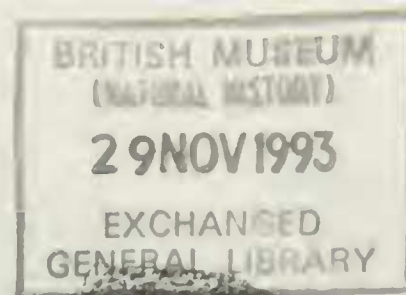




Number 43

THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



November 1993

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

125th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of its foundation in 1994.

The principal events marking this milestone will take place in St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich on Saturday, 21st May 1994.

During the day, from 10.30am to 4.00pm, an Exhibition will be held demonstrating the current activities and historical highlights of the Society. Many other organisations concerned with Norfolk's natural environment will also be represented on this occasion. Admission will be free.

At 7.30pm that evening, also in St. Andrew's Hall, Dr. David Bellamy will give a public lecture "In the wet a Peatnick returns to his Broadland roots", in his capacity as President of the Society. There will be a charge for this event (members £1 - other adults £2 - all children free) and tickets will be available in due course from the Society or at the door on the evening.

We hope that you will be able to attend one or both of these events and help us celebrate our anniversary.

COME AND JOIN US

It is not an exclusive sect. There are no esoteric admission rights. There is no arcane password demanded at the door. It is just a group of Society members whose interest in wildlife is at least partly fulfilled by photographing it - preferably producing illustrations that are pictorially pleasing as well as technically accurate.

You don't have to be an expert to come along to the meeting of the Society's photographic group at the Assembly House in Norwich.

In fact, few of the regulars, me among them, would dare to proclaim ourselves as experts. But we learn a little more at every meeting and our photography, we hope, gets a little better with every tip we pick up. and there are plenty to be picked up.

Most of what I have learned about nature photography - and there is a great deal more to be learned yet - has come from listening and talking to experts at the group's meetings, both visiting speakers and Society members.

So far this autumn we have had representatives from Norwich Camera Centre showing us some of the latest equipment on the market and Rex Hancy describing his experiments with photography through the microscope.

Our aim in compiling this season's programme has been to find speakers who don't just give us slide shows, interesting though they are, but tell us in some detail *how* they took their pictures: what equipment and film they used; what techniques of lighting and exposure were employed; what they looked for in composition, background and camera angles; how they persuaded a lively insect to stay still or a flower to stop waving in the wind.

So, if you do a little wildlife photography and want to get better at or if you are thinking of having a go for the first time and don't know where to start or what to use, come along.

Talk to members and speakers. Ask questions. You can learn a lot from our successes and especially from our

mistakes.

If you are not certain what equipment to buy or what film to use, ask. There is plenty of free advice available at our very informal meetings. We hope to see you there. The details are in the right-hand corner of your programme card.

Tuesday November 30th "Natural History with a Camera" by Tony Howes.
1994

Friday January 14th "1993 – from Cyprus to the Burren" by Reg Jones.

Monday February 14th "Dragons and Damsels" by Ivan Loades.

Thursday March 17th "My Way with Micros" by Roland Rogers.

Tuesday April 19th "Bats' Pix" by Tony Tilford & John Goldsmith.

David Paull.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Monday December 6th 1930 hrs. "Christmas Quokkas". No, I don't know what they are either. A godsend for Scrabble players perhaps? Come and hear Tony Irwin explain. In the City Library Lecture Theatre, Norwich.

1994

Thursday January 20th 1930 hrs. "Memories of Dick Bagnall Oakley". is a joint effort by his son Jeremy and Logie Bruce Lockhart, illustrated with a film and slides. In the City Library Lecture Theatre, Norwich.

Sunday January 30th 1100 hrs. A Field meeting to Covehithe and Benacre Broad to look at winter migrants, led by David Paull. Meet near Covehithe Church, TM 528819.

Wednesday February 23rd 1930 hrs. "Norfolk's Changing Countryside", a talk by Dr. Tom Williamson of the centre for East Anglian Studies, UEA. Dr. Williamson has written several books on the history of this county's landscape, his latest being *The origins of Norfolk*. In the City Library Lecture Theatre, Norwich.

SHOULD SET ASIDE BE SET ASIDE ?

I have been interested to read recently several articles questioning the value of the current rotational set aside arrangements from an environmental viewpoint. This feeling has been on my mind for much of the Summer as I have watched progress of the scheme in my local area.

Whilst I am not qualified to judge on the agricultural merits of the scheme, casual observations of its application on my local patch have convinced me that little or no benefits have accrued to the wildlife. In Spring a large field of last year's stubble was left unploughed, attracting many Skylarks. These were noted singing and displaying over the area in good numbers and clearly had chosen the area to breed. During the first week in May the whole field was harrowed thus destroying all hope of successful nesting. At the time of writing this field has been sprayed and is a brown desert. While all this was going on, nearby parkland which had been used for grazing for very many years, has been ploughed and is growing a crop of sugar beet!

On another local farm three small fields had been "set aside" and were similarly treated early in May. However the destruction here was aggravated by the bulldozing of some 400 yards of mature hedgerows and associated ditches separating the fields. These hedges had Blackbirds, Dunnocks, Yellowhammers, Wrens, a Robin and a pair of Turtle Doves all holding territories and many nests must have been destroyed. I can accept that larger fields have agricultural benefits but the destruction of hedgerows in the middle of the breeding season is unforgivable, particularly as nothing has been done to the land during the subsequent three months.

If these local developments are typical of the application of the obligatory rotational set aside scheme throughout the Country, the cumulative effect on the populations of ground nesting birds must have been substantial. Clearly a rethink of the rules and incentives is urgently required if any material benefits to the environment in general and farmland birds in particular, are to be obtained from "set aside".

DAD.

Please send items for Natterjack to Colin Dack, 12, Shipdham Rd, Toftwood, Dereham Norfolk NR19 1JJ

WELLS FIELD STUDY CENTRE

I was pleased to represent the Society at the Twenty Fifth Anniversary celebrations of the Wells Field Study Centre on Thursday 4th November 1993. The excellent work of this centre, firstly under the guidance of Paul and Eleanor Banham and, more recently, Christine West, has introduced thousands of Norfolk children to the world of nature. Everyone with an interest in the environment should be grateful for their efforts over the last twenty five years. We extend our thanks to all involved with the past achievements and our best wishes for the next quarter of a century.

DAD.

"MIDDLE MARSH – A NORFOLK MISCELLANEA"

This book, written and illustrated by Keith McDougall, has been described as one man's anthology of life on a Norfolk farm and gives a series of literary and visual snap-shots of a small family estate in the County. It contains numerous black and white sketches and over 36 full colour paintings. The author is offering copies to members of the Society at the special price of £12 per copy post paid with £3 per copy being donated to our funds.

Any member wishing to avail themselves of this offer should send a cheque/money order for £12 to Mr. McDougall at:- Chalk Hill Fine Art, Warham, Wells-next the-Sea, Norfolk. NR23 1NS

Please mention this advertisement in Natterjack and the Society in your order.

A GALL NEW TO THE NORFOLK LIST.

On recent visits to Norfolk Naturalist Trust reserves we have found galls on Elm leaves.

The Gall appears as 2-3mm raised cylinders slightly hairy and open at the top where presumably the midge had emerged. The galls (up to 12 on each leaf) are situated mainly along the midrib and a few on the veins.

The gall midge has been determined as *Janetiella lemei*. We understand that this is uncommon to rare.

Reg & Lil Evans.

"KING ALFREDS CAKES"

Most naturalists can recognise these black hard fungi which appear often on dead ash trees (although they do have other hosts). These round fungi on cutting in half show concentric rings hence the name *Daldinia concentrica*.

On a visit to Roydon Common we found an area of burnt gorse, the branches bore many small fructifications of *Daldinia vericosa*, which resembles *Daldinia concentrica* but appears on burnt gorse not on ash. It is easily separated by the spore size.

Reg Evans.

EGG PARASITES

A batch of 33 moth eggs found on a oak leaf did not yield the expected young larvae of the Pale Tussock. Some time after their failure to appear there was an emergence of tiny black wasp like parasites. They were each about 1mm long and the moth eggs had only one in each (33). They belong to the family *Scelionidae*.

Reg Evans.

A FLY KILLER

On a recent visit to Whitwell Common Barbara Hancy drew my attention to numbers of dead flies attached to the heads of plantain. These had the characteristic pose of flies attacked by a fungus determined as *Entomophthora dipterygena*. This is not uncommon and appears as grey exudations from the abdominal segments of the victims.

It is of interest to note that the flies collected in the area killed by the fungus were all hoverflies *Melanostoma scalare*. This species of hoverfly seems especially prone to this fungal attack as we have previously observed.

Reg Evans.

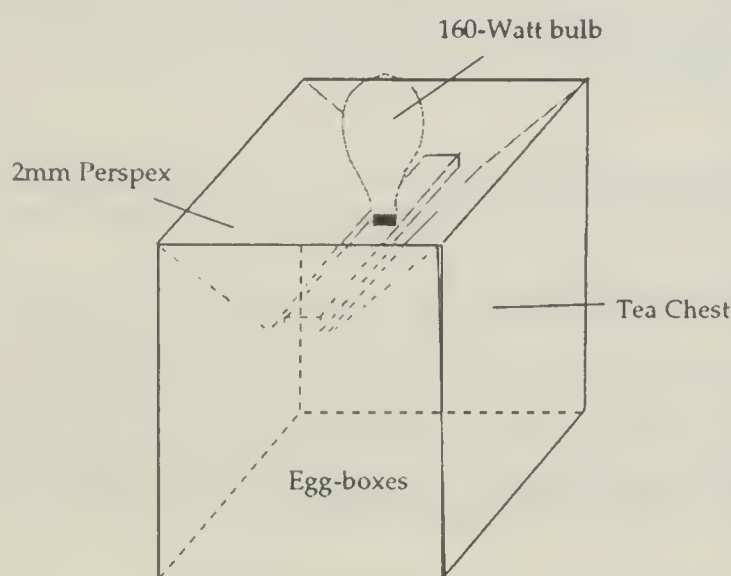
"BRITISH BIRDS" MAGAZINE

Enclosed with this mailing is the annual leaflet advertising the monthly "British Birds" magazine. The Society is one of the bodies whose members qualify for the reduced rate of subscription, details of which are given on the leaflet. In addition to publishing the annual report on rare bird sightings (of great interest to many Norfolk birders) The magazine, now frequently illustrated in colour, contains a wide variety of articles on the birds of Britain and Western Europe.

A RETURN TO NOTHING.

Is it the excitement of the unknown or the basic fact of being out late at night when so many people are tucked up in bed? I don't know, but "nothing" interests many people as shown by the Moth Evening I attended with the family at "Natural Surroundings", Bayfield this summer.

Home made Light Trap



Having had a successful evening there with a Robinson MV light trap and witnessed the variety of moths in that habitat I decided to carry out a series of moth evenings on Beeston Regis and Sheringham Commons, an area where Alec Humphries and myself "hunted" back in the mid-sixties. For this I built a light trap from a tea chest and utilised a 160-watt bulb light source. It is said that the catch from a non-mercury vapour light is 40% lower, however, this was adequate as we did not wish to be over-run with moths!

Our first excursion was on 3rd. July and Rosy Footman, Maple Prominent, Privet Hawk and both Large and Small Elephant Hawk were the highlights. As the season progressed different species were obtained including Swallow Prominent, Buff Arches and Striped Twin-spot Carpet. We were joined by David Mower (and his generator) enabling us to investigate more remote parts of the Commons. Such treks produced 'new' species but numbers were fairly low - a situation noted by other moth recorders throughout the County this year I believe.

With some of the LBJ's (Little Brown Jobs) and non-descript Micro's the invaluable assistance of Ken Durrant was called upon where his extensive knowledge and reference collection provided a name for our specimens and took our "catch" to over 100 species. Some 25 species were 'new' records, however, it is heartening to know that some of the moths Alec and I caught 30 years ago are still present. Unfortunately the rains of September and October curtailed our evenings but hopefully we will be able to start earlier in the season next year.

All records will be submitted in due course to the Norfolk Moth Survey.

Francis Farrow.

NORFOLK & NORWICH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY LECTURE

The Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society invites members of the Society to an illustrated lecture by Dr. Oliver Rackham on "Woodland Archaeology" in the Music Room of the Assembly House at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 4th December 1993. Admission £1.

FOR SALE

COMMODORE 128 computer with serial port Commodore and added parallel port in use. Commodore SFD 1001 1 megabyte disk drive. Philips 80 green screen monitor, Triumph Adler TRD 7020 daisywheel printer. Software:- Superscript word processor and Superbase (programmable) database. This equipment is still being used for Society membership records to print out labels. Was used to produce the Natterjack when I first started to edit it.

If you are interested contact *Colin Dack, 12, Shipdham Rd, Toftwood, Dereham Norfolk NR19 1JJ*
Tel:- (0362) 696314.