same time!

Images: Nick Owens

The male Grey Patched Mining Bee, *Andrena nitida* opposite had been taking nectar from Lesser Celandines. It is cleaning its antenna using a groove on its first tarsus joint (centre of diagram). A spur on the base of the tibia extends over the groove. It differs from other spurs on the bee's legs in having a fringe of very fine bristles at the tip and a membranous flange beneath. This flange is matched by a similar flange on the back edge of the groove. By pulling the antenna between these two flanges, pollen and other debris can be scraped off. The antennae of male bees are essential for detecting the scent of virgin females. Females of each *Andrena* species are thought to have a distinctive chemical signal.



The cleaning groove in an *Andrena*'s front leg



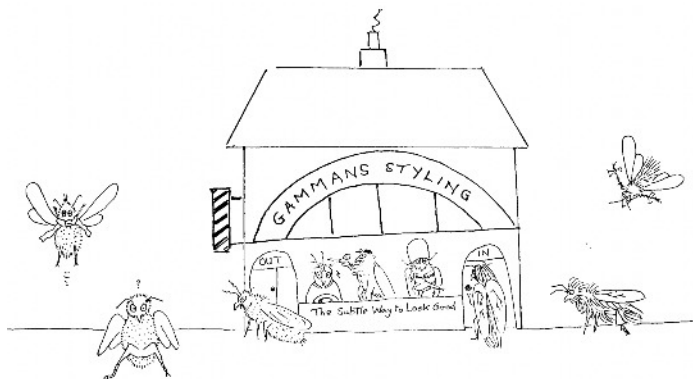
Male Grey Patched Mining Bee, *Andrena nitida* cleaning its antenna using a groove on its first tarsus joint (See diagram opposite).

Images: Nick Owens

Shampoo and Set for bees

Those who collect bees for identification sometimes find them in a messy state and in need of a wash and brush-up. Readers may find it useful to know that the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society handbook provides advice about how to do this, which involves soaking in a sequence of solvents for many hours, then using a hair dryer on maximum heat. The instructions point out that the air stream must be from the rear of the insect, ensuring that the hairs stand up, perhaps aided by a fine paint brush.

All this put me in mind of the way that bumblebees might respond to the re-introduction in Kent of the Short-haired Bumblebee *Bombus subterraneus* (known as SubT), a long-term project led by Nikki Gammans.



An Unusual Hornet Nest

Hans Watson

Every once in a while, I receive a phone call, text message or e-mail, telling me of a sighting, event or natural curiosity that may be of interest to me. So it was, in early March, that member Bill Hammond rang to tell me about an unusual Hornet nest in a wooden bird hide on his property, and invited me to go and see it. For most naturalists, the word 'unusual' is enough to trigger their attention and interest, and so I knew that I had to make time and go and see this nest for myself. I am extremely glad that I did go, for not only did I get to see the Hornet nest, but to see the remarkable wildlife area of ponds, reed-beds and wildflower meadows, that Bill has created on his farm. I consider this to be an excellent example of practical conservation.



Hornet's nest on the inside of the bird hide door, with Brenda Hammond

The Hornet nest was quite a large one, and built on the inside of the wooden door to the bird-hide. The Hornets, now of course, all gone, had gained access to the hide, through a small opening at the top of the door. There was evidence, that a woodpecker had also made an effort to gain access, by enlarging the small hole, although there was no apparent damage to the nest. I imagine that Hornets are quite capable of discouraging a woodpecker. Bill's wife, Brenda, made a very good job of removing the outer part of the nest, to expose the 6 tiers of cells, and although I have seen the interior of

several other nests, each one I see leaves me in awe of the skilful work of these insects. And all this, done in darkness.

I am very grateful to Bill and Brenda Hammond for their invitation and hospitality, and congratulate them on the wonderful wildlife area that they have created.

Hornet's nest (interior)



Images: *Hans Watson*

A NEW BIRD FOR MY CAMERA

Tony Howes

Recently a friend rang me up to say, "I have hawfinches coming into my garden, would you like to come over and have a go at them?" As I have only ever seen this rare and illusive bird a couple of times and then only at distance, I jumped at the chance, and went over the following day.

I toured round many different sites during the invasion last year searching for this almost mythical finch, but without finding any at all. Searching for them in churchyard yew tree's (they love the berries) proved unhelpful, there were reports from various places in the county, but I missed out each time, so I was beginning to think I wouldn't catch up with them at all.

At my friends a hide had already been set up, and a suitable feeding place arranged, all I had to do was get in, get the camera lined up and wait. - Blue tits came, as did greenfinches, a collared dove arrived in a flurry of wings, then a couple of great tits flew in for a few seeds. I took practice shots to check the camera settings were ok, as I was making final adjustments I heard the sound of wings as a bird flew in, on looking through the peep hole there was the object of my desire, a beautiful hawfinch, looking absolutely stunning. They have an air of authority about them, solid and chunky, and with gorgeous colouration, but the bill was what my eye was drawn to, very large and powerful, like a digger bucket.

Over the next few hours there were five more visits, at least three different birds were involved. I left feeling elated, hawfinches are enigmatic birds, genuinely scarce over most of the country, in front of the camera they are natural posers, staying put for several minutes at each visit, turning to give views from all angles. So it all came together in the end, with another notch on the camera lens.



Hawfinch

Image: *Tony Howes*



Hawfinch

Images: Tony Howes

SNAPSHOTS FROM SALTHOUSE

John Furse



Last November I spotted a Purple Sandpiper on the brackish pool at Gramborough Hill, Salthouse. One was seen there on four days earlier in the month.



The Lapland Bunting was one of at least three which were grounded quite close to brackish pool, around the same time as the Purple Sandpiper. The buntings regularly fly over in winter.



The Shorelark appeared sporadically at Gramborough Hill during November, but was far from tame. A dog-walker flushed it and I was lucky that my camera took this more than reasonable flight shot.

Images: *John Furse*

The Redshank was displaying and 'singing' from a post along the Beach Road, Salthouse, 18 March 2019 and the Oystercatcher I photographed at Salthouse Duck Pond 03 March 2019. It was ringed as a second year bird at Heacham in July 2005! This July, the bird will be FIFTEEN although the oldest known Oystercatcher that has been recorded was in the Netherlands and was at least 46 years old. It was also ringed as a second year bird in March 1972 on Texel. Oystercatchers rarely get older than 20 years.



Images: *John Furse*

RECOLLECTIONS CONCERNING THE LAST OF THE REEDHAM NATTERJACKS (*Epidalea calamita*)

Garth Coupland

*I see the beauty of creation in a toad's patterned skin,
And the secrets of the Universe its golden eye within.
Of green and dripping havens where Summer's frogs do dwell,
And of adventures seeking them this child does love to tell.*

This small poem I wrote for my girlfriend so that she might better understand me! In its sentiments I have not changed since the moment I turned over an ancient, mossy paving slab in the village of Reedham, Norfolk, when I was three years old. What I found beneath it had a profound effect upon me and changed my life forever.

In the Spring of 1953 Doctors Michael and Kirsteen Coupland and I, their eight week old son, arrived in Reedham from Sussex. Michael was to start in practice as the local GP and we lived in The Old Mill House, a large, Victorian home with a garden to match. Lawns, an orchard, flower beds, wonderful old sheds and greenhouses, mellow brick walls upon which grew pear trees rooted in the sandy soil and a view across the flat marshland all the way to Gt Yarmouth. The house sat on the site of a windmill which burned down earlier in the century. One might presume that the placing of the mill on top of the sandy bluff that was the former coast of the ancient Yare estuary before the draining of the marshes, was to catch the maximum wind. The fact that the village was clustered upon this sandy bluff, with the River Yare running below, is an essential part of this story.

Michael had a deep love of natural history. His mother, Phyllis, drew and exquisitely painted the flowers and butterflies of southern England and his interest was encouraged and nurtured by his preparatory school headmaster, Meston Batchelor, an outstanding naturalist. Michael had been sent off to board at the age of four. This and a boyhood and youth spent wandering the Sussex Downs was to become a legacy passed on to his grandchildren. So it is not surprising that Michael encouraged his little boy to take an interest in all the wonders of the Natural World. But I should return to that moment when I turned over the slab.



Swallowtail

Painting by Phyllis Coupland

This memory is incredibly vivid and desperately important to me. My father took me along a path that ran through an herbaceous border. The path was made of concrete slabs fashioned to look like old, flat stones. They were rough and moss encrusted and I distinctly remember liking their natural appearance. I suspect that he already knew what was under the slab but let me lift it. There, hunched up in a hole of its own making in the loose soil beneath was an animal. It was dry and warty and much the same colour as its surroundings but with a thin, yellow stripe down the centre of its back. I picked it up and it felt deliciously alive, soft and cold and its eyes were golden and shone from the fascinating, camouflaged head. I was informed that I had found a Natterjack. A Natterjack! What a perfect name for such a captivating creature! I remember feeling unbelievably excited by this find. There was something about this animal that I liked more than anything I had ever seen. I now recognise this as my aesthetic appreciation of and attraction to the anuran form. This being the reason or not, I was hooked, and from that moment until today I have loved frogs and toads and their habitats and travelled in many countries seeking their cold, wonderful company.



Natterjack - Winterton

Image: *Garth Coupland*

I left Reedham at age eight to live in Acle, some six miles away, and life was never as good again. In Reedham, Natterjacks, Grass Snakes and Viviparous Lizards filled my time and my imagination in what seems now to have been endless Summer days. What I didn't know was that I was enjoying the last of the Natterjacks of Reedham. My experience, married to what my father told me, leads me to believe that the colony became extinct in 1962 due to the ploughing of the breeding marshes for arable farming.

Natterjacks are a burrowing species of loose and sandy soils and so are often coastal and dune dwelling. To my knowledge the Reedham colony clung very closely to the sandy bluff, all that remained of the old coast, and did not venture beyond the village unless it was to breed. My father told me that the

little creatures would swim the River Yare to breed in the dykes on the marshes south of the river. I never experienced this but Mr Brown, the Reedham Postmaster, gave my father a black and white photograph that he had taken on those marshes of a male Natterjack calling at night. This photo, in a cheap, mint green, plastic frame, always had pride of place in my father's consulting room wherever he worked. Even today some of his patients remember it. I remember it as part of what defined my father and finding it recently in a box was a deeply emotional moment. The image and glass is held in place with medical, sticking plasters, no doubt put on by my father's healing hands! He died in 2011. In the photo the Natterjack straddles



Natterjack - Reedham circa mid-1950s
Image: Mr. Brown - Postmaster of Reedham

the ground in a manly stance amongst the grass stems and calls with his throat immensely distended. I used to find the image completely fascinating.

Natterjacks were the only toad I knew until, aged seven, I discovered Common Toads at a prep school chum's house in Mulbarton near Norwich. I never have seen a Common Toad in Reedham but have seen them breeding nearby at Acle and Hassingham in dykes on the marshes. It was as if the Natterjack was the only anuran to inhabit the sandy bluff as I never found a frog in the main village either. At Winterton on Sea, among the dunes, heaths and woods I have seen all three species together.

I remember that Natterjacks were quite easy to find if one knew where to look. I had three places that seemed productive: any suitable slabs in our garden, under Mr Brown's solid, cast iron doorstep at the back of the Post Office and another, much more magical place, particularly for a small natural historian - the 'pits'.

A visit to the 'pits' always started thus - "Garth, would you like to go hedgehog hunting?" My father's quite unnecessary question would always have my heart beating just that little bit quicker than normal. Between our house and the marshes the sandy bluff had been cut by 'the cut'. The cut contained the railway line that turned south to cross the river via the famous swing-bridge and then on across the marshes to Lowestoft. Running along the top of the high bank above and parallel with the line was a concrete, U-shaped ditch with four pits spaced along its length to capture any water that would

otherwise have eroded the sandy bank. From each pit a pipe went down to another pit by the side of the line with a similar concrete ditch. Animals would fall into the ditches and then hide and die in the pits so it became a regular

duty to save them. Hedgehogs were the main casualties and the damp earth at the bottom of the pits was full of their bones. Grass Snakes were also caught and were a most exciting find. Natterjacks would seemingly miserably burrow into the muck and await death or my saving hands after my father had lowered me down into the pits.

When around six or seven years old I sunk a ceramic basin into the ground as a pond and staked chicken wire around it with bamboo sticks. In this enclosure I kept Common Frogs and Natterjacks. One day, just as my great aunt Acky arrived from Glasgow to stay with us, a Grass Snake penetrated the security fence and devoured a Natterjack. It then couldn't get back through the wire due to the bulge of its meal so it was captured and placed in a pail to show Acky. She was horrified when the snake regurgitated the Natterjack in front of her. She never visited again!

When I found Common Toads at my friend's place I brought a large female home and kept her with some Natterjacks in one of our greenhouses where they roamed free among the tomato plants and the grape vine. On failing to find her one day I was informed that some people from the BBC had visited whilst I was at school and taken a Natterjack to make a film about witchcraft. They had actually taken my Common Toad by mistake. My father telephoned the well known naturalist presenter, Dick Bagnall-Oakley, only to learn that the mistake had been discovered but they'd filmed it anyway sitting in the lychgate of the attractive country church at Woodbastwick. I have never understood the injustice of not being allowed to see my toad on television and consequently never forgave my parents for this terrible sin! The television people met me outside school when they eventually returned my toad. She had lost a great deal of weight and I was horrified. They had also placed a 'lizard' for me in the box with her. My mother would delight in telling of the

utter disdain in my voice as I informed them that their lizard was a newt. I was paid one Guinea for the supply of the animal and it paid for the taxidermy of a Weasel that my father found dead on the road. The taxidermy was done by the famous Fred Ashton of Pettitts of Reedham.

A year after I left Reedham so did the Natterjacks. When about twelve years old I wrote to Dick Bagnall-Oakley to enquire if he knew of any other places where I might find Natterjacks and he wrote back telling me of the colony at Winterton on Sea. I regularly visited Winterton Dunes on a warm, early Summer night to sit by the ponds and watch and listen to the Natterjacks breeding. I feel that their numbers have declined terribly and steadily in the last fifteen years or so. The loudness and pulsating nature of the calling of a decent number of males would bring on a feeling of nausea after a while

which was most extraordinary.

Time and tide took my children and me on the emigrant's path to Queensland, Australia. After five years, in 2017, I returned to Norfolk but they remain.

Instead of Natterjacks I had the equally wonderfully named Pobblebonks and some 240 species of frog! Still in love with the anuran form since that first Natterjack, I started to paint pictures of Australian frog species. My daughter has an Australian degree in animal science, works with rescued Koalas and paints pictures of mammals and birds. My son is an astounding naturalist and skilled photographer of natural history. In 2015 I spent ten weeks travelling the American West in search of herpetological wonders and a European trip in 2016 saw me renewing old acquaintances, including Natterjacks on the Norfolk coast. When I find frogs and toads across the Globe each new species brings the same thrill to my spirit as that first Natterjack. The legacy of that single animal, my dear father, Meston Batchelor and my grandmother lives on in my children and me as we find, observe and admire the Natural World and recreate those moments of joy with our art.



Giant Barred Frogs *Mixophyes iteratus* (male left & female) - Australia's largest frog

Watercolour by Garth Coupland

Norfolk & Suffolk Bryological Group meeting to Beeston Common

Mary Ghullam

There was a very good turn out of 13 people on 2nd February, 2019 despite the possibility of snow showers and Francis Farrow led us round and imparted his expert knowledge of the site. The group had last visited the site in November 2002, although individual members have added some more recent records. We covered Sheringham Common North and Beeston Common North and South, recording into 2 tetrads. The highlights were 2 new 10k records - the tuberous *Bryum subapiculatum*, which Richard Fisk found on the ground near a group of willows and the liverwort *Cephalozia connivens*. Three patches of the very tiny liverwort, *Cololejeunea minutissima* with its typical perianths, was spotted on a willow. The oddest find was the alien liverwort *Lophocolea semiteres*, its male plants found growing on a large piece of foam in the woodland. It is often found along forestry tracks, possibly spread by machinery. Although we didn't manage to refind a number of specialist bryos, we recorded 69 different species over the sites and, according to my records from 2002, added a considerable number (17 in all, according to my records) of new species across the sites, including *Zygodon conoideus*, *Sphagnum capillifolium* spp. *capillifolium* and surprisingly *Radula complanata*, as well as the species mentioned above.



Julia Masson

NSBG members on the central mire,
Beeston Common



Mike Ball

Heath Star-moss
(*Campylopus introflexus*)



Julia Masson

Mary investigating Southern Crestwort
(*Lophocolea semiteres*), which is also
shown opposite



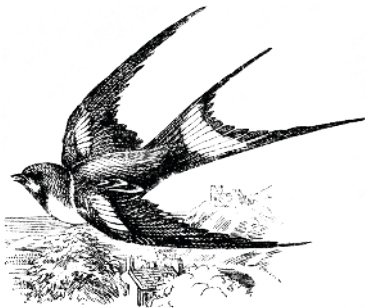
Francis Farrow

150 years ago - from the 'Transactions'

Volume 1 - 1869-74 Part VIII Miscellaneous Notes and Observations p.60

MORTALITY AMONGST SWALLOWS AND MARTINS.--The unusually low rate of temperature which prevailed towards the end of May, appears to have caused the death of a very considerable number of Swallows, Martins, and Swifts, throughout the county, the particulars of which have reached me from various quarters. Most of them appear to have been found dead on Saturday, the 29th of May, having been seen for two or three days previously in a very feeble and emaciated state. Hundreds appear to have died about this time throughout the county. Indirectly the extreme and unseasonable cold, was, no doubt, the cause, but on examining the register kept in the rooms of the Literary Institution in this city, I find that between the 24th and 29th of May, the temperature varied at night between 48 and 40 degrees, the lowest being on the Saturday, at which time the chief portion of the birds had perished. I therefore attribute their death rather to hunger than cold ; since the absence of sun deprived them of their usual insect diet, and when thus enfeebled the cold had a far greater effect upon their vital powers. I examined several and in all cases found them only skin and bone, their breast-bones being painfully sharp, and showing plainly the amount of their privations. Swallows and House Martins evidently suffered most, and Sand Martins in a somewhat less degree, being essentially a water-side species. Swifts were also picked up, but these birds, later breeders than the rest, I imagine must have betaken themselves southward to avoid a like fate.

On the 27th of May, a gentleman driving from Bridgham to Harling, found the parapet of the bridge over the Thet lined with Swallows and Martins, which did not attempt to fly away. Some sat in the road and scarcely troubled themselves to stir *as* he approached. On the morning of the 29th, Mr. Solly, a butcher, in passing over the same bridge, literally drove over a group or two of these poor birds, which he, of course, imagined would rise on his approach, but on descending from his cart found them too feeble to fly, and many of them dead. They sat in clusters of four or five, with their heads inwards and huddled together for warmth. They had collected on the south side of the bridge, protected from the north and east by a small plantation, and of course whilst able to seek their food had frequented the water's side. At West Harling, Mr. J. Ringer bad several picked up dead in his paddock on the 29th, and one in a chicken's coop ; whilst for a day or two before his men observed them flying into the cattle sheds and stables for shelter whenever a door was left open, tamed to a most pitiable extent, by their want of food. From Yarmouth and Lynn the same accounts were received and at the same time, between the 27th and 29th Mr. Cole, a bird-stuffier in Norwich, had upwards of sixty birds, chiefly Swallows and Martins, with a few Swifts, brought in dead, or dying, by boys, for sale. One man brought in twenty, all picked up in the vicinity of this city. Mr. Crompton ascertained that at Haveringland as many as seventy were picked up dead under the cattle sheds, apparently almost all the birds of the Swallow tribe in that neighbourhood, and similar reports have appeared in our local journals from many other localities.



Swallow - Clipart courtesy FCIT

In Suffolk, the same mortality was noticed, and Mr. T. E. Wilkinson, of Rickingham, in a letter to the "Times" of June 4th, says :—"Dozens of Swallows and Martins were found lying dead in this neighbourhood on Sunday last, May 30th, after a severe hoar frost." A similar occurrence is recorded in 1816 by Messrs. Sheppard and Whitear in their "Catalogue of Norfolk and Suffolk Birds." At that time, as late as the 4th and 5th of June, hundreds of these birds were picked up at Christ Church, Ipswich, which had collected in knots, and sat on the grass in parcels of thirty and forty. The same summer many

House Martins were found dead in Norfolk, and some were so weak that the cats sprang upon and killed them as they flew near the ground.—*Henry Stevenson.*

Norfolk Festival of Nature

The Festival Debate: The Future of Nature

Francis Farrow

The evening meeting was chaired by Patrick Barkham (Guardian writer, author and past-president of NNNS) and held at the Forum, Norwich on 13th April 2019. Before the debate started we were delighted to listen to an informal conversation between Patrick and 'Wilding' author Isabella Tree. Isabella as well as being an accomplished author of travel books embarked on a project with her husband, Charlie Burrell to turn the failing 3500 acre farmed Knepp Estate in Sussex into a profitable farm in a wildlife friendly landscape within 25 years. With tractors and ploughs sold the Old English Longhorn Cattle, Exmoor Ponies, Tamworth Pigs and deer took over driving the landscape and developed the most fantastic area for wildlife. From this basis of success the panel for the debate consisting of Henry Cator (Farmer and Water Resources East representative), Pamela Abbott (Chief Executive NWT) and Jake Feinnes (Holkham Estates Conservation Director) joined Isabella and Patrick. The topic was the future of nature and covered introduced species, soil, chemicals in farming, subsidies, water conservation, climate change and re-wilding. It was a positive debate and the general consensus was that agriculture will change but it has to be done with respect for the farmers and incentives will be required. It should not be a 'carrot and stick' approach. One statistic stays in the mind - most UK arable farmland has only 60 harvests left and in some areas only 15 before the soil is truly exhausted. We need a return to more traditional farming practices or as it is expressed nowadays 'Regenerative Agriculture' to protect the soil and to bring back wildlife. It will also help with climate change as a healthy soil biota facilitates carbon sequestration. Knepp has shown us one positive way forward on a landscape scale but smaller areas such as gardens can all help with benefiting nature, especially if allowed to be a little wild in places and chemical free.



How Hill Reminder

The society will be celebrating our 150th anniversary at How Hill on Saturday 8th June between 10-4 and would love you to join us. For full details please see the advert in the previous edition of Natterjack, but as a reminder there will be a buffet lunch available for the first 60 respondents (to book a place see details in the previous Natterjack or if you would prefer to pay by cheque then complete and return the booking form with this article).

You do not have to have the buffet to attend - there is space in the garden for those wishing to bring their own food and it will be a chance to meet other members and join a guided walk around the gardens or nature reserve. We will also be displaying photographs submitted by members - our favourite in each of four categories [1) Swallowtail butterfly, 2) A wildlife portrait, 3) Wildlife in a Norfolk habitat and 4) Pictures showing a key ID feature of a species] will be reproduced in the 150th anniversary edition of Transactions, the society journal.

We hope to see you then!



MEMBERS' CELEBRATION DAY AT HOW HILL ON SATURDAY 8TH JUNE 2019

I would like _____ tickets for the Members' Lunch at £15 each

Name

Address

Phone No:

Email:

Please tick
your choice

☐ I enclose a cheque payable to Norfolk & Norwich Naturalist's Society

☐ I will pay using Sort Code: **20-62-53** Account No: **60662860**
Barclays Bank plc, 5/7 Red Lion Street, Norwich (20-62-53)

Please return to: Assistant Treasurer Jim Froud, Westward Ho, 4 Kingsley Rd, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 3RB

Swallowtail survey 2019

The Swallowtail butterfly is an iconic species of the Norfolk Broads and also features on the logo of the society, so in 2019 we hope to further our knowledge of this species by recording not just the presence of Swallowtails, but also their behaviour. To this end we are asking anyone who sees a Swallowtail in Norfolk this year to make some extra observations based on the behaviour of the butterfly, duration of the activity, time of day, flowers visited and type of habitat.

Expected behaviours are:

- Roosting/basking
- Travelling
- Territorial/Courtship/Mating
- Ovipositing
- Nectaring

And habitats:

- Reedbed
- Fen
- River/Dyke/Broad,
- Agricultural
- Garden
- Other (please specify)

Please compile this information in a spreadsheet along with the usual recording data (location, date, abundance, recorder name) and email to Andy Brazil our county butterfly recorder via recorder@norfolkbutterflies.co.uk



Swallowtail

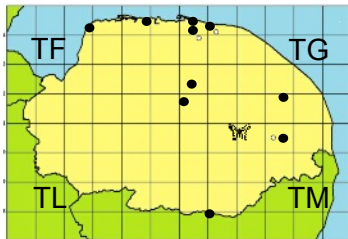
Images: Brian Macfarlane

If you've never seen a Swallowtail before then why not search one out this year? Some of the best places to try include Catfield Fen (stick to the Rond footpath or attend an open day), Hickling Broad, How Hill, Strumpshaw Fen and Wheatfen.

Excursion

Reports

- 2019-20 Field Meeting location
St. Andrew's Hall
Eaton
- Workshop Centre



A 2019-20 programme of excursions, events and talks is enclosed with 'Natterjack'. All excursions are expected to be reported throughout this our 150th Anniversary Year.

Creating a Naturalists' Library at Wheatfen

Tony Leech

In days gone by, the Castle Museum, Norwich was a place where amateur naturalists had access to books, expertise and other resources. The Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society established its library there but this has not been maintained since circumstances changed and it became more difficult for amateurs to use the Castle Museum.

In its 150th year the society is creating a new library for the benefit of the county's naturalists. The project has been helped by the recent bequest to the Society from the estate of Basil Ribbons, a former member.

As this will not be a lending library, it is necessary for it to be housed in a place where specimens can be brought for study - and it needs to be accessible. What better venue than the workroom of the Ted Ellis Trust at Wheatfen? This provides all the facilities needed and the trustees of both organisations very readily came to an agreement which will see the library in operation during 2019. The connection with Ted Ellis could not be more appropriate; he was a leading light in the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society and its President in 1953-54, 1954-55 and 1968-69 - more times than anyone else except J. H. Gurney.

Books are still essential for the serious identification of organisms - indeed their quality and utility is ever-increasing. They are, however, expensive and can rapidly become out of date. Naturalists may acquire some of the literature in their own field but lack it in other areas. County recorders and other naturalists in Norfolk have been asked to suggest suitable acquisitions and £3500 has been made available for their purchase.

The workroom at Wheatfen has already benefited from books donated by others. In particular, a large number of books on fungi were donated by Mike Woollner and others by Tim Benton. To house all of the books in a safe and accessible way, the Ted Ellis Trust and the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society are jointly funding the construction of purpose-built shelves with transparent doors.

Wheatfen is probably the best-recorded site in Norfolk (with over 1150 species of fungi alone). May this new library promote ever more interest.



The Study Centre at Wheatfen during a Hoverfly Workshop

Introducing the Bodham Ponds Bioblitz III 2019

- Saturday 22nd June, starting 10 am.

Over the last two years, linked to the work of the [Norfolk Ponds Project](#), we have been surveying 4 small farmland ponds in the village of Bodham (North Norfolk) to measure the response of the ponds to restoration. The first summer Bioblitz in 2017 studied four very overgrown ponds. Then in autumn 2017 we restored two of the ponds (Church Farms Ponds 2 and 3) by major scrub and sediment removal (with 2 left overgrown as controls). Last summer's 2018 Bioblitz saw the ponds recovering from restoration and we had some fun capturing this. This year the ponds will (are already!) blossoming!!! Thus we welcome all, studying any group (aquatic or terrestrial) to come and see what the ponds are like this year. Which species have come back to the ponds and the pond banks and what species were lost due to the works? Our theory is that we will get many more gains than losses...but we need you guys to help us find out! See the Church Farm Pond 2 story in the attached.

So - a huge thanks for those who came to the Bodham ponds Bioblitz last year. It was so much fun and so appreciate all the results that have come in. After this year I will look to collate all of the information gathered in and we can see what changes we can detect.

This years Bioblitz, as for last year, will take place at on 22 June starting at 10 am with parking at TG 1165 3890 - see this link here for where to park <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?X=611655&Y=338905&A=Y&Z=115> - the road you need is the same minor road that runs past Bodham Church, Lower Bodham - the centre of the "Bodham Pond District" no less!!!

There is no need to bring any food. We will supply, tea, coffee, cake (made by the remarkable Jo Sayer) and a barbecue at the end of the afternoon.

The ponds are now full of macrophytes. At the end of last year Church Farm Pond 2 was full of lovely charophytes. Plus Church Farm Pond 3 is also very clear and planty and has seen a huge increase in frog spawn this year (30 clumps!). Note that Church Farm Ponds 1 and 4 were left as they were - one of them is overgrown by willow and the other is full of Phragmites.

The Bioblitz is linked to our British Ecological Society (BES) funded "Great Twin Pond Dig" project (the brainchild of the marvellous Helen Greaves) which aims to get local people involved with pond conservation in both of Norfolk (Bodham) and Lancashire. Thus, in Norfolk we have a team of local (amazing!) budding pond surveyors and conservationists who are recording the chemistry and biology of the ponds every 2 weeks - the Bodham Ponds no less! And they are in year 3 of their study now and still going strong...they will be very keen to learn from any experts who can come and equally keen to talk on what they have found.

Timings:

10 am - Arrive and park at TG 1165 3890 near to CHFA1 - then walk to our base camp which is on grass margin next to CHFA4. You will see the Norfolk Ponds Project sign there.

12 pm - Tea + coffee + cake served! To keep all going (and any time thro day after this!)

3-4 pm - ish Barbecue!!!

Finish - after barbecue unless, but people can still do a bit more. No time limit!

****Can anyone who is veggie or has any special diet requirements barbecued food-wise please let me know and we will cater for you appropriately****

What to bring?

We will provide barbecued food and tea and coffee. So just bring any extra food that you fancy and water in case it is hot.

Wellies - useful for those getting in the ponds.

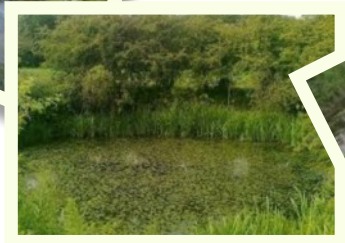
Any sampling gear that you want to use, but I will have pond nets and some trays.

Thanks so much to all in advance. Lets make sure we have some fun and who knows what we might find. Remember this is old style farmland so all sorts of stuff could be lurking!

Please say if you can come to help me plan - would so like to get the “ole team” back together and also be great to welcome anyone new!

Carl Sayer

(07766717245 if you get lost!)



Obituary: Barbara Hancy 1932 – 2019

As a child, Barbara regularly won wildflower collection competitions at her primary school; an interest which continued for the rest of her life. As an adult, she enthusiastically recorded small mammals, moths, galls and grasses. Her collection of grasses was to be accepted into the reserve collection at the Castle Museum.

Barbara's interest in plant galls began when she and Rex found a strange growth on a Speedwell in Thetford Forest. The phenomenon was explained by the late Reg and Lil Evans, who encouraged the couple to take up the study of plant galls as few others were working on it. They did so with enthusiasm and became founder members of the British Plant Gall Society. They collaborated in the production of the Occasional Publication, '*The Study of Plant Galls in Norfolk*'.



Barbara and Rex looking for galls

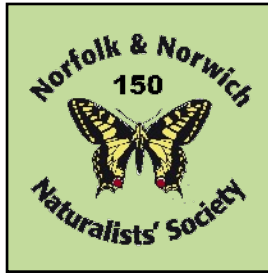
(This photograph is reproduced by courtesy of the Eastern Daily Press)

As co-producer of Radio Norfolk's 'Nature Trail' programme, Barbara's eye for detail and precision made her invaluable when editing recorded tapes. Her essays on plants became a popular contribution to these recorded programmes.

Barbara was modest in the extreme and when she was nominated as joint recipient of the Sydney Long Medal, she was convinced that it was a hoax. While looking for galls and helping to research the booklet, '*The Notable Trees of Norwich*', Barbara became more and more interested in the shapes and colours of the leaves themselves. Carefully selected leaves were photocopied onto thin card and accurately cut out, despite her arthritic fingers. Cascades of leaves still decorate walls and screens in her favourite rooms. While still able, she regularly patrolled her wildflower garden to record the fungi, grasses, insects and plant galls, but due to her increasing incapacity Barbara's view of the outside world was eventually reduced to what she could see from her window. She was thrilled to see birds on the feeders, the swaying ornamental grass-heads and the leaves on the trees.

Even though Barbara struggled with mobility issues she was always excellent company and good fun.

Nick Elsey



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

Please send
all articles / notes and photographic material
to the editor as soon as possible by
July 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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**The Rose Bedeguar gall or Robin's
pin-cushion from 'The Study of Plant
Galls in Norfolk'**

Drawing: Garth Coupland