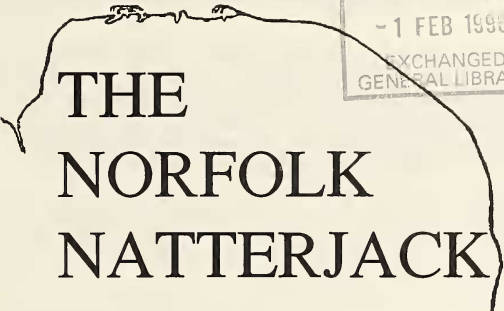
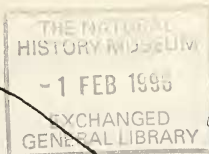




Number 48



# THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



February 1995

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

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## VALUE FOR MONEY

I have just been looking at the statement of accounts for the year ending April 1930 presented to the Society at the Annual General Meeting held in that month. 383 ordinary members subscribed just £169 and a few pence between them! That works out to the nearest whole shilling at an average 9s.each. For the younger members that translates to about 45p..

Whenever I see figures of the cost of any item in the past, before throwing up my hands in astonishment and wishing we were back in the good old days, I always try to relate the sum quoted to a working man's wage at that time. The year ending April 1930 was a significant year for me. I was born during the previous September. At the time my father could count on less than £1.50 a week, if the weather held that is and he was allowed to continue his employment. Almost a third of a weekly wage to pay the annual subscription? Needless to say he was not a member.

Perhaps in a different place in different circumstances and without my infant mouth to fill he may have saved his shillings and subscribed. After all, many of the items deemed important, indeed essential for well-being cost a high proportion of income. Reading through the list of members it is clear that many of them came from the world of business and the professions where shillings may have been somewhat easier to find and in which membership of such a high prestige society was desirable in itself. It is also clear that many others must have carefully assessed their options and scrutinised their personal accounts before commitment. Take a third of a current week's income and you see why.

What did they receive in return? The President, in the preamble to his address, talks of two summer excursions and monthly meetings in the winter, though not every month appears in the account. A copy of the highly prized Transactions was of course an important benefit. The Bird and Mammal Reports were still way off in the distant future. No Newsletter was mentioned. When you compare that with our current programme with its mass of indoor and outdoor meetings, group meetings, workshops and publications, it does look rather thin yet there is something coming through those far back-pages we would do well to emulate. There was a conscious pride in membership of the Society.

After our last Council meeting I felt quite exhausted, a feeling shared, I am sure, by all members present. The business of the Society has grown in volume and complexity to such an extent we have agreed we need to schedule more meetings to cover it all satisfactorily, especially our plans for active data collecting well into the future. Tiring yes, but also a matter of immense pride that the Society is still growing in the really important aspects of its being.

How is this all done on such a modest present-day subscription base? Better ask the Treasurer. Over the years we have been more than fortunate to have the voluntary services of talented treasurers who have kept us alive and healthy.

One last note from 1929/30. A familiar name stands out from that membership list - E.T.Daniels - who joined in 1928. How often that name or those initials crop up in reports, accounts, articles in later years. What a record of service over half the life of the Society itself Congratulations and thanks are surely due to Ernest for all his contributions and just as surely we are proud to still list his name as a member and friend.

Rex Hancy Chairman.

## DUNNOCKS EATING PINE SEEDS

As part of our modest Christmas decorations, Mary had collected a number of pine cones (presumably *Pinus nigra*) at Holkham Meols and displayed them around the base of the Christmas tree. The peace and quiet of the festive season was frequently interrupted by the cracking of opening cones as the warmth of the room had its effect. As the Twelfth Night arrived we cleared the decorations and were amazed by the number of seeds that could be shaken from the cones. Enough to fill a small basin was collected and for want of something better to do with them, the seeds were put on the bird table where more traditional bird seeds were regularly provided.

I was subsequently fascinated to watch one of our resident Dunnocks apparently feeding on this new supply of food. It picked up the winged seeds working the seed bearing end into its bill and appeared to remove the seed before discarding the wing over the edge of the table. This procedure was watched on several occasions on different days and I feel sure that the bird did manage to extract the seed.

Although our resident Dunnocks regularly feed on or near the bird table, picking up small seeds or scraps falling from the nut-baskets, I was intrigued to see how quickly they adapted to a new "foreign" food source.

Don Dorling.

## PHEASANTS AND THE FOX

On a recent Sunday morning I was walking a local footpath and, having counted the party of Moorhens in the Park near the lake (there were over 50 present), I cautiously peered around a corner hedgerow into the next field to see what was feeding on the discarded sugar beet tops. The expected party of about 40 pheasants was there, including a fine almost blue cock. But what was that large rich brown creature in their midst? Carefully lifting the binoculars to the eyes I was treated to fine views of a large fox.

I watched the fox for several minutes feeding on a large piece of sugar beet with the pheasants continuing to feed quite unconcernedly nearby. Eventually the fox had satisfied his needs and began to move off towards the majority of the pheasants who did not flee to the hedge, as they usually do when I appear in sight, but merely moved smartly away from the fox and then continued to feed to the side his direct path. At least in the open and in daylight, the pheasants did not treat the fox as a serious danger.

Don Dorling.

## SOME LESS COMMON FUNGI FOUND DURING 1994

By Alec Bull

When visiting places where we know Reg and Lil Evans can't get to during the autumn, collections of fungi are made, those we know are named and where necessary, some are taken to Reg for confirmation, as well as all those we can't identify. Not infrequently, some of the uncommon species are found at home where we seem to a pocket of unusual habitat! Thus in 1993 Reg pointed out a number of scarce species worthy of mention in Natterjack which I failed to send in last year, including *Volvariella murinella* growing on our sheep paddock, whilst the nearby 'Carr Meadow Bank' provided us with a number of scarce species including *Fayodia gracilipes* and *Clavulinopsis tenuipes* which at that time were both new to Reg's lists. This year's 'locals' included *Lepiota serena* in the orchard with an asterisk beside when the list was returned. On September 30<sup>th</sup> we collected from two sites in the Stanford Training Area with a list of over 40 species from Hopton Point including such rarities as *Phaeocolus schweinitzii* which causes heart rot of pine trees and *Polyporus floccipes*, here frequent on dead and dying Broom stems. From there we moved to Buckenham Tofts Park, collecting well over 80 species including abundant *Lepiota aspera*, rare when we first found it in STANTA two or three years ago, but this was the third site for it there, and I even found it in East Tuddenham this year. *Amanita solitaria* was also found under beech trees plus a number of rarities including *Lucoybe godeyi*, also found at Hopton Point, *Calocybe ionides*, a beautiful blue capped species with pale yellow gills, and *Chamaemyces fracidus*, a second record for us in 1994, as it also turned up in the orchard. Many years ago at 'fungus time' we visited Winterton Dunes and found large numbers of a moderately large warm biscuit coloured fungus with a strong and distinctive smell. This was before Reg and Lil came back to Norfolk, and despite a number of visits to the area over the years, we had never seen it again. This year, on October the 8<sup>th</sup> it was everywhere again. Subjected to microscopic examination it proved to be a *Lactarius*, though no milk could be found when the cap was broken, so Reg sent a specimen to Kew who identified it as *Lactarius helvus*. Rare in Norfolk, but usually exuding milk when broken Like a number of supposedly rare fungi, it seems rare because it does not appear every year. Another example from Carr

Meadow Bank, *Hygrocybe unguinosa*, a slimy grey capped species was abundant in 1982 and 1993, but not a single specimen appeared in any of the years between, neither did we find it this year.

My best fungus foray during 1994 was on September 27<sup>th</sup> when I did a solo effort to East Wood, Denton, having obtained a permit for plant recording and having got a 'hunch' about the possibilities for fungi. The wood is Hornbeam on slightly acid clay and with deep leaf litter in places. In just 2½ hours I collected 100 species including 4 second and 3 first records for Reg's lists. One of the 2<sup>nd</sup> records was actually growing by the track to the wood, namely *Volvariella taylori*. The remaining three 2<sup>nd</sup> records were *Armillaria tabescens*, the 'Honey Fungus' without a ring, *Lactarius circellatus* one of the milk caps always associated with Hornbeam, and the stately and beautiful 'Magpie Cap' *Coprinus picaceus*. This inkcap stands nearly eighteen inches tall on a slender stem, the black, shining inkcap part having white patches at intervals over its surface. The 1st records were *Leccinum carpini* a Bolete also strictly associated with Hornbeam and two particularly beautiful members of the genus *Cortinarius*, *C. caesiocyaneus* and *C. rufolivacea* with a ragged orange red zone on the stem, the remnant of the universal veil. This trip was quite a revelation, with 6 species of *Lactarius*, 10 of the dainty *Mycenas*, five species of *Inocybe* and 12 of variously coloured *Russulas*. I shall certainly make notes of possible good sites for fungi in future years, as it is not only interesting from my point of view, it also adds records to the county data bank.

Alec Bull, Hillcrest, East Tuddenham, Dereham. NR20 3JJ

## FUNGUS GNATS AND SCUTTLEFLIES

For some years a study has been made of flies emerging from decomposing fungi, especially Fungus Gnats (*Mycetophilidae*) and Scuttleflies (*Phoridae*). These observations have added to the knowledge of the life history of some of these flies, 50 species of fungus gnats and 18 species of Scuttleflies having been reared.

An interesting by-product has been the emergence of parasites that were occasionally obtained from these hosts - often they have been seldom studied and determination of species difficult to obtain.

A *Russula maculata* toadstool collected on Narborough Railway Nature Reserve and allowed to decompose produced an emergence of Scuttleflies. These are so called from their distinctive walk - best described as 'scuttling'.

Following this a few days later some Hymenopterous parasites were seen. They had fed on the larvae of some of the flies - *Megelesia lutea* (*phoridae*). They were determined by Dr Capek (Czech Republic) as *Aspilota compressiventris*. Stelfox and Graham.

Reg Evans.

## *Guizotia abyssinica* - a wild bird seed alien

Among the plants grown from wild bird seed this year were the expected flax, canary grass, sunflower and various crucifers.

A more interesting plant was potted separately. This annual had a robust stem growing up to 4 feet tall and produced many small flower heads about an inch in diameter. Obviously belonging to the compositae family, they resembled corn marigold flowers.

The plant is cultivated in East Africa for the oil in its seeds and food.

It does not always produce seed in this country as it does not withstand frost.

Some members might find it interesting to have a patch in the garden for wild bird seeds.

Reg & Lil Evans.

## COUNTRYSIDE EXHIBITION

Corpusty Village Hall Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1995 10.30 am. to 5.00 pm.

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

# GRASSHOPPERS AND BUSH-CRICKETS OF NORFOLK

Most members will be familiar with my interest in this group. I have now updated the provisional distribution maps published in the 1991 edition of Transactions to include all records received to the end of 1994. These are now available in the form of a 16-page A5 booklet which is available **free** to anyone interested in this group and willing to contribute future records.

The booklet comprises 13 maps and 13 line drawings, and includes an introductory text suitable for beginners. Guide-lines on future recording effort are included, identifying under-recorded species and under-mapped parts of the county.

To receive your copy, please send a 9" x 6" stamped addressed envelope to:

D. I. Richmond, County Orthoptera Recorder, 42 Richmond Rise, Reepham, Norfolk. NR10 4LS

## ADDITIONAL GALLS TO THE CHECK LIST

Reg & Lil Evans

### Diptera

#### Cecidomyiidae

<i>Anisostephus betulinum</i> -	Circular blisters on both surfaces of Birch leaves.
<i>Didymomyia reaumuriana</i> -	On common lime leaves pustules on both surfaces.
<i>Dasineura acrophila</i> -	Ash leaf margins folded upwards to pea-pod shape.
<i>Dasineura marginemtorquens</i> -	Willow leaf edges folded.
<i>Massalongia rubra</i> -	Birch leaf : swollen midrib on lower surface.

#### Acarina

* <i>Aceria drabae</i> -	On Thale Cress : felted and rolled leaves.
* <i>Aceria ononidis</i> -	On Rest Harrow : felted and rolled leaves.
<i>Cecidophlyopsis atricus</i> -	Stitchwort : leaves rolled upwards and thickened.
<i>Vasates fraxini</i> -	Ash leaf : felt patches on underside.

#### Aphididae

<i>Aspidaphis adjuvans</i> -	Knotgrass : leaves margins rolled and distorted.
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### Additional rusts to the gall check list.

*Kuehneola uredinis*. *Melampsora hypericorum*. *Melampsora orchidi-repentis*.  
*Phragmidium bulbosum*.  
*Puccinia adoxae*. *Puccinia angelica*. *Puccinia cruci*. *Puccinia deschampsiae*.  
*Puccinia dioicae*. *Puccinia glomerata*. *Puccinia graminis*. *Puccinia heiracii*.  
*Puccinia magnusiana*. *Puccinia obscura*. *Puccinia phragmitis*. *Puccinia saxifragae*.  
*Puccinia violae*. *Puccinia vincae*.  
*Transchelium anemones*.  
*Uromyces anthyllidis*. *Uromyces betae*. *Uromyces dianthi*. *Uromyces muscari*.  
*Uromyces valerianae*. *Uromyces viciae-fabae*.  
\* *Endophyllum sempervivi*. \*Collected by Gillian and Ken Beckett.

## SPIDERS

I have observed three specimens of *Scytodes thoracica* in Norwich (although I have never been fortunate enough to witness one ensnaring its prey).

I discovered the first adult female on a living room floor in October 1991 while living on Newmarket Street. The second and third individuals were found in my next house which was situated on the other side of the city, at

Chalkhill Road. I did not take either of these as specimens. The first at Chalkhill Road was outside the house, in the sheltered front doorway on a sunny day in May 1992. It appeared to be another female. The last specimen was found in a room at the back of the house a few days later. The spider, another female, was closely guarding her egg sac. The sac was held together by an exceedingly spartan covering of silk and was positioned close to her "chest".

I remained at Chalkhill Road for the rest of the summer but saw no more specimens. Nor have I seen any in Norwich since moving again. It could perhaps be hypothesised that I carried the species from my first house to the second. However as only a small amount of luggage and no furniture was transferred there was not much room for stowaways. I also doubt that any conveyed eggs or spiderlings could have matured in the four cold months between the move and next sightings.

Having found two sites in Norwich I expect that more await discovery. A shy creature, rather wary of publicity, perhaps the present attention will generate a better knowledge of this fascinating spider's Norfolk distribution.

Matthew Shardlow

During 1994 we heard much and read many reports in the press concerning the much lower than usual numbers of butterflies seen throughout the summer months. The main explanations appear to be focussed on the very poor weather conditions experienced during egg laying and larval stages. Certainly from my own observations, I recorded very low numbers of caterpillars during the year.

Not so much has been mentioned with regard to moths, but it seems to me that their numbers were well down also. I know that locally there were certain exceptions to this and there were quite large numbers of certain species seen such as the Silver Y moth, but generally, for me a very poor year indeed.

I do not indulge in light trapping for moths but I appreciate that those who do may well tell a different tale, I can only reflect on my own observations.

In my garden I have a number of *Leylandii* Cypress trees and for around five years now I have found both caterpillars and moths of the species Blair's Shoulder Knot, known to inhabit conifers of this genus, but this year I saw no caterpillars and only the odd moth of the species. The Vapourer moth that is to be found in my garden usually in fair numbers every year, both as moths and caterpillars, were also in very short supply this year.

I keep outside lights on all night in the garden and keep records of moths attracted to them. The numbers and varieties encountered are usually very interesting though not so encouraging this year. When on my nature rambles I always look for and keep records of caterpillars and moths, but again, poor numbers for the year. Even the Cinnabar caterpillars which I always see in fair numbers seemed much fewer this year.

In most years I have hawk moth caterpillars brought to me for identification, but once again no more than half a dozen during 1994.

If the spring weather conditions were responsible for lower numbers then let us hope that the spring of 1995 is more favourable for both us and the Lepidoptera.

Tony Brown.

## EXTRA FIELD MEETINGS

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 1995

**THORPENESS** near **ALDEBUROUGH** Meet 1030hrs TM473596 on the green opposite the **MEARE**, on the sea-ward side of the Aldedorough road. To look at coastal plants going in April and June to see the change in that time. Leader: Colin Dack.

If you have transport problems getting to field meetings contact me. I will then see what I can do. Colin Dack

## ARE YOU MISSING THE 'SALT ALIENS'?

On this page are five common 'salt aliens', beautifully drawn for us by Theresa Plant. All are to be found alongside roads which have been salted during the winter. This means the A47, A140, A143 and several more. We are aware that these are horribly dangerous areas to plant record, but some at least can be spotted from the car. For instance, *Cochlearia danica* appears in spring as a pale mauve to whitish band about a yard wide along the whole length of the Newmarket bypass on both sides, and is found in many places in Norfolk, and *Puccinellia distans* forms a foot wide pale grey mistiness just beyond the edge of the tarmac which can also be spotted from the car once you get your eye in. Tip- Once your passenger gets his/her eye in!



*Atriplex prostrata*  
Often upright beside roads



*Puccinellia distans*  
Greyish green, six inches. Not the deflexed panicle branches.



*Atriplex littoralis*  
Parallel sided narrow leaves all up stem. Height up to 2 feet.



*Spergularia marina*  
Petals pink.



*Cochlearia danica*  
Flowers pale lilac.