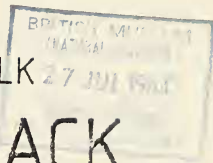


THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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Belonging to the Naturalists

If you rather carelessly explain that you "belong to the Naturalists", you may find that the comment turns out to be more confusing than helpful, since 'naturalists' tend to gather in a variety of clusters. In Norfolk the comment is likely to mean that you are a member of the Naturalists' Society or of the Naturalists Trust -- a distinction which is lost on the majority of the public. There was a time when the distinction was clearer: when the Trust was almost exclusively a device for raising money to buy land, and whose members met once a year if at all; and when the Society was almost exclusively a club existing to arrange lectures and excursions for the interest and amusement of its members. In the banter of the time, some Trust members saw themselves as the doers, regarding Society members as talkers who, binoculars round necks, self-indulgently picnicked around the nice places in the county: some Society members, on the other hand, saw themselves as students of nature - studying, listening, working, publishing - and regarded Trust members as rather distant and withdrawn professional landowners, absorbed with making money and buying property although not particularly interested in or knowledgeable about wildlife. Good-natured insults aside, the stereotypes are largely false, not least because they are very often the same people. The Trust and the Society have a large number of their members in common.

The Trust lists a number of objects in its constitution, but the central - and most characteristic - of its activities is ... 'To establish, form, own and maintain sanctuaries or reserves for the preservation of birds or other animals, and...for wild plants'. Other bodies also buy land to be held and managed for the conservation of nature. The National Trust not only takes over large houses often incidentally with woodlands (e.g. Felbrigg) or wetlands (e.g. Horsey) or other natural resources, but also nature reserves as such, e.g. Scolt Head, Wicken Fen. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Woodland Trust, The Wildfowl Trust, and so on all own and manage reserves. Here, then, is one of the main thrusts of the nature conservation movement, and anyone who is concerned about conservation ought to support one or other of the reserve-buying and reserve-managing agencies.

Important though these protected sites are, when you plot them on a map they account for only a tiny fraction of the county land surface. There may be choice things living and doing in these natural museums, but the mainstream of wildlife jostles, seethes and teems overwhelmingly outside them. Opportunities for the study of wildlife lie all around, and with them come responsibilities since there is a conservation task here as well. It depends upon people with a lively interest in living things, and a knowledge and an awareness that enables them to discern and to act. There are very few professionals involved in conservation at large, and the coverage is almost wholly provided by the amateur naturalist: that is, by people like you. So, although as a Society we do not own very much (apart

from some interesting and valuable books at the Museum) and although as a rule we do not collect money for buying land (except that when Scolt Head Island was bought for the National Trust in 1923 the funds were largely raised by this Society, and indeed Dr. Sidney Long was Secretary of this Society when in 1926 he arranged the purchase of Cley Marshes and so started the Trust), we do like to think that our doing comes through our knowing. Nobody knows it all, of course, but it is not difficult to settle upon a small group of plants or animals or phenomena and make them your own. There will be someone in our membership who can help you and guide you, and there is a need for people with a firm grasp of the various areas of natural history, particularly in relation to the surveys that we are called upon to undertake. The threat to wildlife is growing and the need for conservation is more acute: as members of the Society, we need to be not only interested and sympathetic but also knowledgeable, if only of our own small sector.

G. D. W.

SOME NORFOLK OAK GALLS

Several interesting records have accumulated since I last wrote about the gall wasps (Manning, 1956) and, in this note, I mention some relating to gall-making species associated with oak. These small insects exhibit the phenomenon of the alternation of generations, one consisting of normal sexual forms (abbreviated as s.g.) and the other entirely of agamic females reproducing parthenogenetically (a.g.).

Galls of Andricus lignicola (Hartig) a.g. were found on Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur L.) at Holt Country Park, E. Norfolk, on 7 June 1983. This appears to be the first Norfolk record for the insect, which was shown to be a British species by Quinlan (1974) who reported its occurrence in 1973 in Hampshire, Sussex, Surrey and Essex. According to Askew (1982), who found galls in Berkshire in 1979, "Almost certainly A. lignicola is a quite recent introduction to Britain". The typical gall of A. lignicola a.g. is distinct from the spherical, smooth-surfaced, common oak marble gall of A. kollari (Hartig) a.g., being irregularly spherical, rough-surfaced and with the epidermis bursting through in places. The insects themselves have a strong morphological likeness and both species have a sexual generation on Turkey Oak (Quercus cerris L.).

A bud-gall of A. quercusramuli (L.) a.g. was discovered on Pedunculate Oak at Hempton, W. Norfolk on 13 October 1980. I first saw s.g. galls resembling cotton wool on male oak catkins in E. Norfolk more than 30 years ago. Also on Pedunculate Oak at Hempton in October 1980 were leaf-galls of Cynips agama (Hartig), a gall wasp known only from its agamic form. I didn't find the characteristic spherical/globulose leaf galls of Cynips longiventris (Hartig) a.g. in East Anglia until 1970, though Mayfield had recorded them from E. Suffolk in 1937 and I had seen them in Goathland, Yorkshire, in 1956. I can now report the following occurrences, all on Pedunculate Oak: E. Norfolk - Felthorpe, 1980; Holt Country Park, 1982; Mousehold Heath, Norwich, 1982; W. Norfolk - Fouldean Common, 1970; Hempton, 1980.

The ovoid galls of Neuroterus aprilius (Giraud) a.g. were present on male catkins of Pedunculate Oak at Mousehold Heath, Norwich, on 10 June 1983. I found this insect's s.g. galls in E. Norfolk in 1951 and in W. Norfolk the following year. Knopper galls of Andricus quercuscalicis (Burgsdorf) a.g. may now be seen on acorns of Pedunculate Oak in many parts of Norfolk. I have these records: E. Norfolk - Crostwick, 1979; Felthorpe, 1979; Norwich, 1980; Haverlingland, 1980; Dunston, 1980; East Carleton, 1980; Holt Country Park, 1982; W. Norfolk - Swaffham, 1980; Hempton, 1980. A. quercuscalicis s.g. has been found in Berkshire (McGavin, 1981) but I have yet to see Norfolk specimens of this form or its galls on catkins of Turkey Oak.

Acknowledgement. I thank John Quinlan for confirming my identification of A. lignicola galls and for placing my Norfolk specimens in the BM(NH) collection.

References

- Askew, R.R. (1982) Ent. mon. Mag., 118: 116
 McGavin, G. (1981) Antenna, 5: 19-20
 Manning, S.A. (1956) Ent. Gaz., 7: 41-47

Mayfield, A. (1937) Eastern Evening News (Wild Life Note No. 1975)
Quinlan, J. (1974) Ent. Gaz., 25: 293-296.

S. A. Manning

MEMBERSHIP

On May 1st, 1983, our membership tally was:

Ordinary Membership, 264 : Family Membership, 176 : Honorary Membership, 4 :
Affiliations, 7 : Life Membership (no longer available), 9 : Ordinary Members
with Standing Orders unchanged at the subscription level of £3 and who have had
one reminder, 28 a total of 488. At that date, only a few weeks after the
A.G.M., no-one had taken up the new option of Junior Membership. Please carry
the need for new members in mind, and interest people in enrolling where you can.

EXCURSION TO SCARNING FEN, 22 June 1983

About a dozen members made a tour of Scarning Fen on a fine
evening. The most interesting plants seen were Pinguicula vulgaris (Butterwort),
Menyanthes trifoliata (Bogbean), Dactylorhiza incarnata (Early Marsh Orchid),
Dactylorhiza praetermissa (Common Marsh Orchid), Dactylorhiza fuchsii (Spotted Orchid),
and hybrids between these three, Gymnadenia conopsea (Fragrant Orchid), Drosera anglica
(Long-leaved Sundew), Epipactis palustris (Marsh Helleborine), Frangula alnus (Alder
Buckthorn), Salix repens (Dwarf willow), Blysmus compressus (Broad Blysmus),
Schoenus nigricans (Bog-rush), Eriophorum sp. (Cotton-grass), Carex remota, C. flacca,
C. hirta, C. panicum, C. acutiformis, C. lepidocarpum, C. vesicaria.

Mosses and liverworts identified by Alec Bull: Acrocladium cuspidatum,
Ctenidium molluscum, Campyllum stellatum, Drepanocladus revolvens, Mnium punctatum,
Conocephalum conicum, Philonitus calcarea, Dicranum, Sphagnum rubellum agg.,
Lophocolea bidentata.

Birds apparently feeding young : reed bunting, sedge warbler,
reed warbler. Unfortunately no grasshopper warblers this year.

D. Maxey

NATURAL HISTORY RECORDS OF U.E.A. CAMPUS

Chris Gibson of the School of Biological Sciences, U.E.A.,
Norwich, NR4 7TJ, is attempting to produce a survey of the natural history interest
of U.E.A. campus, and appeals for any records of the area, or areas immediately
neighbouring it, e.g. Earlham Park. He is interested both in recent records and old,
pre-University records, since he would like to include a section on the historical
development of wildlife interest on the site. Information direct to him, please.
He hopes to complete the report by the end of 1983.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

needs names of recorders of various plant and animal groups
to help in the survey of Thompson Common and in other projects. Offers to the
Secretary of the Committee, Miss Anne Brewster, Four Winds, Corpusty.

REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN RECORDS

Members are requested to make a special effort to record all
their positive sightings of reptiles and amphibians. Next year a report will be
written on these groups, and the species distribution maps updated. All records
to J. Buckley, c/o Castle Museum, Norwich.

J. Buckley

EXCURSION TO ICKLINGHAM AND WEST STOW, 12 June 1983

About 30 members assembled in the picnic site car park on Ramparts Field, Icklingham, and were immediately able to appreciate typical Breck flora at its best. Being a picnic site, the turf is kept short by pressure of numbers, rather than rabbits as it used to be, the result being a close sward filled with low-growing plants, many of which were at their best. To give a full list would take up too much space, but some of the choicer plants were: Trifolium striatum (Soft Clover), T. arvense (Hare's-foot Clover), T. dubium (Lesser Clover), T. campestre (Hop Trefoil), Medicago minima (Bur Medick), Vicia sativa ssp. sativa and ssp. angustifolia & Vicia lathyroides (Common and Spring Vetches), Saxifraga granulata & S. tridactylites (Meadow and Rue-leaved Saxifrages), Sedum acre (Stonewort), Crassula tillaea (Mossy Stonewort), Cerastium arvense (Field Mouse-ear Chickweed), Thymus pulegioides (Wild Thyme), Myosotis ramosissima (Early Forget-me-not).

Turning into Icknield Way we walked north for about half a mile, noticing how the formerly rare grass, Bromus diandrus, is now becoming a pest of arable land, especially along the margins of barley fields, extending some way out into the corn. Turning west along the margin of the King's Forest, plants seen included Arabis hirsuta (Hairy Rockcress) and Anthyllis vulneraria (Kidney Vetch) and -- although not yet in flower -- Sisymbrium altissimum (Tall Rocket) and Thalictrum minus (Lesser Meadow Rue). Reaching another north/south track, we were arrested by a large stand of a striking alien, Vicia narbonensis, a small relative of the broad bean, with deep purple flowers, vetch-like hairy pods, and bean-like leaves with tendrils on the upper leaves. It is a native of Southern Europe, and it is suggested that it may have been grown for pheasant feed at some stage, but it would appear to have been there for a year or two and was quite at home mingled with the native grasses. Probably several hundred plants were present over at least 20 square yards. This constitutes the second record for Suffolk, the previous one being in 1900.

Butterflies numbered ten species, including a very tatty Speckled Wood near the bean colony and, on our way down the track to lunch, the first of two Brilliant Green Hairstreaks. Other species included several Small Coppers, Orange-Tips and a Brimstone during the afternoon session. For this we moved to the Country Park at West Stow to visit the reconstructed Saxon Village. We were booked in for a guided tour of the village given by the warden, Richard Darrah. This was billed to last about an hour, but our guide dealt with his subject so fully, and aroused so many questions as to how the early Saxons built their houses, how they lived, what animals they kept, what crops they grew, and many other topics, that proceedings had to be brought to a close with a vote of thanks after we had taken over an hour and a half of Mr. Darrah's time. I, for one, thought it the best 75 pence-worth I have had for many a long day.

Most people were beginning to flag by this time, but half a dozen hardy souls went round the Country Park Nature Trail which included a tour of a very nice lake created from an old gravel pit. The party finally broke up at about 17.00 hours.

Alec Bull

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QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire for members about the Society has been prepared and should be going out in the same mailing as this bulletin. The Council would be glad if there could be a good response to this since the information about members' attitudes and wishes will be very useful in planning the future of the Society.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NATTERJACK

should be sent to Ernest Daniels, 41, Brian Avenue, Norwich, Norfolk, to arrive not later than October 15th. Accounts of meetings should aim to be about 300 words or less.

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G. D. W.