

THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



The Quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

No. 23

November 1988

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PROGRESS AT WHEATFEN

Next spring we can look forward to taking one of the most exciting nature walks in the county, a new two and a half mile walk at Wheatfen. It is already in place and when Phyllis Ellis took Les Peet from Guernsey round it recently they found Swallowtail caterpillars, Adders Tongue ferns and two new stands of Marsh Pea. But it is very wet underfoot now and vegetation has grown so that even Phyllis describes it as hard going. Look forward to next spring.

Winter work at Wheatfen will get underway nextweek when an excavator begins to open up the drainage of Old Mill Marsh and the Smee Loke. This free exchange of water is essential to maintain the fen nature of the reserve. While the excavator is there he will be taking out a small pond which can be reached by wheelchair. A shelter, to be erected alongside will allow the disabled to share in the joys of Wheatfen.

Work has started on the carpark and plans are going ahead for the nature centre which will provide a meeting room and shelter for naturalists visiting the reserve.

All this has only been possible because of the wonderful support the Wheatfen Trust has been getting from all sides: we have almost 600 Friends and a Wheatfen Conservation Group has been started. We have to thank the conservation groups who have worked at Wheatfen this year and the MSC teams who have done such excellent work for us.

Phyllis Ellis has welcomed school groups ranging from infants to GCSE projects, over a dozen societies and countless individuals to Wheatfen during the year besides speaking at meetings and appearing on Radio Norfolk. She sees the work of the Trust as being to preserve Wheatfen and to allow people to enjoy themselves there.

We understand that the BBC will be showing John Mountfords long awaited film on Ted Ellis and Wheatfen on 9 December. An Event to look forward to.

K.B.C.

DENVER

5th June 1988

This was a joint meeting with the Denver, Fordham, Roxham and Ryston Village Trust. The Trust members were, as always, the perfect hosts.

Only five members of the Society (Lil & Reg Evans, Barbara & Rex Hancy & me) attended this meeting. We were treated like V.I.P'S. The Trust members made a very big fuss of Reg as your President this year, which he obviously appreciated. In the morning we had a good look at Whin Common from which good lists were made. Bates Wood was very soggy under foot so we did not do so much there.

At lunch the Trust provided us with cider. They should not do things like this as I could get used to this so very easily!

After lunch some of us went to the Old Vicarage to see the Yellow Figwort *Scrophularia vernalis* growing in the garden. We were invited in to this very interesting house for afternoon tea and were shown the original deeds in copperplate handwriting. (If only the members writing to me could write like this.)

This was a very enjoyable meeting. Four new fungi records were added to the Norfolk list, We also found a fasciated Spear thistle. Those of you who did not attend do not know what you have missed, but perhaps I should not say too much as if too many had turned up we could hardly have been treated so well.

Colin Dack.

LANDGUARD COMMON

3rd July 1988

Almost four years to the day since our last visit to Languard Common. a small party met at this splendid site to be shown the very special botanical treasures by Arthur Copping who has carefully monitored the flora for many years. Over the years the wild area has been encroached upon until now only a fragment remains, this remnant now seems to be secure under the control of the Suffolk Trust. The increasing disturbance of the rest is a benefit as it creates continual open habitats. On our last visit there was just one plant of Sticky Samphire *Ditrichia visiosa* a Mediterranean species in its only British locality, having been there since about 1976. On our present visit we were able to see how it had increased - there is now the original plus a dozen vigorous seedlings. Henbane which luxuriated in 1984 was, except for one depauperate plant on the beach, (found by Colin Dack), entirely absent. Among the many nice things Arthur pointed out to us were an abundance of Slender Thistle *Carduus tenuiflorus*, now only a rare and sporadic casual in Norfolk, Suffocated Clover *Trifolium suffocatum*, the rare hybrid cross between Oxford Ragwort *Senecio squalidus* and Sticky Groundsel *Senecio viscosus*, the Grass-leaved Pea *Lathyrus hissolia*, White Ramping fumitory *Fumitoria capreolata* and American Winter-cress *Barbarea verna*. The Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus* was nearly over but could still be seen. Arthur is a grass specialist, he was able to take us to the rarities Meadow Brome *Bromus commutatus*, Compact Brome *Bromus madritensis* and

Rough Dog's-tail *Cynosurus enhinatus*. Tamarisk *Tamarix gallica* abounded on and near the Fort and the masses of Sea-kale *Crambe maritima* were spectacular on the beach. The strong wind discouraged insect life but we did see Cinnabar and Narrow - bordered Five - spot Burnet moths.

E.T.Daniels.

BACTON WOODS

21st August 1988

In the absence of Society field meetings in August, twelve members arranged to meet at the Bacton Woods Picnic Site.

They proved to be most enthusiastic in spite of the dull day, and their searches were rewarded. Fifteen kinds of galls, eight species of spider and many flowering plants were seen. Some of us had a glimpse of a slowworm taking cover, and a common shrew. Much interest was taken in sawfly and moth larvae, and in a number of dead hoverflies plagued by a fungus.

Large white incrustations on a beech trunk were examined and found to be due to scale insects. This has, unfortunately, been seen previously this year.

Fifty two fungi were recorded, two of them new to the County list.

It does not require a large attendance to make a highly successful meeting. Originally arranged as a fungus foray, there was much of interest in other aspects of natural history. There usually is!

Reg & Lil Evans.

CONSERVATION OF FUNGI

It would take many "Natterjacks" to describe the life cycle of fungi, and the way in which it differs from flowering plants. Well meaning people sometimes question us concerning the taking of fungi when we are making records.

Several hundred species can be identified in the field although many of these would require picking to enable details to be seen under and below the cap.

Hundreds more require microscopical examination for cystidia, basidia, spore size and ornamentation, cap tissue cells and chemical testing etc. Photographs can often be useless as an aid to identity.

This is recognised by the Nature Conservancy, the Norfolk Naturalists Trust, the National Trust, and the British Mycological Society.

There are some reserves where protection is given, the species being visually identifiable. Minimum collections of others are taken when identity is in doubt. The rest are left for visual appreciation by non-mycologists.

Reg & Lil Evans.

(Also see Natterjack No 20 Feb 88)

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS!

Short of ideas why not send your friends a copy of the 1987 colour **BIRD AND MAMMAL REPORT** price £3.00 plus .30p post & packing total £3.30
To Mary J Dorling "St. Edmundsbury", 6 New Road, Hethersett, Norwich. NR9 3HH.

SOCIAL EVENING : CATTON VILLAGE HALL : SATURDAY 12th NOVEMBER : 7.30 P.M.

From the comments received after last year's party, we feel that the arrangements were agreeable to most of those who attended. Therefore we propose to repeat the format, having gained from the experience.

We shall hold the price at £2.50 per ticket and these will be on sale from now on. For the sake of comfort numbers will have to be limited to around 70 so it will be a case of first come, first served. A phone call or a note in the post will secure a place for you, and we shall bring along tickets to meeting in the coming weeks.

If anyone would like to provide an item of food, please phone me. The ingredients will be paid for, so please hand in a bill with the dish prepared on the night. I need to know what you will be making so that we can ensure variety. its nice to sample members' favourite recipes.

Please book your place for the festivities as soon as possible.

BARBARA HANCY, 124 FAKENHAM ROAD, TAVERHAM, NORWICH NR8 6QH - NORWICH 860042

FELBRIGG Gt. WOOD

25th September 1988

About 24 members attended the first of this years fungus forays. Over 70 species were recorded. The most notable being *Hygrocybe unguinosus*, *Sparassiss crispa*, *phaeolus schweintzii* and a *discomycete* on cow dung *Coprobia granulata*.

Mike Woolner.

CARRY ON COLLECTING

Would members please carry on collecting the petrol / oil gift vouchers. We have decided not to have the raffle at the Society Social Evening, But to have it at the A.G.M. instead to give us more time so that more vouchers can be collected to give us a better selection of prizes. If any member or non members would like to donate a prize for the raffle it would be very much appreciated. A bottle of Old England Ruby wine has been donated by a non member.

Colin Dack

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT NATTERJACK should be sent to Colin Dack, 12, Shipdham Road, Toftwood, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1JJ, to arrive not later than **1st January 1989**. Contributions sent after this date will not be accepted for the February Natterjack.