



# THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

No.21

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## RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

As many members will know, the Society's Council has established a number of committees, mainly to help with the organisation of the Programme, Membership and Publications. There is another, however, whose function is much less defined and precise: the Research Committee. In fact, although I was invited to accept the chairmanship two years ago, I'm still not certain what that function is!

However, it seemed to me that we ought A) to encourage, if not initiate, suitable research projects in the County, and B) maintain any projects already going on and collate their results. Of the former, we have responded to two requests for help in investigating particular habitats: one for a general look at Wiveton Downs, an area up to now (as far as I am aware) somewhat neglected by naturalists, and another for specialists to investigate some aspects of the natural history of Howe Hill which have received less attention than, say, its larger plants and animals. Field meetings have been arranged to both these sites as part of the Summer programme.

Of the latter function, we have been concerned mainly with the Roadside Verge survey which was completed in 1985. We thought that this was a most useful and significant piece of work, whose organisers deserve (and I trust have received) the Society's thanks and congratulations. However, as everyone agrees that roadside verges are a vitally important reservoir of plant and animal species, we are going to need to watch over them and regularly assess actual and potential threats. Consequently, in the Committee's name I wrote to everyone I could trace who had contributed to the original survey, thanking them for what they had done, and asking them to keep an eye on their verge(s), with a view to producing a new report perhaps ten years after the first one.

A number of contributors were kind enough to reply to this necessarily generalised letter, and many of them made the point (which I

should have thought of myself) that they were not so young as they were, and doubted whether they would be in a position to help that far in the future! However, they all offered to carry on watching their verges as long as mobility allowed, which is one of the nice things about naturalists.

Paul Banham, Wells

## SAXTHORPE

24th April 1988

The unexpected fine weather produced a very large turn out for this meeting, lead by Ann Brewster.

We could see evidence of Red Deer, Ann Brewster showed us how the Red Deer were damaging the young trees by nibbling off the growing tips. A large number of young trees were damaged in this way. Deciduous trees are being planted in place of conifers. On a walk through the wood we saw a carpet of primroses.

In the morning some of our members explored the wood and area where the cars were parked. A Common Lizard was seen on a branch lying on the ground. Rex took a photograph, then Colin attempted to photograph the Lizard, however as he knelt his right knee joint gave a audible crack whereupon the Lizard promptly disappeared! It takes very little to disturb this reptile. In the adjacent woodland Lil Evans and Gordon Meek found a pale brown cup fungus Encoelia furfuracea growing on dead hazel branches, April is the time when it is seen.

Some of us spent the afternoon looking in a wood near the bridge. Under a pile of dead branches Gordon Meek found a 2" Scarlet Elf Cup Sarcoscypha coccinea. Lil Evans found a pinkish jelly fungus Neobulgaria pura growing on a dead stump, these fungus records are uncommon in Norfolk.

After lunch we visited a meadow to see the Alternate-Leaved Golden Saxifrage Chrysosplenium alternifolium there was also a good showing of Wood Anemone Anemone nemorosa, Ramsons Allium ursinum and some Yellow Archangel Lamiaeum galeobdolon. We were then taken to a meadow where pigs had been kept four years ago. Ann Brewster showed us a photograph taken two years ago when it had a very good flora, it is now well on the way to being an Alder carr.

We next went to the site of the Mousetail Myosurus minimus. There was a Bull in this meadow, Colin claimed to have some good photographs of Mousetail, he kept both eyes on the bull form outside of the meadow while we took our photographs.

We then visited the Exhibition in the Village Hall. Considerable effort had been put into several of the exhibits, including a very interesting distribution map of Harvest Mice in the Saxthorpe and Corpusty area. Is this the best area for Harvest Mice in the County? Or is it that Ann Brewster has gone out and found the evidence?

C.D., R.E. & M.P.

## A FLOOD ALLEVIATION STRATEGY FOR BROADLAND

Jan Brooke & Kerry Turner of the School of Environmental Sciences, U.E.A., are currently undertaking a research project for Anglian Water and the Broads Authority aimed at formulating a flood alleviation strategy for the Norfolk Broads area. Environmental acceptability is an important criterion of this research, and to this end we are contacting various conservation agencies to help with the compilation of a "rare species" inventory. We feel that it would be useful if the Water Authority had a reasonably comprehensive list of the location and relative importance of species of particular interest, together with some indication of their water quality requirements.

If you are aware of any such species in Broadland particularly those species which are less widely publicised, I would be grateful if you could make a note of the following:-

- 1 Species name (Latin and English).
- 2 Location of species (grid reference or march/level name and nearest main river).
- 3 Importance (international, national, regional).
- 4 Water quality requirement (fresh, brackish, salt, no preference).
- 5 Whether this information should be regarded as confidential.

Data can be forwarded to:- Jan Brooke, ENV, U.E.A. Norwich. NR4 7TJ

Please include a note of your name and address, so that information can be followed up if necessary.

It should be emphasised that the above refers to all forms of wildlife, not just plants. In fact, more information already exists on plants than anything else. Jan has assured me that, where necessary, information can be treated in confidence.

Alec Bull

## FRUIT FLIES FROM FUNGI

Fruit Flies Drosophila are, as the name suggests attracted to fruit especially if it should be over ripe. Their larvae are found mainly in decaying vegetable matter. It would appear that hard wood encrusting fungi would be an unsuitable habitat.

Hypoxyylon rubiginosum is such a fungus. Hard thin reddish-brown layers appear on the wood of dead Ash trees. Norfolk collections were made to discover if they were attacked, if so the identity of the insects

Some Nemapogon species of small moths emerged, followed by their parasite Apanteles parasitellae, a small wasp like creature associated with microlepidoptera in fungi.

In addition two species of fruit fly were present in the container Drosophila subobscura and Amiota basdeni.

A specimen of Daldinia concentrica (King Alfred's cakes) also produced Drosophila subobscura.

Reg Evans.

### 'JEWS EAR' FUNGUS

This is a common brown gelatinous fungus often seen on the bark of living and dead Elder branches and occasionally on Beech, Elm and other trees.

Some of this material was placed in moist peat where it eventually decayed. In the container appeared many tiny 'gall midges' so called because this group often produces galls although these were not visible on the collected fungus.

These midges proved to be Camptodiplosis auriculariae (Cecidomyiidae : Diptera) seldom recorded, and probably new to the County.

Reg Evans.

### A COMMON BRACKET FUNGUS AND ITS INHABITANTS

Inonotus hispidus is found growing on various deciduous trees such as Apple and Walnut, but is especially common on Ash. There is no common name for this species which could well be called the "Ash Polypore" because of its apparent preference for this tree.

I have seen specimens on other trees growing along Earlham Road and they probably still produce their annual fruiting bodies there.

Surprisingly on splitting old and mature bracket fungi of this species I seem to always find pinkish beetle larvae which in due course become adult beetles Orchesia micans. They are brown oval shaped and able to jump to avoid capture.

There is (of course) an associated parasite which is also present in most collections often in quantity. This blackish small "wasp" Meteorus obfuscatus exerts some control over this common beetle.

Reg Evans.

### SPONSORED NEST-BOX BUILD

The Norfolk Young Naturalists and West Norfolk Conservation Volunteers are holding a sponsored nest-box build during early July in aid of tropical forest conservation. We hope to sell any boxes made to add to the money raised. Prices are from £2.75 for bat or small bird boxes (£2.50/box for six or more), to £8.00 for owl boxes. Boxes made to order for a wide variety of species. Enquiries or orders for boxes to Edward Cross (Hillington 600227).

### GIVE A DAY FOR NORFOLK

Are you concerned at the amount of development which is taking place in the County? Do we need more bypasses and all our main roads dualled? Do we need more tourists, or is enough enough? These and many other aspects of our countryside in the years leading up to the year 2,000 are to be discussed at a One Day Conference which is being planned by a group of concerned members of our community, to take place on Saturday 10th September at Wymondham College. Full details in the next Natterjack. The title to look out for is the same as the heading above. Watch this space!

# PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP PROGRAMME 1988/89

As hitherto, all indoor meetings are being held at the Assembly House, (in the Sir Edmund Bacon Room throughout) to commence at 7.30 pm.

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|------------|--|
| Sunday     | Photographic Fungus Excursion to West Harling Woods.   |
| 11th Sept  | Meet at the West Harling Picnic site. Carry picnic lunch,  |
| 1100.Hrs   | afternoon follow up at 1400hrs subject to the weather being favourable   |
| Wednesday  | Members Evening: To renew acquaintances, to welcome new  |
| 21st Sept  | members and to enjoy some of your holiday slides at the first indoor meeting of the new session. Please bring up to 12 slides each |
| Wednesday  | "East Anglian Wildlife" Lecturer: Mr. B. Wingrove.   |
| 19th Oct   |  |
| Wednesday  | "Photographing Flowers, Home & Abroad." Lecturer: Mr R.Jones.  |
| 23rd Nov   |  |
| Friday     | "The Scilly Isles" Lecturer: Mr R. Batch.  |
| 9th Dec    |  |
| Wednesday  | "Small is Beautiful" Lecturer: Mr M. Woolner.  |
| 18th Jan   |  |
| Wednesday  | "Alpine Flora" Lecturer: Mr K. Durrant.  |
| 22nd Feb   |  |
| Friday     | "Getting close to Nature" Lecturer: Mr K. Palmer.  |
| 17th Mar   |  |
| Monday     | "Walking in Wales" Lecturer: Mr M. Poulton.  |
| 17th April |  |

At the conclusion of each lecture provision is made for members to show a few slides of their own. No more than 10 each please.

Bob Robinson

I would like to remind members that Photographic Group meetings are open to all Society members to attend. You do not have to have the latest in high-technology jewellery hanging round your neck. You do not have to own a camera, just have an interest in Natural history photography and would just like to come to the meetings. We only mention equipment when someone asks about it. If you have a photographic problem someone in the group would be able to help you.

## PETROL / OIL GIFT VOUCHERS

Would members who never seem to collect the number required, to collect the so-called gift. Please save them so they can be exchanged for gifts to use as prizes in a raffle at the Society Social Evening. For further details see August Natterjack.

Colin Dack.

£10 was raised for Society funds from the collection of Nescafe labels.



## RARE FUNGUS FOUND IN WEST NORFOLK

Whilst hunting for fungi in the Stanford Battle Area on 21st November 1987, I discovered Volvariella surrecta growing on rotting Cloud Caps Clitocybe nebularis under a line of roadside Beech at Hopton point. The find was later confirmed by Mr.R.E.Evans. I had previously seen the species in a similar habitat where it was found some years ago by Mr Evans, at East Tuddenham. These are the only substantiated recent records, though Mr Evans tells me that the late Dr. Ellis had referred to another find a year or two ago, but that no definite record had ever come to light. The only previous records of this species in Norfolk appear in Part 2 of G.J.Cooke's Norfolk County list of Fungi, Transactions of The Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society 1938, page 473 under Volvariella loveiana. Tottenhill. 26/10/1903. Dr.C.B. Plowright (The late Dr. Petch's grandfather, I am told) and King's Lynn, 26/10/1902. C.Rea.

It would appear worthwhile for mycologists to search sites from which they know Clitocybe nebularis during the early part of November, when the host plant is likely to be decaying.

Alce Bull.

## SOCIETY NOTICE BOARD

## WORKSHOP IN 1988.

7th June: Microscopy Group - Copepods and Foraminifera.

6th July: Norfolk Moth Survey - Pyralid identification.

25th August: Flatworms and Leeches.

10 October: Norfolk Moth Survey - Introduction to micros and annual review.

All workshops are held in the Castle Museum Norwich at 7.30pm 19.30hrs Car parking is available on the Castle Mound.

Note that the Norfolk Moth Survey will be holding a number of field meetings during the summer. For details of these, contact Tony Irwin at the Museum (Norwich 611277 ext. 42).

## TRANSACTIONS 1988

The editor of the transactions apologise to all members who were looking forward to reading their Transactions without the distraction of the brilliant colours of the Bird and Mammal Report. Unfortunately this year, as last, the Transactions will be delayed until July.

Tony Irwin.

The editor would be pleased to receive notes (contributions) for the next Natterjack, especially from those members who have not yet made a contribution. Closing date for submissions 1st July 1988. Contributions should be sent to Colin Dack, 12, Shipdham Road, Toftwood, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1JJ.