



THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



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Keeping An Eye On Things

During the summer we were surprised, not to say alarmed, to find out about a plan to extend the golf course at Eaton by taking in over ten acres of the adjacent marshland between Marston Lane and the River Yare. Since the land is subject to flooding, it was planned to build it up with hard core and soil filling -- about 12 lorry loads a day for about five years -- and so obliterate part of an area which had been picked out as deserving particular protection in this Society's Yare Valley Report of 1974. The City's Planning Committee is believed to be still considering the matter, and it is by no means certain that the scheme will go ahead, but the disturbing thing is that the golf club had applied for, and been granted, planning permission for the development over a year ago. Despite this apparent hurdle, the plan was unknown to the Nature Conservancy Council, to the County Naturalists Trust, to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, to the British Butterfly Conservation Society, and to other like societies including our own. Despite the theoretically public nature of the planning procedure, the whole scheme seems to have been kept remarkably quiet.

Every planning application has to be made to the local District Council (which in this case was the City Council) and although some of the major schemes, such as gravel workings, may have to be passed on to the County Council, they too will pass through the District level in the normal way. The District Councils have an obligation to deal with applications within eight weeks, but since copies of all applications must be passed to the local Parish Councils who must be given at least two weeks to offer an opinion, it is difficult for a District Council to act in less than three weeks. In short, every planning application will reside at District Council level for at least three weeks where it will appear on a list of planning applications received which is open to public scrutiny. A visit to the planning department of your local council about once a fortnight should, therefore, be enough to keep an eye on proposed developments in your area, and if you stumble across something significant, you can ring the alarm bell, or tell us about it and we will. It is boring work, of course, ploughing through hundreds of loft conversions, garage extensions, caravan standings, and so on: and you may need some local knowledge or research to know if the proposed 350 dwellings at Bloggs Road seems likely to threaten sites of value; but as things stand, it is the only way of keeping up our guard. I understand that double-glazing salesmen use the system to sniff out business, and our vigilance seems to be an altogether more worthy cause. So, if you have time, or can arrange with several local people to divide the task, keeping an eye on planning proposals for your district can be made a valuable part in our overall conservation aims.

G. D. W.

Norfolk Gall Notes

Gall Wasps (Hymenoptera, Cynipidae): In the second issue of The Norfolk Natterjack I reported finding galls of Andricus lignicola (Hartig) agamic generation at Holt, East Norfolk. I now record the presence of galls of this species, again on Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur L.), at Cromer, East Norfolk, on 7 July 1983.

Gall Midges (Diptera, Cecidomyiidae): Since I last published records of Norfolk gall midges (Manning, 1955, 1956) I have found these additional species in the county: Didymomyia tiliacea (Bremi). Galls occurred on leaves of lime, (Tilia sp.) at Weeting-with-Broomhill, West Norfolk, on 9 September 1980. I had found these galls at two places in Cambridgeshire in 1968-69 (Manning, 1970) and at Santon Downham, West Suffolk, in 1968. The gall of this species is visible on both sides of the leaf, the portion on the upper surface being cylindrical while that on the lower surface is hemispherical. The inner gall, with its single brilliant yellow larva, falls to the ground at the end of June, but the space left is filled by the proliferation of the outer gall and the surrounding leaf tissue often becomes reddish

Harmandia globuli (Rubs.). Larvae of this species were present in small, thin-walled globular galls on the upper surface of leaves of aspen (Populus tremula L.) at Felthorpe, East Norfolk, on 20 June 1981.

Mycodiplosis sp. Early instar larvae of an unidentified Mycodiplosis species were associated with the rust fungus Melampsora populnea (Pers.) Karst. on the underside of leaves of aspen (Populus tremula L.) at Felthorpe, East Norfolk, on 20 June 1981. The larvae feed on the spores of the rust fungus, apparently staying immobile for hours while doing so.

Galls on Leaves of Beech (Fagus sylvatica L.). I should be pleased to receive specimens of galls occurring on beech leaves. Please send with your name and that of the place of collection. Fallen leaves are well worth examining and may also yield records of leaf-mining insects.

References Manning, S. A. (1955) Ent. Gaz., 6: 205-14
Manning, S. A. (1956) Ent. Gaz., 7: 113-14
Manning, S. A. (1970) Nature in Cambridgeshire, 13: 28
Manning, S. A. (1983) The Norfolk Natterjack, No.2: 2

S. A. Manning, 9 Eversley Court, Prince of Wales Road, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9HR

British Bird Magazine

Once again, membership of the Society qualifies for special concessionary rates of subscription to the monthly ornithological magazine, 'British Birds'. Enclosed with the last issue of Natterjack was a leaflet giving details of the special rate applicable for the 1984 subscription - £5.75. The magazine publishes articles on many aspects of the ornithology of Great Britain and Western Europe, including much of local interest. For example, a recent issue contained a paper detailing the breeding activities of a local speciality - the Stone Curlew - on a Norfolk reserve. Every serious bird watcher should consider subscribing to this non-profit-making journal.

D.D.

Mammal Records

Rex Hancy would be glad to receive all mammal notes, particularly grey squirrel sightings. He needs the information to help in constructing distribution maps.

SOME BYGONE NORFOLK NATURALISTS - 1

Sir James Edward Smith (1759 - 1828)

The end of the 18th century saw a mini renaissance in English natural history, particularly botany, with the formation of several new societies, the emergence of a new generation of field naturalists, and the publication of several volumes which were to become definitive works of reference for many years. One of the pioneers of this revival was Sir James Edward Smith. Born in Gentleman's Walk, Norwich, in December, 1759, Smith was the eldest son of a wealthy, non-conformist wool merchant. Educated privately, through a weak constitution, Smith is said to have derived his love of flowers from his mother. Doubtless also of great interest to the young man was the society of amateur naturalists he met whilst attending botany classes at Hugh Rose's house at Tombland. Rose had been joint author with the Rev. Henry Bryant of the 'Elements of Botany' (1775) and had attracted the friendship of several local like-minded enthusiasts.

Smith left for Edinburgh University in 1781 to study medicine and attended the botany classes under Dr. John Hope, one of the earliest teachers of the Linnean system, and had time to begin a natural history society in that city. However, his future was to be irrevocably cast when, two years later, he went to further his studies in London and met Sir Joseph Banks. On the death of the great Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus, his widow offered to Banks the precious collection of books, manuscripts, plants, etc. for 1,000 guineas. Banks declined but on his recommendation Smith, with no little help from his father, purchased the entire collection and had it shipped to his apartments in Chelsea. (A spurious tale recounts how the Swedish king ordered the boat carrying the collection to be captured and returned).

Not long after this, Smith left the country for that social and educational indulgence afforded to the well-to-do young men of the period - the Grand Tour. On his return from the continent, in 1787, he discussed with friends the formation of a new natural history society in the name of the late Swedish naturalist, and his brainchild was duly born in February, 1788. The Linnean Society thus began with 73 members, and Smith was chosen as first President - a role which he enjoyed exclusively and autocratically until his death in 1828.

Smith retired to Norwich soon after his marriage in 1796 but it was from his native city that he penned most of his important works. The classic 'English Botany' with illustrations by James Sowerby, though begun in 1790 was completed in Norwich in 1814. There followed 'The Introduction to Physiological and Systematic Botany' (1807) and 'The English Flora' (1824-1828) and quite literally thousands of articles. These books remained definitive works for many years. Apart from his knighthood (1814) he was honoured by many foreign academies. He died at his home in Surrey Street on March 17th, 1828. The Linnean collection was later bought by the Society for £3,000.

Michael Bean

Churchyard Survey

In 1981 the Botanical Society of the British Isles launched a survey of churchyards throughout Britain. The aim was to identify the top 10% of churchyards in each county for their botanical interest. With this information, local naturalists will be in a better position to advise on their management if asked. Since 1981, 84 churchyards have been visited in East Norfolk (that is the part of the county lying east of a line from Blakeney Point to South Lopham) by some members of the Society and many members of the Trust. Much of the credit for this is due to the efforts of Bob Leaney. However, that still leaves an estimated two hundred churchyards to be visited in Norfolk alone.

If any members are interested in helping with this survey, please get in contact with me at the Castle Museum. Churchyards partially or totally surveyed

during 1981-3 are: Alby, Antingham, Attlebridge, Aylmerton, Baconsthorpe, Barford, Barningham, Bedingham, Beeston Regis, Bessingham, Binham, Bodham, Bradfield, Brandon Parva, Brinton, Broome, Buxton, Bylaugh, Calthorpe, Catfield, Claxton, Cley, Coston, Denton, Ditchingham, Drayton, East Ruston, Edgefield, Ellingham, Elsing, Erpingham, Felbrigg, Gimmingham, Glandford, Gresham, Hales, Hanworth, Hardingham, Heckington, Hedenham, Hemblington, Hingham, Horsford, Horstead, Hunworth, Kimberley, Knapton, Langham, Loddon, Lyng, Morley St. Botolph, Morley St. Peters, Morston, Mundesley, North Barningham, Rackheath, Roughton, Runhall, Sheringham, Shimpling, Shotesham All Saints, Shotesham St. Mary's, Sisland, Southrepps, Stody, Stratton Strawless, Swafield, Swainsthorpe, Thorpe Market, Thwaite, Thwaite St. Mary, Trimmingham, Trunch, Tuttington, Upper Sheringham, Upton, Walsingham, Warham All Saints Warham St. Mary's, West Beckham, West Runton, Wickmere, Wiveton, Wrampingham.

I can thoroughly recommend this survey as a way of getting to know Norfolk and its botanical and architectural riches. It is also an ideal way of spending a pleasant summer's day.

Peter Lambley

Butterfly Records

The Natural History Department of the Castle Museum would be glad to receive any records of the Clouded Yellow and the Camberwell Beauty seen in 1983.

Lifts to Meetings

In their returns to the recent questionnaire, a number of members said they would appreciate the offer of a lift to Society meetings. They were:

Mrs. B. Buckton, 23 Thorpe Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew. Norwich, NR7 OXA
Mr. & Mrs. Butlin, 18 The Paddocks, Old Catton, Norwich
Mrs. M. Cooper, 32, Grove Walk, Norwich, NR1 2QG
Miss G. Gibbons, 9 Irving Road, Norwich, NR4 6RA (evening meetings only)
A. Hare, 'High Minton', Hillside, Norwich Road, Cromer, Norfolk
Mrs. J.M. Humphris, 20 St Edmunds Road, Taverham, NR8 6PB (occasionally)
S.A. Manning, 9 Eversley Court, Cromer, NR27 9HR (0263-513673)
A. Parr, 67 Crown Road, New Costessey, Norwich
Miss S.D. Vaughan, 43 The Ridgeway, Valley Drive, Norwich, NR1 4ND

The Broads Review

The Society sent a detailed response to the Countryside Commission's request for comments on their Broads Review, a copy of which was also sent to the local press. On September 29th last the Eastern Daily Press reported:

"A Broads National Park would be the best way of protecting Norfolk's waterways and wetlands, according to Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society. In comments on the future of the Broads administration, the society states: "The Broads deserves an administration with a long-term future, with the necessary powers for effective action and with an appropriate number of members representing the national interest."

Contributions to the next Natterjack

should be sent to Ernest Daniels, 41 Brian Avenue, Norwich, Norfolk, to arrive not later than January 15th, 1984.

(....and a Happy Christmas to all our readers!).

G. D. W.