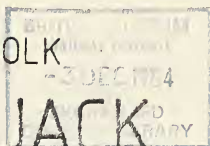


# THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



*The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society*

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## HARD CHOICES

During the summer a West Country friend was trying to describe to me the taste of roast heron. He is not a vandal, but a fish-breeder and fish-raiser with several acres of ponds which act as magnets to fish-eating birds. They are not deterred by fine netting around the ponds, by a cat's cradle of fine fishing line criss-crossing over the water, by swinging cut-out shapes on long sticks, or by tinkling or banging from a variety of suspended, wind-blown objects. Only the dawn stalk with a shotgun offers the comfort of an illegal and brief respite.

Broadly, it may be said, conservationists seek to maintain life, and faced with decisions about conserving particular areas, would prefer not to interfere: but almost always conservation involves controlling which sometimes also means killing. The bulk of our plant and animal communities are not stable, climax communities, but are some stage in a dynamic succession of stages. If we decide, usually quite arbitrarily, that we wish to sustain some particular rare plant or animal or assemblage of plants and animals, we are at the same time declaring war upon the competitors of, the predators of, the successors to, our chosen protectorate. Taking a part of nature under our wing immediately involves us with many decisions, and to meet these we need accurate and detailed knowledge of the species involved, of their life cycles and of their interrelationships.

We would almost certainly disagree with the priorities of the old type of gamekeeper who, in the interests of his employer's grouse, would treat as 'vermin' the golden eagle, the osprey, the kite, all owls: and we perhaps haven't much time for the fish-breeder who objects to losing £100-worth of koi carp before breakfast and takes the only action that seems effective. But we can't avoid, each time we join the fight to conserve a particular area, the need to define our aims, establish our priorities, and make our decisions: and sometimes some of those will be hard.

G. D. W.

## EXCURSION TO BRYANTS HEATH, FELMINGHAM : July 22nd, 1984

About 25 members travelled to Bryants Heath, near North Walsham, on one of the warmer days of the period. For several, this was a first visit to this small S.S.S.I. of 39 acres - an area which has lacked the attention of naturalists in recent years. Prior to 1894 the Heath was owned by the Trustees of the Poor of the Parish. Today the Parish Council are the 'owners' of the area, the land being vested in the Parish Council by virtue of the Local Government Act of 1894.

As the central area is virtually all gorse, members walked the perimeter noting the spread of bracken, almost to the boundaries. However, the bog area was full of interest to many, and four Common Spotted Orchids (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) were seen where previously none had been recorded. One similar plant was also found alongside the path in the south of the Heath. Several common butterflies were out in the sunshine during the day while, in the afternoon, one lucky party found a Humming-bird Hawk Moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) visiting the honeysuckle blossom.

In years past, Marsh Club Moss (*Lycopodium inundatum*) and Bog Orchid (*Malaxis paludosa*) have been recorded but neither has been found in recent visits. Alec Bull has been more fortunate in discovering two species of bramble new to East Norfolk - namely *Rubus carpinifolius* and *R. arreniiformis* but we shall require his presence to locate these.

Future visits will depend much upon members' individual interests, but any information of species not previously listed will be welcome. Special thanks are due to all who have kindly provided details of their finds; this is greatly appreciated. The summary reads as follows:

Flowering plants	94	Insects	16
(including Grasses	17	Spiders	6
and Rushes & Sedges	6)	Other animals	5
Fern	1	Galls, including causers	18
Mosses	5		
Fungi	14		

K. W. K. Palmer

#### BRITISH BIRDS MAGAZINE

Enclosed with this issue of 'Natterjack' is a leaflet giving details of current subscription rates to the monthly magazine 'British Birds'. Once again members of the Society qualify for the special concessionary rate of £16.50 per annum. The magazine contains a wide range of articles, notes and illustrations on the birds of Western Europe, and frequently deals with topics of direct interest to Norfolk ornithology. Recent issues have dealt with the identification problems associated with stints and small sandpipers, reed warblers and immature skuas, all accompanied by coloured illustrations.

D. A. D.

#### BIRD WATCHING EXCURSION : December 9th

The details of this meeting on the Programme Card do not include the meeting time. Please meet at Potter Heigham Church at 10.30 a.m.

C. Neale

#### NORFOLK YOUNG NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

will meet at the Castle Museum, Norwich, on January 4th, 1985, for a talk by Rex Hancy entitled 'Bugs, Bats and Bitterns : the nature of Norfolk'. From 7.00 p.m. to about 8.30 p.m.; parking provided; refreshments available in the interval. Tickets free from 41, Holcombe Avenue, King's Lynn, or at the door.

Alison Wilmore

#### SOCIETY MIGRANT

After nearly 16 years as botanist at Norwich Castle Museum, Peter Lambley has departed these shores and has taken up a three-year post at the University of Papua New Guinea. Peter served the Society as museum representative on the Council and, recently, as Editor of the Transactions. He was elected President for 1980-81. We wish Peter and his family every success on their adventure and look forward to some really exciting talks when he returns to Norfolk in a few years' time.

A. G. Irwin

# NORFOLK BREEDING BIRD SURVEY 1980-1985

Progress with the above project has been most heartening this year. Sincere thanks are due to all those who have undertaken field-work: to those who have not yet sent in their cards and, hopefully, casuals, please let me have them as soon as possible. Of the 1455 Norfolk tetrads, results are on file from 1109 (on 12th October, 1984). Plans are already being made to ensure that undercovered and, especially, uncovered tetrads will be visited at least once in 1985. As Britain's leading county for birds, Norfolk's Atlas, once prepared and published, must not be seen to be inferior to those comparable ones that are already in print.

All existing workers, as well as volunteers who come forward in the meantime, will be contacted early in 1985. Furthermore, as director of the project, I intend to be present at the public exhibition meeting to be held in the Ivory Room at the Assembly House, Norwich, on February 16th next. Survey data will be displayed, and I hope to meet as many of you who have worked for the project as possible there. Don't forget to contact me, c/o the Natural History Department, Castle Museum, Norwich, NR1 3JU. My home telephone number is Norwich 898646.

Geoffrey Kelly.

## SOME BYGONE NORFOLK NATURALISTS - 5

Charles & James Paget (1811-1844 : 1814-1899)

This year sees the 150th anniversary of the publication of 'Sketch of the Natural History of Yarmouth and its Neighbourhood'. Its appearance, towards the end of 1834, heralded one of the first of the local faunas which became such a feature of the last century. Of its authors, much is known about James Paget, the eminent physician who became sergeant-surgeon to Queen Victoria, but little is recorded of Charles' life.

The two brothers went to school in Gt. Yarmouth. Their father, Samuel, one-time Mayor of the borough and successful brewer, had amassed a considerable library including Smith and Sowerby's 'English Botany' and Dawson Turner's 'Historia Fucorum'. Their mother was a skilful writer and painter and an avid collector of natural objects, especially sea-shells and corals. With parents eager to promote an interest in these things, and a circle of friends which included a number of prominent county naturalists, every opportunity was thus presented to the two brothers to pursue a study of natural history. Early on we find Charles collecting plants and insects, and his brother collecting algae, on the beach, and plants on the Yarmouth Denes and salt-marshes "chiefly on Saturday afternoons, and on casually unoccupied bits of days, and often before breakfast...".

Soon Charles specialised in insects. His initial sorties gathered some 750 species from the area and he began corresponding with the leading naturalists of his day. Meanwhile, James was being guided in botany by the bryologist Thomas Palgrave, a nephew of Dawson Turner. Through him he was introduced to William Hooker and other leading Norfolk naturalists. An abortive plan to enter the navy launched James, instead, on a medical career, and before he left for London he served an apprenticeship with a local practitioner, Charles Costerton. This 4½ years of training in Yarmouth gave him ample time for study. He exchanged coastal plants with inland collectors and built up a nearly complete herbarium of the flora of the district.

The culmination of the two brothers' efforts was the 'Sketch'. The book is some 120 pages long and includes lists of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, flowering and non-flowering plants, and insects, found within a radius of some ten miles of Yarmouth. An introduction gives a fascinating view of the varied habitats around the old town. Also described is the activities of wildfowlers and bird-dealers whose livelihood was provided by the abundant life found there, and the local naturalists who studied it. Small though it may be, the 'Sketch' is a valuable record of the status and distribution of Norfolk wild-life 150 years ago.

James left for London shortly after its publication. Charles remained in Yarmouth pursuing his entomological studies while endeavouring, unsuccessfully, to save the family's ailing business interests. All the insects listed in the 'Sketch' - 766 species - were provided by him, and to these he later added a further 100. In the year after the 'Sketch' his friend, John Curtis, honoured his name with a new species, *Agryponia pagetarus*, the 'Yarmouth Grammon' or May-fly. But Charles' health was not strong. He had been an invalid from the age of 13, and the strain of business contributed to his untimely death in March, 1844.

His brother's career is well-known. Though rising to eminence, James retained his interest in natural history, becoming friends with Darwin and pursuing some studies in plant pathology, galls and parasites. He never forgot the 'Sketch' and its "priceless" preparation for his later life.

Michael Bean

#### NORFOLK REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

The report on Norfolk reptiles and amphibians recorded over the last ten years will soon be written up and members are urged to send in their records as soon as possible. It is hoped that all members might be able to send in some records: brief annotated species lists for areas well known to the observer would also be most useful. Records to me, c/o Natural History Dept., Castle Museum, Norwich, Norfolk.

John Buckley

#### EXHIBITION MEETING : February 16th, 1985

With this issue of 'Natterjack' is enclosed a poster advertising an item not in the current programme. This is a public Exhibition Meeting to be held in the Ivory Room at the Assembly House, Norwich, on Saturday, February 16th, 1985, from 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Could you please arrange to display the notice on your local notice board, whether it be in a library, a parish notice-board or just in your local grocer's shop window. Thank you.

Alec Bull

(We are sending the posters out with this issue, although rather early, since the next issue will be too late. Members will have to decide on the most appropriate time to display posters in relation to a meeting in mid-February. Ed.)

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP

Summer 1984 proved to be one of variable weather and mixed fortunes as far as our Photographic Group was concerned. Cuttings to Bradfield Woods, Strumpshaw Fen, Hockham Woods and East Wretham Reserve attracted only a small number of enthusiasts, two only on August 26th to the last named, due no doubt to the fact that August is the traditional holiday month. Autumn got off to a good start, however, with 30 members turning up for what proved to be a most interesting evening at Jarrolds Printing Works, where we were treated to an introductory lecture on modern photographic techniques as applied to the printing trade, and were then escorted by our lecturer, Mr Dennis Avon (Works Photographer and author of a number of photographic books) around the Photographic Section of the works where he showed at first hand the machines in use, and work in progress.

The matter of venue for future meetings has received consideration over the past few months (with the removal of the School of Education from Keswick Hall to a new building on University Plain) and it has been decided that we could not do better than to hold them in the Assembly House in the city. It has the advantage of being central, with its own car park -- free to members attending meetings in the building -- and the cost of hiring is not prohibitive. With this in mind, firm bookings have been made and a Winter Programme has been drawn up following the pattern that appeared to meet with approval last year, i.e. a short 10-15 minute



talk to photographic beginners, followed by the main lecture of the evening at about one hour, the remainder of the evening to be occupied with the showing of members' own slides (a suggested maximum of five slides per member) to fill in as far as possible any time we have at our disposal. Please do give these meetings your support; better still, bring with you any acquaintance or work colleague interested in photography and introduce them to the N.N.N.S. and to our group in particular. We will make them welcome.

Finally, any suggestions as to how the Group's activities could be improved or expanded will be appreciated -- to me, please; I can assure you they will receive careful consideration..

Bob Robinson

NORFOLK AND NORWICH NATURALISTS' SOCIETY -- PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP -- PROGRAMME

Thursday, November 22nd, 1984 - 7.30 p.m. - Edmund Bacon Room, Assembly House

Mr. Paul Banham - 'Nature Photography - France & California'

December, 1984 - No meeting

Wednesday, January 16th, 1985 - 7.30 p.m. - Kent Room, Assembly House

Dr. Geoffrey Watts - 'Pathways to Close-Up Photography'

Wednesday, February 6th, 1985 - 7.30 p.m. - Lecture Theatre, Central Library

Group lecture to Main Society - 'Colour in Nature'

(N.B. It would be appreciated if members, wishing to have slides considered for inclusion in this lecture, could bring them along to the December 12th or January 5th main Society meetings: I will gratefully receive and take care of them).

Monday, March 11th, 1985 - 7.30 p.m. - Edmund Bacon Room, Assembly House

Mr. Norman Carmichael - 'Some Approaches to Natural History Photography'

Thursday, April 25th, 1985 - 7.30 p.m. - Kent Room, Assembly House

Mr. Rex Hancy - 'A Miscellany of Nature Photographs'

Keep shooting in the winter months ahead!

Bob Robinson

EDITOR OF THE TRANSACTIONS

At the last meeting of the Council of the Society, on the 24th of September, 1984, the resignation of Peter Lambley from his position as Editor of the Transactions was considered. After some discussion of the conditions of the appointment, nominations were called for. Dr. Tony Irwin, Entomologist at the Castle Museum, was proposed by Roy Baker and seconded by Rex Hancy and, in the absence of other nominations, the Council unanimously agreed to invite Dr. Irwin to accept the Editorship. He has subsequently accepted the appointment with thanks.

G. D. W., Chairman.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRANSACTIONS

Could I please have papers to be considered for inclusion in next year's Transactions, together with notes and other contributions, by the end of the year? To me, at the Natural History Department, Castle Museum, Norwich. Norfolk, NR1 3JU, please.

Tony Irwin

## CONSERVING NORFOLK ROADSIDE VERGES

We are moving slowly ahead. The County Surveyor is discussing with Divisional Surveyors ways of dealing with interesting verges, and in particular lines of communication between our voluntary wardens and the people actually responsible for verge cutting and maintenance. The County Planning Officer has said that he may well be able to help with the supply of markers, and has expressed a general interest in, and support of, any scheme leading to better management of roadsides for wildlife.

You may remember that I listed about 50 of the best verges identified by Alec Bull's volunteers in the mid-70's in 'Natterjack' 5, and in the last issue I was able to report that 22 of those had been taken up by members willing to keep half an eye on particular stretches. Given that response I thought it worthwhile to list the positions of the other sites to see what further help we can get within the Society, before asking around beyond it. The sites already spoken for are not included.

N.W. Norfolk (O.S. 100 km. square TF) - Tottenhill, Castle Rising, Babingley, Heacham, Ringstead, E. Winch, Sedgeford, Shernborne, Fring, Barton Bendish, Thornham, Anmer, Harpley, Docking, Titchwell, Tittleshall, Beeston, W. Bradenham, Wells, E. Bradenham, Mileham, Hindringham, N. Elmham, Hoe;

N.E. Norfolk (O.S. 100 km. square TG) - Morston, Reymerston, Billingham, Twyford, N. Tuddenham, Elsing, Thurning, Hockering, Hunworth, Welborne, E. Tuddenham, Corpusty, Wymondham, Oulton, Itteringham, Swannington, Haveringham, Blickling, Aldborough, Colney, Calthorpe, Drayton, Horsford, Beeston, Stoke Holy Cross, Rackheath, Framingham Earl, Bradfield, N. Walsham, Trunch, Wroxham, Worstead, Edinghamthorpe, Hellington, Wotton, Honing, Crostwight, Dilham, Stalham, Brumstead;

S.W. Norfolk (O.S. 100 km. square TL) - Cranwich, Foulden, Didlington, Santon Downham, Thetford, Croxton, Merton, Bridgham, Rockland;

S.E. Norfolk (O.S. 100 km. square TM) - Hindolveston, Morley St. Botolph, Carleton Rode Shelfanger, Burston, Tivetshall, Shimpling, Dickleburgh, Flordon, Wacton, Fulham Market, Fulham St. Mary, Colegate End, Morningthorpe, Shelton, Needham, Hardwick, Shotesham, Saxlingham, Redenhall, Poringland, Topcroft, Woodton, Howe, Bedingham, Earsham, Hedenham, Thurton, Mundham, Ditchingham, Thwaite, Loddon, Ellingham, Kirby Cane, Hales, Geldeston, Gillingham, Haddiscoe.

If one or more of these sites is near to you, or an area through which you regularly travel, I would be happy to sign you up as an honorary warden of one or more of these verges. Please write to me at Barn Meadow, Frost's Lane, Gt. Moulton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR15 2HG.

G. D. Watts

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NATTERJACK

should be sent to Ernest Daniels,  
41, Brian Avenue, Norwich, Norfolk, to arrive not later than January 15th, 1985