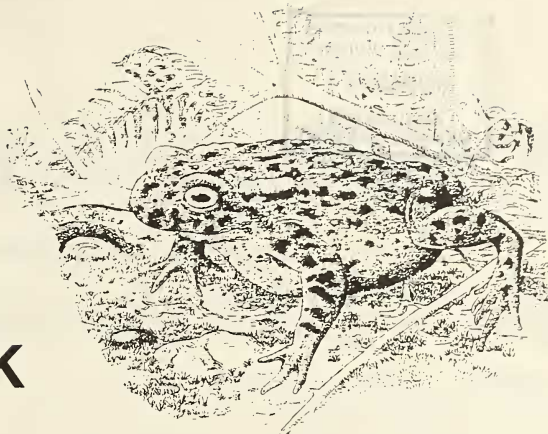


THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

No.17

May 1987

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SOCIETY NOTICE BOARD

MICROSCOPY GROUP

The first meeting of this group was held at Norwich Castle Museum on 1st April. Twelve members were entertained by Keith Clarke, Malcolm Thain and Tony Irwin, whose informal slide shows involved pond life (including diatoms), ectoparasites and a variety of creatures photographed by scanning electron microscope. A visit to the SEM suite at UEA was one of the items it was hoped to arrange in a programme of practical workshops during the coming year. Other demonstrations at the meeting included fluid mounts prepared by David Fagg and some very clever lighting systems operated by Dick Hammond.

If enthusiasm is a measure of potential success then this group has a rosy future. All members of the Society are welcome to attend meeting, which are held in the Castle Museum at 7.30 pm.

17 June - A basic practical session including simple slide preparation, getting the light right and looking after the instrument.

15 July - Photography, drawing and measuring using the microscope. Live examination of pond life.

NORFOLK BUTTERFLY SURVEY: NORFOLK MOTH SURVEY: NORFOLK DRAGONFLY SURVEY.

Any one who has not received details of these surveys and would like to be involved should contact Tony Irwin at the Castle Museum.

WORKSHOP DATES.

(All at the castle Museum, at 7.30 pm unless stated otherwise.)

5 June - Butterfly identification and survey results to date.

6 June - (10.00 am) Moth identification - beginners' session.

5 August - **Water Weeds.** This identification workshop should help everyone with an interest in freshwater life. Not to be missed!

10 August - **Caterpillar workshop** - Techniques and identification. Pets welcome.

24 September - **Moths.** Identification of Autumn species and review of the survey.

Early October - Slugs!

Future workshops will include: insect photography; introduction to lichens; centipedes, millipedes and woodlice; bumblebees; small mammals; dragonfly larvae.

Annual Subscription

This is to remind members that their subscription was due on the 1st April. cheques should be made payable to :- Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.

Annual Subscription rates are:

Junior £3.00

Family £7.50

Ordinary £6.00

Affiliation £15.00

D.A.Dorling, Honorary Treasurer.

"St Edmundsbury", 6 New Road, Hethersett, Norwich. NR9 3HH.

WARNING

If your Subscription has lapsed for more than one year and the Hon Treasurer has not received your subscription by the 1st August 1987. your name will be deleted from the membership roll.

Colin Dack, Membership Secretary.

1987 TRANSACTIONS

Some of you will have noticed that there is no Transactions with this mailing. Unfortunately it has been delayed this year (for which the editor accepts responsibility) and we felt it better to get the programmes out on time and send the Transactions later. There is plenty to look forward to, with articles on Thompson Common, brambles, saltmarsh, snakes, moths millipedes and much, much more!

1986 ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

The proceedings of the conference "The amateur naturalist in the changing countryside" have now been published as a 44-page booklet. This is being sent free to all conference participants. Other members of the Society may obtain copies at £1.00 each. The cost to non-members is £2.00.

"LOOKING FOR PLANT GALLS" - COMPETITION.

The British Plant Gall Society are offering three equal prizes of £5 plus copies of the Provisional key to winners of their nation-wide essay competition.

The competition is for children and young persons up to 18 years of age. Entries written on the subject above should be sent to Rex Hancy, 124 Fakenham Road, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6QH by 1st September 1987. Age will be taken into consideration by the two judges, Ken Durrant, our N.N.N.S. Chairman and Rex Hancy.

SOILWATCH

44% of arable land in England and Wales is now at risk from soil erosion, according to the Soil association's recent soil sampling survey. Intensive cultivation and hedge removal has left land vulnerable to the ravages of wind, a situation which could create 'dust bowls' in future.

The S.A. has now launched a more detailed survey and would like to hear from anyone interested in taking part in their own locality. The Soil association, 86 - 88 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB tel: 0272 290661. (Wording taken direct from 'Home Farm' mag. April 1987)

COASTWATCH

A prime aim of Coastwatch is to collect basic information on the distribution and extent of coastal habitats and the intensity of human activities which may change and, perhaps, damage them. In order to do this two surveys have been developed.

- 1 **Habitat Mapping survey** in which coastal habitats such as rocky and sandy shores, cliff slopes and sanddunes are marked onto large scale maps using coloured pencils from which their areas and lengths are measured.
- 2 **Coastal Uses and Activity Survey** in which human pressures such as bait digging and sewage outfalls occurring in coastal habitats are recorded.

Details from: Teresa Bennett, Coastwatch Coordinator, Nature Conservancy Council, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA

PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP

The Winter of 1986/87 has been a long overdrawn one, and here we are midway through April and Spring like weather seems as far away as ever. We can however look back with the knowledge that whatever the weather our monthly meeting have been well attended. The lectures have been interesting and our awareness of both natural history and photography very much increased, thanks to the individual lecturers who contributed to the programme. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Group Lecture "The Coastline of East Anglia" given to the Society on Wednesday 28th January. It was special in that the majority of our members were represented in the slides shown. The work of selecting the slides, putting them in order and the final presentation, was undertaken by Mr Paul Banham to whom we are indebted for an excellent evening of commentary.

So much for the 1986/87 season now to a close - how about 1987/88 ? Having been concerned with the drafting of the Society programme to be issued shortly, I am able to say that given fine weather the field meetings arranged should provide ample opportunity for both natural history and pictorial photography. We need your pictures for next years group presentation to the Society, scheduled for Thursday 14th April 1988, under the title "East Anglia through the seasons". With this in mind, with a whole year in which to prepare, and with a title which gives ample scope whatever your particular specialist interest, let us have lots and lots of pictures.

The Photographic Group will continue to meet at the Assembly house this coming year, the Edmund Bacon Room having been booked throughout from September 1987, to and including May 1988. The programme set out below, will I feel sure prove to be an interesting and entertaining one. As hitherto members are asked to bring along up to six of their own slides for showing after each main lecture.

Finally it is time once again to remind readers that non-members of the group who are interested in photography but as yet are involved, are welcome to attend our meeting, - who knows our efforts may inspire them to take up the hobby.

Bob Robinson

PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP PROGRAMME 1987/88

Wednesday Sept 9th 19.30hrs	"The Decline of the British Honeybee" by Mr R Cutter Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Sunday Oct 18th 11.00hrs	Photographic Outing to Felbrigg Gt Wood for Fungus & Autumn Colour. By Kind permission of the N.T. No fungus specimens to be taken , Photographs only please. Meet main car park, TG196395
Wednesday Oct 21st 19.30hrs	"Four Months in south Georgia" by Mr J Rhind Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Wednesday Nov 25th 19.30hrs	"Norfolk the finest bird County" by Mr M Seago Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Monday Dec 14th 19.30hrs	"Exploring the Isles of Orkney & Faroe" By Mrs A Wilson Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Wednesday Jan 20th 19.30hrs	"Between the Tides" By Mr J Fenton Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Thursday Feb 18th 19.30hrs	"Walking the Pennine Way" by Mr P Negal Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Thursday March 17th 19.30hrs	"Wildlife in the Garden" by Mr T Jennings Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room
Thursday April 14th 19.30hrs	"East Anglia through the Seasons" Photographic Group presentation to Society City Library Lecture Theatre
Wednesday May 18th 19.30hrs	Members Evening A challenge - your slides to match the theme "Broadland". up to 10 slides each please. Assembly House Edmund Bacon Room

Bob Robinson.

A CLUSTER OF MITES

Each year especially in the Autumn we see so-called Harvest Spiders with their long slender legs and round bodies. Quite often they have conspicuous Red Mites clinging to their legs and body.

This behaviour of Mites is not confined to Harvest Spiders and we have seen ten on a Stable Fly Stomox calcitrans. Another fly carried 3 False Scorpions, reddish brown small creatures about 2-3mm in length.

The object of these tiny arachnids is dispersal to other areas, when harmless it is known as phoresy. In some cases however it is not merely hitch-hiking but is true parasitism.

In our garden last year we recorded three specimens of the lesser Stag Beetle Dorcus parallelipedus. This is unusual and the first time we have seen them here during the last 10 years

One of these had suffered considerable damage and the foreparts of two legs were missing. It was heavily infested with mites which proved very difficult to remove, as they were firmly attached by strong brownish threads to many parts of the beetle. They could not be removed by brushing as is possible often when they are found on Burying Beetles. Tweezers and patience eventually removed them.

The count was a 'mitye' figure of 326.

Reg Evans

A NEW HOST

Whilst walking along the road in Welborne we saw a Lesser Broomrape Orobanché minor growing near a Foxglove in a neighbour garden, no other plant was within 1 1/2 feet of the Foxglove, we were allowed to dig up both plants.

On examination firm attachment was seen between the host's roots and the parasite. These were replanted again to await any further results in 1987.

There was a large stem of the Broomrape about 15" tall bearing 55 flowers and at the base where it joined the host, a swelling about 3/4" diameter. The Foxglove roots also bore a smaller shoot of the Broomrape which was still growing on August 20th. This had flowers very close to soil level. Where seed produced would be near the host's roots.

The Lesser broomrape Orobanché minor is said to be parasitic on Clover and others of the family papilionaceae and we have seen it on a Clover patch in the village. It is also to be found on plants of the Compositae family.

As this host, Foxglove Scrophulariaceae does not appear in the literature it seems to be new- that is, of course, unless you know different!

IVY BROOMRAPE

Many years ago we collected a small quantity of Ivy Broomrape Orobanché hederæ seeds whilst botanising in Ireland. We uncovered the roots of a Giant Ivy Hedera colchica and scattered the seeds in September where they produced flowering stems the following year. On moving to Norfolk we took a capsule of seed and introduced them to Ivy Hedera helix also in the garden. Here they have produced flowering plants each year for the last 10 years. Why is this adaptable Broomrape not appearing naturally in the County?

Reg & Lil Eavns

A NEW NORFOLK RECORD

Centipedes are nocturnal creatures, fast moving and possessed of a pair of poison claws by which their prey is captured and killed. They would seem to be unlikely hosts for a small parasitic fly.

A small Centipede was collected from leaf litter in Blue Stone Wood Norfolk, in June last year. In colour it was rather different from the usual reddish brown of our Common Centipede *Lithobius forficatus* as it had a slight purplish tinge. It was hoped that when fullgrown it might be of interest and not be our common species, in any case its behaviour and feeding habits could be studied.

However the centipede became noticeably sluggish, did not feed as voraciously as expected and eventually died. The carcase was swollen in one area and raised hopes that a parasite of some kind was likely to emerge.

On June 5th a small fly was in the container having emerged from a puparium within the hosts body. This was determined by The British Museum as *Eloceria delecta* Meigen. This is now in their collection where there are a few other specimens. There is also one continental record of this species breeding in a centipede.

Reg Evans

POLYSTYRENE MOTH COCOONS

Puss Moth larvae construct their cocoons of silk and line them with scrapings taken from the surface of the wood on which they intend to pupate. The result is a hard cocoon of a colour much like the wood on which it rests and quite strong enough to resist most predators.

Larvae were provided not with wood but a sheet of polystyrene. One solved the camouflage problem by sticking willow leaves of the food plant to cover the cocoon.

The second, unable to reach the willow leaves, placed small white chips of the polystyrene on the outside of the cocoon. These scattered particles showed up strongly in contrast to the brownish silk of the cocoon, this seem to be some attempt to conceal the brownish colour from the white surround.

Neither of these cocoons were as hard as the normal.

The moth emerges by liberating formic acid, to dissolve the silk threads holding the wood fragments and pushes its way out.

No difficulty is foreseen.

Reg Evans.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NATTERJACK should be sent to Colin Dack, 12, Shipdham Road, Toftwood, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1JJ, to arrive not later than 15th July 1987. Contributions sent after this date will not be accepted for the August Natterjack.