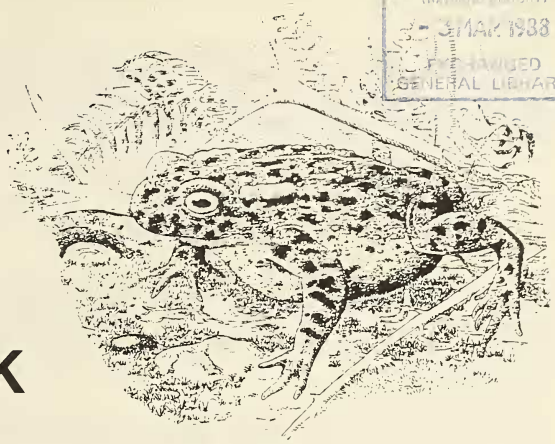

THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists´ Society

No.20 February 1988

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Dr.C.P.PETCH

It is with great regret that we have to report the passing of one of the County´s much respected botanists. Dr.C.P.Petch MD. FRCP. a past president of the Society 1981-82, who passed away on December 8th 1987, aged 78. He was buried at North Wootton near King´s Lynn in the village where he was born.

A methodical researcher and recorder he was always ready to assist with a problem of identification. He was co-author with Mr.E.L.Swann of the Flora of Norfolk published in 1986 to commemorate the Society´s centenary year.

Our sincere condolences are extended to his wife and family.

K.C.Durrant.

FUNGUS REPORT 1987

This has been a remarkable year in many respects. After a disappointing start there were plenty of fungi later in the season and 117 new species were added to our list. Excursions of the Society provided 293 records. Personal forays by members, Mid Norfolk Trust excursions and other sources provided a total of 2769 by December 31st. Total records are approximately 19.000 which should provide much information regarding the frequency of species in the County. Some of the new finds have already appeared in previous copies of the Natterjack, there are so many others that it seems pointless to name all of them. It is anticipated that fungus records since 1975 will be placed with the British Mycological Society this coming year.

A few words on conservation. Since Toadstools are only the fruiting bodies, the main plant (beneath the soil or other substrate) is not affected by picking. A single fruiting body produces millions of spores so that survival depends largely on one of these finding a suitable habitat.

It is not possible to identify all species in the field and many require further examination at home. Identification in the field often requires a look at the gill structure which is only possible by pulling up the toadstool.

Furthermore in all our forays after identification the material is left in situ to be rapidly eaten by fly or beetle larvae, small mammals, deer etc and spores are rapidly dispersed in this way.

A little thoughtfulness in collecting - the spores of Earthstars can be shaken out in the area where found. Do not take more than one even if identification is in doubt. It is not anticipated that conservation is a problem, although some areas known to be habitats for rare fungi are protected.

Reg Evans.

A RARE FUNGUS - CALOSCYPHA FULGENS

This fungus was first found in this Country when we visited Brandon Picnic Site (March 1968) in grass on the roadside verge. The specimens were cup shaped about an inch in diameter. The inner surface was a bright yellow colour with a tinge of green.

At first thought to be of no economic importance and unlikely to be pathogenic. However we are informed that it is " The ascogenous state of a common mould parasitic on seeds of conifers especially in wet situations".

A further find of these cup fungi was made near Elveden (in April 1985) under conifer in a woodland ride. These records were in Suffolk.

Two days later we visited Lenwade Nature Reserve. We were delighted to find a single specimen under ash distant from conifer.

Since the other state (´mould´) is parasitic on seeds of conifer and these are wind borne, it is possible that the ascogenous state (the cup fungus) developed from an infected seed.

The bright yellow cup fungus 1" (25mm) in diameter is easy to see. In March to May it is unlikely to be confused with any similar fungus, so if you are in conifer woods at this time look out for this rarity (3 British records only). We would welcome any finds sent for confirmation.

Reg & Lil Evans.

SKYLARKS

Has there been a general shortage of skylarks this year? In May and June I spent nearly five weeks at a farm-house at Ilketshall, Suffolk. The place is surrounded by meadow land but not once did I see or hear a skylark. It was the same on odd days out in and around Norfolk, not one skylark. I mentioned this to a market gardening friend (Mr Albert Ward of Spixworth). He said that every year, usually when snow was on the ground, skylarks would ruin quite a large area of greens, but both he and his son remarked upon how few there were this year. If this is general could it be due to the fact that these lovely little songsters are slaughtered in vast numbers on the continent, or is it that I just have not been in the right place at the right time?

Dorothy Johnson

SOME GALLS IN GREAT YARMOUTH CEMETERIES

Over the past 16 years I have kept a watch on the municipal cemeteries in the centre of Gt. Yarmouth, recording the birdlife (for which they are renowned), mammals, plants, fungi etc. A few years ago I mentioned in these pages some of the species of the latter group which I have come across.

In my rambles I have also fallen upon several species of galls.

Common on the young shoots of sycamore which appear everywhere are examples of the mite Eriophyes macrorhynchus aceribus, populating the leaves in abundance. Not quite so prolific, but also common on certain years, is the species Eriophyes tiliae tiliae forming the characteristic Nail gall on Lime. This tree has also been host to the midge Contarinia tiliarum which forms the "Petiole gall". A lamented victim of last year's hurricane was an interesting Wych-elm which produced some fine examples of the "Roll gall" caused by the Aphis Eriosoma ulmi. This fine tree has since been removed from the cemetery and with it too, I fear, has this gall.

Not the fate of the Robin's pincushion Diplolepis rosae I expect. This spectacular gall can be seen at all times of the year. In spring and summer the tangled masses of red are very common.

But it is to one particular oak that I am usually drawn when gall-hunting. This has produced some fine specimens among which are: Currant and Common Spangle galls Neuroterus quercus-baccarum, Silk-button Spangle Neuroterus numismalis, Pea gall cynips divisa and Marble gall Andricus kollari. Perhaps most interesting of all has been the Knopper gall Andricus quercuscalicis. Members will probably know of the spread of this species throughout the county since the mid 1970's. I first recorded it in the Yarmouth cemeteries, on the acorns of oaks in 1976. That year it was abundant, but since then it has never recurred so spectacularly. Some years have been better than others but in a couple, none were recorded. However the last two seasons have seen good numbers on the same tree but the situation needs continued watching. Gall-hunting in cemeteries clearly pays dividends.

Michael Bean

SOCIAL EVENING SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14th 1987 at CATTON VILLAGE HALL

We do hope that members who attended enjoyed this occasion. We shall be pleased to receive any comments during the forthcoming months to help us to plan for this year. Having learnt from our experiences catering for this last party, we would now be able to assess what we need with more accuracy, if it is decided to do the same again. We do feel that next time numbers may have to be limited. In November 72 people attended and as was seen, this is about the maximum that can be coped with comfortably.

One thing is certain, the dishes cooked by members were much appreciated. Two dishes in particular attracted very favourable comments and requests for the recipes have been passed our way. We thought it would be nice to print these for you to try. Our thanks to Phyllis Ellis and Janet Ewles.

Rex and Barbara Hancy.

TED´S MUSHROOM SALAD (Phyllis Ellis)

(No quantities given, all done by taste!)
To cover 1/2 lb. - 3/4 lb. mushrooms.

A If using bought mayonnaise place a quantity in mixer add mustard (pinch), sugar (pinch) before other ingredients (C)

B Mayonnaise: Using one egg, pinch of sugar and mustard and about a teaspoon of vinegar, start mixer and after a second or so add a mixture of sunflower and olive oil slowly, until desired volume and thickness is achieved.

C Still mixing add about 3/4 teaspoon or less of powdered cloves, one garlic clove (or 2) and either tomato ketchup or a tin of tomato puree and a little Lea & Perrins Worcester Sauce.

D Skin the mushrooms and slice. Place in a dish, cover with sauce and clingfilm and put into the fridge until needed. Gently stir before serving.

TUNA FISH QUICHE (Janet Ewles)

9" flan dish
8 ozs. shortcrust pastry
5ozs. tin Tuna fish
3 eggs
5 fluid ozs. fresh cream
2 1/2 fluid ozs. milk
6 ozs. Cheddar cheese
1 tomato

Line a greased flan dish with the pastry. Drain Tuna fish and flake, grate cheese and thinly slice the tomato.
Sprinkle 1/2 Tuna fish into the pastry case then add 2ozs. of grated cheese - repeat layers again.
Beat eggs with cream and milk, season well and pour over the layers of Tuna and cheese.
Sprinkle remaining 2 ozs. of cheese over this and arrange thinly sliced tomato on top. Bake in centre of oven at 375°F (Mark 5) for 30 - 40 minutes.

ORANGE TIP BUTTERFLIES

We have provided a habitat in the garden for larvae of the Orange Tip butterfly, by not weeding out all the Garlic Mustard Alliaria petiolata. The introduction of a second food plant, Dame´s Violet Hesperis matronalis has also assisted.

Some of the larvae were taken at a late stage to rear into butterflies, but unfortunately 3 out of 7 pupae were found to be parasitised by flies (Tachinidae).

Parasitism is a factor in the survival of the species which is often ignored. This year is not exceptional and confirms records of previous years.

On leaves of Dame´s Violet, larvae and pupae of the moth Plutella were collected. From white cocoons emerged two parasites Apanteles imperator.

Butterfly and moth larvae and eggs suffer many casualties by parasites.

Reg Evans.

WANTED a Commodore 8250 or 8050 dual floppy disk unit to use for Society work. My SFD 1001 disk unit needs reparing, I requir a disk unit to use while this is being repaired. As all my software is in this format. Colin Dack. Membership Secretary.

AN UNCOMMON OAK GALL? - ANDRICUS QUERCUS RAMULI

These are visible among oak twigs as white cotton wool galls which turn to a light brown shade later in the year. They are formed on male oak catkins. A parthenogenetic generation is said to develop in buds in the early spring.

We do not have many records for this particular gall, although it must be conspicuous when young.

Galls collected from the Toftwood area matured and produced gall wasps - brownish insects with yellow legs. In addition considerable numbers of a parasitic wasp Chalcids also emerged. Perhaps parasitism keeps these galls from being more frequently seen.

We would be pleased to know of further sightings of this easily identified gall - white to light brown cottony galls about marble size.

Lil Evans & Colin Dack.

´PIGGYBACK´ TOADSTOOLS

On rare occasions toadstools are found with a smaller one of the same species growing on the cap. Some of these malformed fungi may have arisen due to damage by insects and other causes.

There are some toadstools which live on others of a different species, Asterophora parasitica and Asterophora lycoperdoides have this ability and are found on larger fungi of Russula and Lactarius.

They grow on almost any part of the host producing many white capped small toadstools (up to 1" 25mm diameter). In the case of A lycoperdoides these caps turn ochre colour and produce on the surface an abundance of loose spores (known as resting spores).

In the following year when fruiting bodies of Russula and Lactarius push up through the soil they are said to become infected by these resting spores which germinate and grow on their tissue.

Some of these spores were collected and placed on the cap of a Russula nigricans. Within a few weeks small fruiting heads of a Lycoperdoides were seen indicating that although the resting spores can germinate when next years Russula´s become available, they are also capable of more immediate germination if the host is provided.

Attempts to grow these piggyback toadstools on other species of Russula were not successful. Most Russulas tend to decay rapidly, probably before the germinating spore can develop.

It is noticeable that fungi affected with these small toadstools produce few fungus gnats or other flies. Neither does the host appear attacked by moulds.

Perhaps the piggyback toadstools can prevent the development of these other intruders

Reg Evans.

SOME NOTES ON SPIDERS

It is generally thought that female spiders always eat the male, unless he is quick enough to make off soon after mating. This may be true of certain species such as Meta segmentata females which have no compunction in devouring a succession of male partners.

A pair of Zebra spiders Salticus scenicus confined in a small container shared a retreat (silken tunnel) and did not even quarrel about food provided.

However on an outdoor meeting a shortage of small containers resulted in a male and a female Linyphia piontana spiders being confined together. On opening the container the male was seen making a meal of the female. There are always exceptions!

Generally spiders tested ignored certain flies (Sciarids) and refused the bramble gall wasp Diastrophus rubi. The spider Harpactea hombergi whose food preferences are said to be unknown - reduced booklice (Psocids) to fragments overnight. It seems to be nocturnal in activity.

A relative of this spider is Dysdera crocata with a reddish brown carapace and legs and a tube - like greyish abdomen. A pair of these were introduced in a small glass container. Contrary to the literature there was no slow approach, but an immediate swift entanglement. It was felt that such a violent approach would result in a battle in which no chance would arise of separating the contestants.

Fears were groundless. Mating took place and was repeated several times within the hour.

Reg Evans.

Annual Subscription

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

Annual Subscription rates are:

Junior	£3.00	Ordinary	£6.00
Family	£7.50	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 1988. your name will be deleted from the membership roll.

Colin Dack, Membership Secretary.

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 April 1988.** Contributions sent after this date will not be accepted for the May Natterjack.