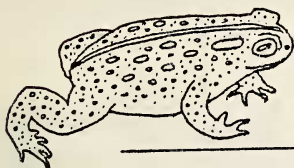


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The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

No. 5

May, 1984

Conserving roadside verges

In 1971 the Committee of this Society decided to take initiatives towards the identification and conservation of roadside verges in Norfolk that had a marked natural history value. During the following ten years a great deal of work was done by many volunteer helpers co-ordinated by Alec Bull, who wrote up their findings in the Transactions (Vol. 26, Pt. 1, pp. 23-35, 1982). There were discussions between the Society and the Nature Conservancy Council, and the then Conservation Officer of the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust took over responsibility for negotiating with the county Highways Dept. and local District Surveyors. The records of the verges found to have conservation value were deposited with the Trust, since county Trusts have proved to be appropriate bodies to operate such conservation schemes in other counties.

Recently, however, the Trust has said that it has been unable to find a volunteer to co-ordinate the project, and with its present workload is very unlikely to be able to do anything in the near future. It believes that it is time that the data was given back to the Society in the hope that something can be done to protect the flora on these sites. So what is to be done? Alec has been looking for somebody with conservation in their hearts and time on their hands, and thinks that a retired naturalist would be the ideal person. Certainly one such, Edgar Milne-Redhead, has set up and runs a very successful scheme in Suffolk. However, one person cannot manage it alone, and over the border individuals take responsibility for about a hundred individual areas, with various levels of co-ordination with highways department, area surveyors and cutters, and with the Suffolk Trust supplying and maintaining the marker posts.

If we have a willing Co-ordinator among our readers, I would be glad to know so that we can start to sort out a scheme. But the damage does not wait while we search, and it may be better to start at the other end. There are probably many interested people who would not mind keeping an eye on some chosen stretch in their parish, seeing that marked stretches receive the agreed maintenance, and reporting in from time to time about how things are going. We are asking members first, but we shall probably extend our search beyond the Society for any local people who will adopt their local prime verges. Alec has been good enough to give me a list of about 50 verges which, at the time of his surveys, were considered worth looking after. His list is:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---|
| 1. Shernborne | TF.714324 | All roads leading away from this crossroads. Chalk flora. |
| 2. Ringland | TG.134140-137133 | <u>Medicago falcata</u> & <u>M. x varia</u> |
| 3. Swannington | TG.149171 | All roads. Heathy flora inc. <u>Epipactis helleborine</u> |

4. Barton Bendish	TF.724058-738064	Exceptional chalk flora: 173 species recorded.
5. Barton Bendish	TF.728074-745084	Chalk flora.
6. Stalham	TG.378255-382257	<u>Sambucus ebulus</u>
7. Brooke	TM.270979-268990	Boulder clay verge
8. Shotesham	TM.257968-255985	Boulder clay verge
9. Brisley	TF.943217-943220	Boulder clay verge inc. <u>Vicia lutea</u>
10. Beetley	TF.944184	Short length. <u>Melampyrum cristatum</u> , <u>Campanula trachelium</u>
11. Gateley	TF.950239-958242	Excellent boulder clay verge.
12. Felthorpe	TG.175184-179186	Formerly <u>Solidago virgaurea</u> ; doubtfully now.
13. East Bradenham	TF.931085-934098	Boulder clay flora; formerly <u>Aquilegia vulgaris</u>
14. Morley St. Peter	TG.065987-073987	Excellent flora
15. Stiffkey	TF.976433	<u>Scrophularia vernalis</u> : its locus classicus
16. Bedingham	TM.284908-263914	<u>Trifolium ochroleucon</u> abundant
17. Peddars Way	TF.727356-729351	Chalk grassland
18. Peddars Way	TF.739329-747308	Chalk grassland
19. Toft Monks	TM.436946-439949	Good woodland flora
20. Denton	TM.285873-295873	Boulder clay flora
21. Seething	TM.308976	<u>Sambucus ebulus</u>
22. Ringstead	TF.715399-728395	Chalk grassland inc. much <u>Filipendula vulgaris</u>
23. Denton	TM.284872-284874	Excellent boulder clay and woodland flora
24. Ditchingham	TM.336925-337927	<u>Saxifraga granulata</u> abundant
25. Howe	TM.275999	<u>Polystichum setiferum</u> ; about 50 plants
26. Denton	TM.288886-289889	Boulder clay inc. <u>Genista tinctoria</u>
27. Alburgh	TM.253899-258881	Boulder clay inc. <u>Primula veris</u>
28. Wortwell/Alburgh	TM.252859-278863	Boulder clay inc. <u>Anacamptis pyramidalis</u>
29. Ellingham	TM.360924-362923	Boulder clay inc. <u>Parentucellia viscosa</u>
30. Morningthorpe	TM.217928-207921	Boulder clay inc. <u>Geranium pratense</u>
31. Flordon	TM.182976-187974	Boulder clay inc. <u>Ophrys apifera</u> , etc.
32. Titchwell	TF.764423-763437	Chalk grassland flora
33. Colney Lane, N.	TG.181079-197058	Mixed flora inc. <u>Verbascum pulverulentum</u>
34. Mileham	TF.932188-933187	Boulder clay inc. <u>Trif. ochro.</u> , <u>Poterium sang.</u>
35. Mattishall	TG.033117-032119	<u>Crepis biennis</u> abundant
36. Stibbard	TF.985283-987282	<u>Equisetum hyemale</u> abundant
37. Foulton	TL.788996-795997	Chalk breckland flora
38. Denton	TM.258888-266898	Boulder clay flora inc. <u>Anacamptis pyramidalis</u>
39. Thwaite	TM.336927-333948	<u>Anacamptis pyramidalis</u>
40. Redenhall	TM.248873-248867	<u>Trifolium ochroleucon</u> very abundant
41. Saxthorpe	TG.117306-131322	Excellent mixed flora inc. liverworts
42. Shotesham	TM.263977-271966	<u>Trifolium fragiferum</u>
43. Felbrigg	TG.208387	Excellent mixed flora inc. much <u>Thalictrum minus</u>
44. Thetford	TL.879833	<u>Veronica triphyllos</u> , <u>V. praecox</u>
45. Edgefield	TG.115336	Excellent heath type flora
46. Sustead	TG.186374	<u>Orchis mascula</u> , <u>Phyllitis scolopendrium</u>
47. Cranwich	TL.767957-775951	Chalk breckland flora
48. Drymers	TL.784065	Chalk breckland flora
49. Wretham Thorpe	TL.892906	Chalk breckland flora
50. Cranwich	TL.768941	Excellent chalk breckland flora
51. Thetford golf course (beside)		Breckland rarities

So if you can spare a little time to represent the verges of your parish or area (or are interested enough to adopt verges in another area) please let me know (Dr. G. D. Watts, Barn Meadow, Frost's Lane, Gt. Moulton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR15 2HG). You don't have to be a botanist or use a scythe or commit yourself for ever and ever. And if you are interested in co-ordinating such a scheme, I would be even more pleased to hear from you!

G. D. W.

Some Bygone Norfolk Naturalists - 3

William Jackson Hooker (1785 - 1865)

When Hooker died in London in August 1865 he was the grand old man of English botany. Among his many achievements may be counted about one hundred botanical works, the foundation of a museum of economic botany, the advancement of botanical research in the colonies and the transformation of the royal gardens at Kew into a national institution. After he left the brewery at Halesworth for the chair of botany at Glasgow University in 1820, he made only short visits to Norfolk and Suffolk; but they were affectionate returns to an area where he learned his consummate skills as a naturalist.

William Jackson Hooker was born in Magdalen Street, Norwich, on July 6th, 1785, and educated at King Edward VI's Grammar School in the Cathedral Close. Undoubtedly his father's love of plants, particularly his passion for collecting exotics and succulents, instilled in him an interest for natural history: at an early age Hooker was studying insects and developing a talent for draughtsmanship.

In 1789 he inherited his godfather's property near Chatham and went to Starston to learn estate management. While there he studied the entomology and botany of the district and corresponded with some of the leading naturalists of the day, especially the Rev. William Kirby, vicar of Barham in Suffolk. In his spare time he also visited the Broads and coast to study the habits of the rich birdlife there. At the age of twenty he was back in Norwich, helping Mr. Simon Wilkin who was planting his experimental botanic garden under the Linnean system at Mill House, Costessey.

An early friend of Hooker's was Sir James Edward Smith (see 'Natterjack 3') who advised the young naturalist to specialise in botany. So Hooker searched the country around Norwich for specimens, and towards the end of December, 1805, while visiting Sprowston Woods, he came across a tiny moss on some tree stumps and thus made the first recorded discovery for England of Buxbaumia aphylla, a rare, leafless saprophyte with a scattered distribution. Smith encouraged Hooker to communicate his find to Dawson Turner at Yarmouth and as a result became a friend of that other leading botanist of his day (see 'Natterjack 4'). Turner eagerly seized upon the young botanist's talent for illustration, and the product of this relationship was the set of over 230 drawings for Dawson Turner's classic 'Historia Fucorum'. Other developments followed; one happy - Hooker married Turner's daughter, Maria Sarah, in 1815; the other not so, namely the business involvement with his father-in-law and a business associate, Samuel Paget, to run a brewery at Halesworth.

Hooker worked diligently, if not enthusiastically, for the business, having moved to Suffolk in 1809. However his main interest was botany and he continued to cultivate many plants in the gardens at Halesworth. While there he entertained and encouraged many eminent and burgeoning naturalists, in particular his 'pupil', John Lindley, and worked assiduously on his publications. Of these the most important was 'British Jungermannia' which appeared between 1812 and 1816 and contained 88 plates.

However, the brewery was not flourishing and Hooker's commitment to natural history was placing financial burdens on the family. So he requested from Sir Joseph Banks (who had in 1809 secured for the young naturalist a place on an expedition to Iceland) assistance in finding a position in the scientific community. Banks used his influence to secure for Hooker the Chair of Botany at Glasgow. By then William Jackson Hooker had been elected a F.L.S. (1806), a F.R.S. (1812) and his friend Sir James Edward Smith had immortalised the young Norfolk naturalist in a genus of moss which the youthful enthusiast had gathered on Holt heath: Hookeria lucens.

Michael Bean

Treasurer's Report

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society the Honorary Treasurer was able to report another successful year financially. The main feature during the year was the decision for the Society to undertake the publication of the annual Bird and Mammal Report without the partnership of the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust. Thanks to the co-operation of the Norfolk Ornithologists' Association this venture has proved to be a financially viable undertaking. A donation from the N.N.Trust made in recognition of the fact that we did not need to call on their guarantee, reduced the net charge of the Report to very modest proportions.

Generous donations were also received from Mr. T.N.D. Peet, the Norfolk County Council and the U.E.A., the last two in connection with the publication of articles in the Transactions.

A summary of the Accounts for the Session ending 31st March, 1984, as presented to the A.G.M. is given below:

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
Cost of Publications	2,444	Balance at beginning of year	1,663
Cost of Lectures & Meetings	142	Subscriptions	2,097
General Expenses	1,074	Interest & Dividends	206
Other Expenses	93	Sales of Publications	1,287
Balance in hand at end of year		Special Donations	802
	2,327	Profit on Annual Supper	25
	<u>6,080</u>		<u>6,080</u>

D. A. Dorling, Honorary Treasurer - April, 1984

Thompson Recording

The help of all interested members is requested in our survey of Thmpson Common North during this year. We shall be meeting on three Sundays -- May 27th, July 15th and September 16th -- at 10.30 a.m. in the car park, particularly for listing the flora, and on those dates the Research Committee will be organising some systematic recording. Help from all botanists, scribes and other aides needed. Also any lists of other flora or fauna made on these or other dates welcomed. Ann Brewster is collecting the data.

G. D. W.

Address Labels

We have converted from the Addressograph machine with its trays of cast metal plates and hours of muscle work for each mailing, to computer printed labels. It took us about three days to enter names and addresses, but once having captured them on a floppy disc, it was only a matter of minutes to print the labels. Barring typing errors, the address on your envelope is how it appears in our records, so if in any respect it is wrong or incomplete, would you let Jeanette Wakefield ('Goldcres Post Office Lane, Saxthorpe, Norwich, NR11 7BL) know. Some of our addresses go back a long way so we tend, for instance, to be rather short of post codes. Making corrections is quite easy with this system, so getting it right is no problem.

G. D. W.

Contributions to the next Natterjack

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