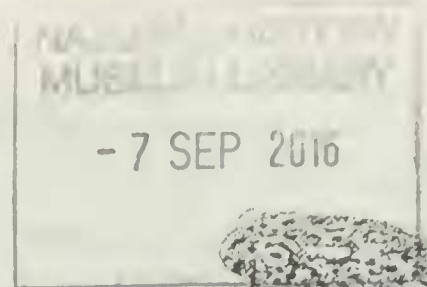




Number 38



# THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



August 1992

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

## SOCIAL EVENING

By popular request, last year's format will be repeated. Everything is relative. The attendance was lower than usual but those who came asked for a repeat.

So why not come along and join us this year? Bring a few slides, no more than nine, sample the wine and cheese and close the evening by reading a favourite literary extract, tell a story or read a poem, on a natural history theme of course.

Nothing is compulsory. The only thing you have to do is buy a ticket (£3) at an autumn meeting or book through us at home. Next year? All may be different again. We expect to attend but as far as organising the evening is concerned, this is our swan song.

Rex and Barbara Hancy



## PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP PROGRAMME 1992/93



Monday	14 <sup>th</sup> September	"Close-ups in the Eastern Mediterranean"	Reg Jones.
Thursday	15 <sup>th</sup> October	"More pages from the Picture Book"	Rex Hancy.
Friday	27 <sup>th</sup> November	"Barbados & other Caribbean Islands"	John Oxenford.
Wednesday	16 <sup>th</sup> December	"Botanising in Majorca & French Pyrenees"	Bob Illingworth.

## 1993

Thursday	21 <sup>st</sup> January	"The Blue Ridge, Virginia to Tennessee"	Max Smith.
Thursday	18 <sup>th</sup> February	"(1) Insects. (2) Pindos Mountains-Greece"	Norman Carmicheal.
Monday	15 <sup>th</sup> March	"Out & About with a Camera"	Brian MacFarlane.
Wednesday	24 <sup>th</sup> March	The World of Nature "Group Lecture to the Society"	City Library.
Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup> April	"By Camera to the Channel Islands"	Joyce Robinson.

Kindly note that with the exception of the Group Lecture to the Society on 24<sup>th</sup> March all of the Photographic Group meetings as shown above will be held as usual in the Sir Edmund Bacon Room at the Assembly House.

Bob Robinson.

## HUNT THE TORTOISE - FIND A BUG

A neighbour come round one evening bearing a small note. His ancient tortoise Toby, had yet again wandered off. How it gets out of its low-walled pen remains a mystery. The last time he went walk-about, he turned up in our garage, and on attempting to pick him up to put him into a box he spat at me quite ferociously - so I spat a few rude words back. His owner was bringing the little notes round to ask people in the area to look in their gardens to see if this 'gentleman (?) of the road' was sheltering there.

Next morning I set off round the garden to search in dark corners and in sheltered spots for Toby. One place I looked was in the thick tangle of weeds under a silver birch tree - no tortoise. But I always look at tree leaves 'just in case' as they quite often turn up interesting finds of another kind. Yes, there was something. I recognised the object on the leaf as a species of shield bug, but what was this? There were eggs underneath it. Also I noticed a thread linked the beast to a chewed off portion of leaf which was bent down as a kind of awning above.

I stood guard over this find as Rex was not due back for a while and I didn't want to lose the bug to a bird before I knew what I'd found. On his return, Rex immediately named it as a parent bug, *Elasmucha grisea*, which was in fact guarding her own batch of eggs. Rex gave me a description to read of how the female chooses a birch leaf in early June where she rests for 2 days and then lays some 30/40 eggs. She stays sitting over the eggs (not incubating) from 2/3 weeks until they've hatched. The larvae stay around the empty eggshells for a few days and then move off together, still under the protection of 'Mum'. The larvae will follow her throughout the second instar, communication taking place between parent and the young themselves by means of the antennae. I read that the parent will also place herself between the young and any 'introduced object' such as a finger or twig. This shieldbug is smaller than some of the other species commonly found but the shape is unmistakable.

Rex did get a photograph, so my wait was worthwhile - but I didn't find the tortoise!

Barbara Hancy 31<sup>st</sup> May 1992

## GRASSES

20<sup>th</sup> June 1992

About 20 members assemble at Brewers Green, Roydon, near Diss, to study grasses. Arthur Copping opened the meeting by passing round specimens of *Avena fatua* (Wild oat) and explaining the structure of the grass plant and the terminology used in describing it. The party then explored the rough uncut areas of the green noting several common and widespread species including *Arrhenatherum elatius* (False Oat-grass), *Dactylis glomerata* (Cock's - foot), *Poa trivialis* ( Rough Meadow - grass), *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Rye - Grass), *Elytrigia repens* (Common Couch), *Agrostis capillaris* ( Common Bent), *Deschampsia Cespitosa ssp. cespitosa* (Tufted Hair - grass), *Festuca rubra ssp. rubra* (Red Fescue), *Glyceria fluitans* (Floating Sweet - Grass) and *Phleum bertolonii* (Smaller Cat's - tail).

These gave an excellent introduction to the diversity of shape and form of grass inflorescences. The party paid a brief visit to Arthur's garden to examine some rarer species in cultivation, including seven fescues, and paused to look at *Ceratochloa carinata* (California Brome) which had appeared as a weed in a neighbouring barley field.

After lunch members explored Fair Green, Diss, and saw the dead remains of the *Poa bulbosa* (Bulbous Meadow - grass) population first discovered there in 1991. A nearby sandy area supported large patches of *Aira caryophyllea* (Silver Hair - Grass) and, in one spot, a colony of *Vulpia ciliata ssp. ambigua* (Bearded Fescue) was found, a species not previously known in the Diss district.





The meeting ended at Diss Cemetery, parts of which are managed as a conservation area. Here was a fine meadow flora with *Trisetum flavescens* (yellow Oat - grass), *Briza media* (quaking - grass) and *Helictotrichon pubescens* (Downy Oat - grass) in abundance. Also present were *Barchypodium sylvaticum* (False Brome) and *Barchypodium pinnatum* (Tor - grass), the latter rare in Norfolk. The presence of *Ophrys apifera* (Bee Orchid) scattered among the grasses was noted with pleasure.

The Society wishes to thank the Diss Town Clerk Mrs. K. Vyrnwy - Clarke, for making available for our use the study facilities in the Cemetery buildings.

Arthur Copping.

- 7 SEP 2016

## BEESTON REGIS COMMON

A morning excursion in mid week was carried out as an experiment and proved to be a success. Fifteen members attended to see the orchids on Beeston Regis Common on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July.

Six species were on show some in their thousands, Common spotted, Heath spotted, Marsh Fragrant, Marsh helleborine, Pyramidal, Bee and Lesser butterfly. It was evident that many of the finer species had already become photographic models by the amount of gardening that had been carried out around them. A number of noses were put to use on the Fragrant Orchids and also the Wild celery.

Three insectivorous plants were seen Butterwort, Greater and Round leaved Sundews, Bog pimpernel was still in flower on large areas as was the Dodder on the Gorse. Despite vandalism to the Flowering Rush in the pond the previous week, a few new flower spikes were showing.

Butterflies seen were Large and Small Skippers, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White and Painted Lady. Oak Eggar, Five-spot Burnet and Silver Y moths were also on the wing. A large colony of Peacock butterfly caterpillars were busy feeding on a nettle patch, by their size they were ready to pupate.

Possibly two or more families of Long-tailed Tits were disturbed while feeding on Aphids in a Sallow, a long flight of twittering individuals made their way to a distant bush as the party approached, Yellowhammers and Chiffchaffs were calling nearby.

The mature Oak trees were literally covered with Oak apple Galls, the younger trees instead had their leaves dotted on the undersides with Red Pea Galls, and many exhibited the so called pseudo galls the brood chamber of the red weevil *Attelabus nitens*. A number of Mugwort were covered with the Pimple galls of the mites *Erophyes artemisiae*.

A week before this excursion Alec Bull and myself went around the site to identify grasses and brambles. Alec found sixteen species of Bramble and we found forty nine species of Grasses and sedges in two hours.

Ken Durrant.

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June, I went to Hickling broad for the day and while rowing around among the reed beds looking for insects, I found numerous caterpillars of the Drinker moth, *Philudora potatoria*, in various stages of growth and generally clinging to the leaves of the reeds.

As I approached a group of reeds, rather more rapidly than I should have, I had to use an oar in order to stop myself and in doing so I accidentally broke one or two reed stems which bent over and into the water. On one of the broken stems, I noticed a cocoon attached to it which I quickly rescued from the water, I

decided to take it home with me and hopefully, have it emerge. I placed it in my caterpillar cage that evening still attached to a piece of reed stem and left it to its own devices. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June it emerged from the cocoon and clung to the side of the cage until its wings had opened and hardened properly, a splendid female in a beautiful yellow buff colour with brownish streaks.

I decided that I would take it to Lound waterworks in order to release it which I did, on my return home, I found that, in the cage, the female had discharge around sixty or so turquoise green eggs, this I found rather surprising so soon after its emergence, (around four hours) I can only suppose that she felt threatened in captivity and decided to discharge the eggs as a precautionary measure.

I would welcome opinions from lepidopterists regarding this.

Tony Brown, 16 Mariners Park Close, Hopton, Gt. Yarmouth, NR31 9DQ Telephone Lowestoft 732332.

## HAVE YOU LOST A SLIDE

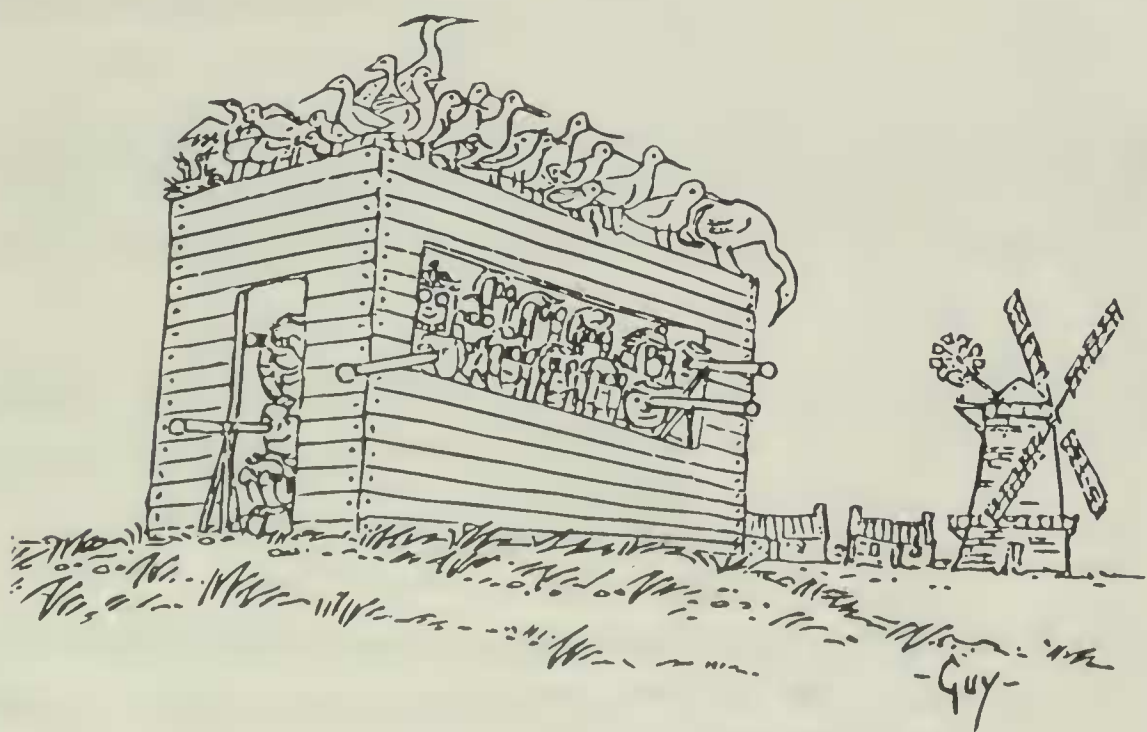
Have you lost a slide of a Peacock Butterfly on fleabane processed by Coe's. This slide was given to the wrong member after the Society Photographic Group Lecture "The Many Faces of Nature".

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

This is to remind members that their subscriptions were due on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Cheques should be made payable to the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society. Please send to Mr. D. Richmond, Honorary Treasurer, 42, Richmond Rise, Reepham, Norwich, Norfolk. NR10 4LS

Annual Subscription rates are: Junior £3. Ordinary £8. Family £10. Affiliation £15.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NATTERJACK should be sent to Colin Dack 12, Shipdham Road, Toftwood, Dereham, Norfolk. NR19 1JJ. To arrive not later than 1<sup>st</sup> October 1992. Contributions arriving after this date will not be accepted for the November Natterjack.



*Wishing all twitching members the  
very best of luck for the coming  
twitching season.*

*Hoping you are able to see many  
rarities new to you.*

*Colin R. Dack  
Editor of Natterjack.*

This Drawing is by Guy Todd the water colour artist from Blakeney. When I commented that I would like to put it in Natterjack, he gave me the original drawing to use and keep.

Guy's address for any  
one interested  
"Shingle Studio"  
Westgate Street,  
Blakeney, Norfolk.