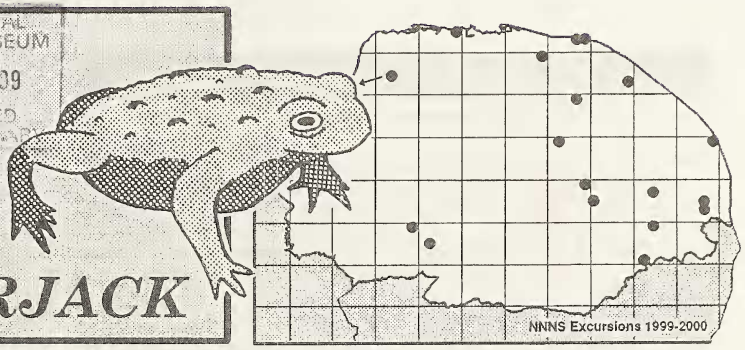
THE NORFOLK *NATTERJACK*

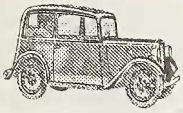


From the Chairman...

LIFTS REGISTER: A NON-STARTER!

I am disappointed but perhaps, because others have tried it before and failed, I should not be surprised. In the last issue of *Natterjack*, with our move to Easton College in mind, I asked members to offer to join a simple register of those willing to give others a lift to meetings and field trips. I have had not a single response. All I can now suggest is that individual members who cannot get to meetings should contact me (01603 457270) and I will try, either directly or via *Natterjack*, to put them in touch with members in their area. For example, I already know of a lady in Fakenham, another in Sprowston and a couple in Thorpe who will not be able to get to Easton unless someone can give them a lift. Any offers?

David Paull, Chairman



FIELD MEETINGS AUGUST - OCTOBER 1999

Please note that start times for the field meetings are variable and that our evening talks are now being held in the Sports & Leisure Centre at Easton College. If you have not been to the centre before, please see the accompanying map showing how to get there.

Sun.15th August Belton Common
JOINT MEETING
11.00 a.m. Full day, TG474023
We will be joining the British Plant Gall Society, the Lowestoft Field Club and the Great Yarmouth Naturalists' Society.

Sun. 29th August Ditchingham House Farm Estate *WILDLIFE 2000*
10.30 a.m. Full day, TM324915
By kind permission of Dorothy Cheyne, this is a rare opportunity to visit and record this private estate which includes Bath Hills.

Sun.19th Sept. Beeston Regis Common
11.00 a.m. Full day, TG165426
This is our third visit to the common this year and it should be a good time to see Grass-of-Parnassus and other late-flowering plants. If conditions are right we may well see some unusual migrant birds.

Tues. 21st September
'The Otters and Rivers Project'
7.30 p.m. Room 7,
Easton College Sports & Leisure Centre
Since the programme was published, Lisa Schneidau has moved on to pastures new. Steve Henson has taken over responsibility for the project and has kindly agreed to present this illustrated talk.

Sun. 3rd October Holt Lowes
11.00 a.m. Full day, TG088383
A fungus foray with Dr. Tony Leech. Please note that we are meeting at the car park to the north-east of the Country Park off Hempstead Road NOT in the main Country Park car park.

Sun. 10th Oct. Winterton Dunes and Church
11.00 a.m. Full day, TG499198
Looking at lichens with Dr Chris Hitch who is the Suffolk recorder for the British Lichen Society.

Tuesday 19th October
'A view of the world through Colin Dack's camera'
7.30 p.m. Room 7,
Easton College Sports & Leisure Centre

We will spend the evening looking at a selection of Colin's extensive and varied collection of slides. As Colin was seriously dyslexic, although it never deterred him from making a considerable and valued contribution to our Society over many years, we will be having a collection on behalf of the Waveney Valley Dyslexia Association and we hope to raise a generous donation in memory of Colin. The chairman of the association has been invited to speak briefly about the work of the charity.

Sun. 24th October Sisland Carr
11.00 a.m. Full day, TM345990
A fungus foray with Mike Woolner. Recently acquired by the Woodland Trust, Sisland Carr has areas of deciduous and coniferous wood on light soils as well as areas of wet carr and it should host a wide range of fungi. The car park is at the south-east corner of the wood and should be approached by the track from the south.

Bob Ellis, Chairman

See page 2 for maps and photographic meetings

The quarterly bulletin of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Founded 1869
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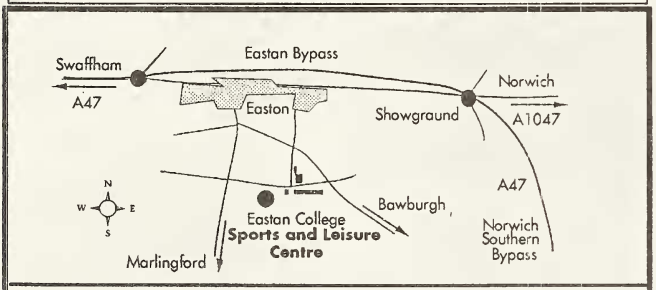
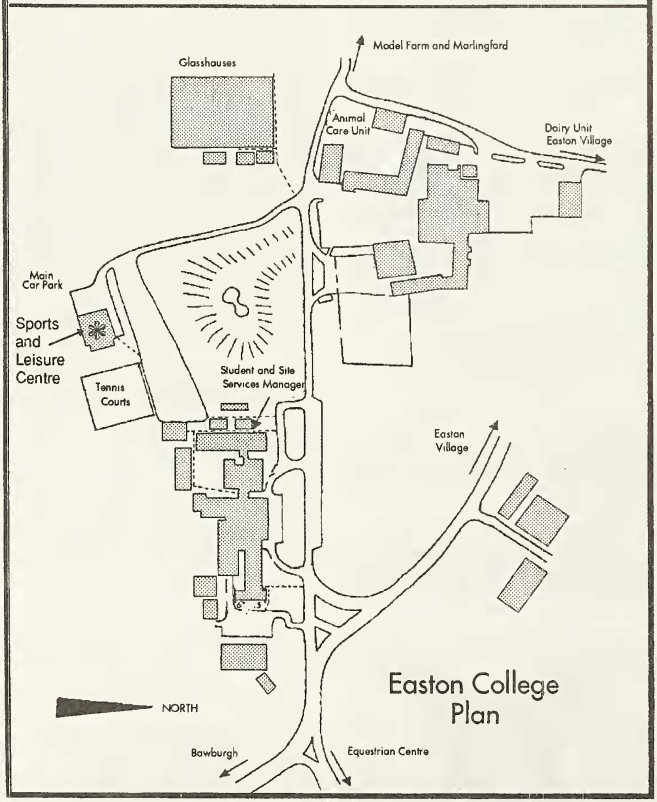
Number 66
August 1999

How To Find Easton College Sports and Leisure Centre

Leave the A47 (Norwich Southern Bypass) at either the Showground or Ringland roundabout. Follow the "Easton College" sign. About a quarter of mile down the lane, follow the green college sign (ignoring a right fork to Marlingford). After another quarter of mile at the next green college sign, turn sharp right into the college drive and follow the yellow signs (complete with swallowtail butterfly!) to sports and leisure centre. At the end of the drive, turn sharp left up to the centre. There is limited parking at the front of the centre but for the main car park behind the centre bear half-right. Walk round to the front of the building to the main entrance.

BEWARE THE SPEED HUMPS!





WOW! - Look at that....

An expression we have all come out with at times. You have just seen a beautiful flower in a meadow or maybe a colourful bird in the garden, you would have liked to photograph it but lacked the know how or the camera.

So why not come along to the Photographic Group meetings and see how it is done. Talk with people able and very willing to put you on the right track, we are only too happy to pass on our knowledge and experience.

Give it a go - come to the first meeting on:-

Monday Oct. 25th.
"Bird Photography from a Hide"
by Tony Howes

Monday Nov. 22nd.
"An Introduction to Digital Imaging"
by Joy and Mike Hancock

Monday Feb. 21st.
"An African Safari"
by Ivan West

Monday March 27th.
"High Life Photography"
by Norman Carmichael

EVERYBODY WELCOME
All meetings at Room 4,
Easton College Sports and
Leisure Centre - 7.30pm
Tony Howes
Chairman, Photographic Group
Tel: 01603 436867

BERNEY MARSHES RSPB RESERVE

May 16, 1999

This splendid day began with the bonus of a trip in the RSPB boat from Goodchild Marina, Burgh Castle, on the Waveney to the reserve landing stage on the Yare near the "Berney Arms". It was a day, however, that was tinged with regret that, because of ill-health, Michael Seago was unable to lead us. We are very grateful to the RSPB's Broads area manager, Ian Robinson, for giving up his Sunday to take over at short notice. Ian took us on two long circuits through the reserve and explained the RSPB's long-term management plan for the now-substantial area of land it has acquired. The plan is a simple one: flooding and grazing. The art is how much and when - and having the patience, and courage, to give the plan time to work.The undoubted highlight of the visit was the repeated sightings of a Collared Pratincole hawking for insects among the Swifts. Other birds that excited particular interest were male Garganey, a small flight of Whimbrel, Marsh Harrier, Little Gull, Yellow Wagtail, Cuckoo, and Avocet. Other birds noted, roughly in the order in which they were spotted, were: Mute Swan, Cormorant, Swallow, Great Crested Grebe, Shelduck, Heron, Common Tern, Common Sandpiper, Oyster-catcher, Coot, Goldfinch, Gadwall, Black-headed Gull, Magpie, Pied Wagtail, Redshank, Shoveler, Sedge Warbler, Skylark, Tufted Duck, Moorhen, Pochard, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Kestrel, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Reed Bunting, Great Black-backed Gull, and Greenshank. Hares (probably four different animals) and a Water Vole were also seen.

Fran Neale

MARSTON MARSH

June 16, 1999

By contrast with the frightening storm that brought an abrupt end to last year's excursion, our walk round Marston Marsh, Eaton, took place in glorious sunshine.

Underfoot, following the previous week's heavy rain, the going was very muddy in places, so - for those who visit the marsh regularly all year - it was good to see a BTCV party laying board walks across the two wettest sections of the most popular path. As always with the marsh, the variations in winter and spring weather affect the flora. This year, there has hardly been an Early Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* to be found but on our walk we saw plenty of Southern Marsh Orchids *D. praetermissa*, although mostly very small spikes.The success story of the marsh, the once very rare Green Figwort *Scrophularia umbrosa*, is now almost rampant and is spreading still further along the dykes and the banks of River Yare. Its cousin, Water Figwort *S. auriculata*, is also thriving but greatly outnumbered by *umbrosa*. Much of the marsh was ablaze with the yellow of buttercups, including several specimens of Celery-leaved Buttercup *Ranunculus sceleratus*.

The sun brought out the odonata in force. The ponds in the stretch of marsh beside Marston Lane were alive with Four-spotted Chasers *Libellula quadrimaculata* and throughout the marsh we found a variety of damselflies: Common Blue *Enallagma cyathigerum*, Azure *Coenagrion puella*, Blue-tailed *Ischnura elegans*, Large Red *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*, and possibly Emerald *Lestes sponsa*. But the stars of the show were the dozens of Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*.

David Paull

BEESTON COMMON

July 11, 1999

A really fine day for a field meeting is an essential requirement, such as it was when the society visited Beeston Common for the second time this year. A large gathering assembled in the lay-by as a pristine Comma visited some bramble blossom nearby. As we entered the back bog Ringlets and Meadow Browns flittered away.

We soon came upon three fine spikes of Marsh Helleborine var. *ochroleuca* which lack the red pigment of the type species. Along the path many of the Marsh Fragrant Orchids were sampled for their scent and Dodder was noted on the Gorse. Common Spotted Orchids, although plentiful were getting past their best and the few Bee Orchids present this year had gone to seed.

Large and Small Skippers were observed with the occasional Five-spot Burnet moth *trifolii* ssp. *decreta*. Up to now this year has been very poor for insects as witnessed on the numerous Hogweed and Angelica flower heads where the main occupants were Soldier Beetles *Rhagonycha fulva* who were busy ensuring next seasons population. The few Hoverflies noted were *Volucella bombylans, Volucella pellucens, Cheilosia illustrata* and *Episyrphus balteata*, also present were the small wasps *Ectemnius continuous* who were hunting for diptera with which they stock their nests in rotten wood.

Under the trees many of the Broad Buckler ferns were infested with the Knot gall (leaf terminals twisted into a ball) caused by the larvae of the fly *Chirosia betuleti*. Passing Meadow Vetchling we came to a small calcareous pond from which a large number of teneral Common Darter dragonflies took to the air as we approached, some of them barely

able to fly on their bright shining wings. A number of the Lesser Water Plantain were in flower and under the water the Stonewort *Chara vulgaris* still looked healthy but when pond dries out, as it does now each summer, the stonewort will exist as a model in chalk, only to collapse to dust when disturbed.

We proceeded to cross the centre of the main bog passed Cross-leaved Heath, Ling, Quaking Grass and the Butterworts which having flowered existed like young lettuce leaves flat upon the path. Our two Sundews , the Round-leaved and the Greater were in flower on the Sphagnum Moss mounds. Three Lesser Butterfly Orchids were still in bloom and received much attention. We passed a large patch of Meadow Sweet, to where a number of our *Dryopteris* specie ferns grow, including the scarce Crested Buckler Fern. On Ragwort plants Cinnabar moth caterpillars were feeding as we passed through large patches of Perforate and Slender St. John's Wort to see some Pyramidal Orchids.

We climbed the dry heath to the old pill box to get a grand view of the common and our local 'mountain' Beeston Bump. On descending again to the bog we passed through clumps of Purple Moor Grass and a large expanse of Wavy Hair Grass. On the bog Royal Fern and Adder's Tongue, Teasel, blue, white and pink Milkwort, Twayblades and Red Bartsia were seen. Broom with fasciation or strap growth and Emperor Dragonflies by the pond and a Red Admiral butterfly completed the $1^1/_2$ hr ramble.

The afternoon session was spent in the Biology Department at Gresham School, Holt courtesy of Dr. A.R. Leech, where a good number of those present in the morning attended a workshop on Hoverflies bringing an end to an enjoyable summers day.

Ken Durrant

The Summer Wine - an algological view.

As we reach Norwich after a tiring day in the field (well, a tiring morning in the field and a tiring lunch in the pub) the botanists, entomologists and molluscologists are all looking forward to snoozing in front of the television at the end of their tiring day. Not so the algologists who have to spend a couple of hours in the lab. looking at the catch, making notes and boiling the diatoms in concentrated nitric acid, (to show them who's master!). This is not made easier if the lunch was particularly tiring. Now that we have acquired some state of the art instruments to measure electrical conductivity and pH there is the further need to check that the calibration has not wandered off during the day. So give a thought to the algologist slaving away while the rest of the group are fast asleep in front of the tele.

I sometimes wonder why I allow myself to be lured into these field days. It sounds idyllic to wander through spring woodland which has not been trodden by human feet for years. The reason for its seclusion is not that it is approached by a mile of track which is used as a testing ground for Land Rover, not that the footpath is flooded to a depth of about 1.1 wellingtons, nor the fact that the understory is young hawthorn which bears large spines. As I write two of my eight fingers are unusable due to potentially septic wounds from our last visit to the site. I know that two fingers is only 25% of those available but as I type with those two fingers it represents 100% of my capacity.

Algology is not as pointless as some forms of Natural History study. It involves such practical problems as "what is clogging the Ely Ouse Essex tunnel" and "why has the water in Hickling Broad changed?". Roy Baker in last February's *Natterjack* reported our work at Seamere. This involved a small group from UEA taking cores from the bed of the lake with a Hiller peat sampler while Roy stood on he jetty recording the scene for posterity and finding the process of coring excruciatingly funny (which I must admit, it probably was, except to those with mud all over their best shirts). Even our short core showed the mere had changed completely since the middle ages and was worth further study. We have been fortunate to interest a group from the University of London in taking a deeper core from the centre of the lake.

A great deal has been said and written about algologists eating treacle sponge pudding for lunch. It is not of course a practice unique to algologists. I will not explain all the attractions of such puddings. I will just point out that in most pubs the steamed pudding can be had for £2 while the steak chasseur favoured by molluscologists costs £5.75. We pensioners have to watch every penny. (Recently we have discovered the Pensioners' Lunch which includes not only the main dish but steamed sponge pudding as well, all for £3.75).

To some extent algologists are parasitic on molluscologists. The molluscologists go out in a splendid boat to dredge up Red Data book species (and masses of shirt-staining mud) and go along, not only for the treacle sponge pudding but for water quality samples, diatoms scraped from the timber piling, and mud samples from the ronds along the river (paper in preparation). They also kindly give me specimens of molluscs for me to take home and look at the gut content (diatoms are to bivalves what treacle sponge puddings are to diatomists). But what a way to spend an evening!

Keith Clarke

THOUGHTS ON AMPHIBIAN INTELLIGENCE AND SURVIVAL

Books have always led me to believe that amphibians would score poorly if given an I.Q. test. Does this speak of the I.Q. of writers who assume a newt could read the questions let alone understand them?

In order no doubt to put me in my place sometimes, my mother has the habit of announcing in front of others the poor results of my own childhood I.Q. test. Whether it is because of this supposed affinity with them or whether it is because it is the truth I don't know, but over the years I have gained great respect for the depth of amphibian intelligence. This intelligence must have contributed to their survival, as amphibians, for much longer than we have been around as primates. This intelligence is also that from which our own presumably evolved if Darwin is to be believed. Yes, I know they sometimes have difficulty crossing roads but observe St. Steven's pedestrians in Norwich on a Saturday to see just how far we have in fact evolved!

The great Herpetologist, Malcolm Smith, wrote of newts coming to the surface on his arrival above their tanks to wait for food, I trained, very quickly I recall, a small band of Common Frogs and Toads to come to me across my walled pond enclosure to a certain flat stone. Here I would feed them nightly on delicious slugs, worms and various arthropods. It is of course unscientific to state that their food was delicious, however, they ate it with relish much as human children devour beefburgers at Macdonalds. I achieved this by shining a torch when I fed them at their individual stations around the pond. Over a number of nights the torchlight became the symbol of an immediate meal and they all soon began to come to the flat stone when light fell on it.

Whilst thinking about training animals I considered so called intelligent mammals such as police dogs that can be trained to leap through flaming hoops. No amphibian would do that. They are not so stupid!

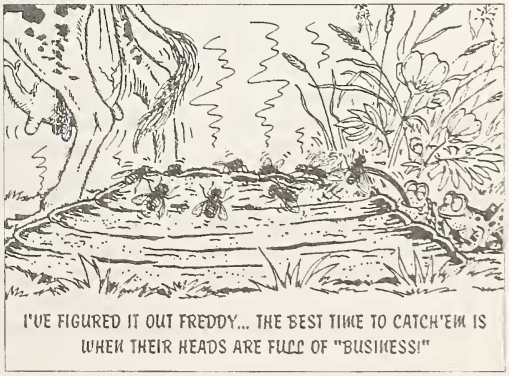
I new a great and ancient naturalist in Sussex who for several years observed a large, female toad which climbed to the top of a tall, flowering hedge to pick off the large nector-feeding moths which visited the flowers at night. How did she discover this? How did she know where to go? How did she remember each year to climb there? Toads are known to loiter with intent to feed on the occupants at the entrance to beehives. We too have our favourite restaurants. My observations of toads in captivity show that they will eat continually until earlier meals are forced, undigested out of their rear ends. We don't do this but I wonder what makes us so sure of our next meal?

One could argue that the examples above merely show a simple Pavlovian type of response to a stimulus not worthy of the title intelligence. I would say that virtually all that we do in our complex lives is simply response to stimuli. We differ from our amphibian brothers only in the complexity of our responses and their stimuli. The degree of difference between us is relative to the size of our relative brains. Intelligence should be measured in terms of quality not quantity. The quality is decided by suitability of the response to the stimulus in terms of how it increases the individuals chances of survival. I suppose the point I'm trying to make is that amphibians are not dim, just small. Perhaps also I'm trying to bring us down a peg or two, clearly a trait inherited from my mother!

Whilst thinking about survival I remember a remarkable incident from my childhood newt-keeping days. Having released some Smooth Newts after watching them breeding someone took my "empty" tank, still full of water and left it in our cellar. A year later I found it and discovered many healthy, although small, newt larvae. These had hatched and lived on apparently nothing (or possibly each other) in that cold, dark environment. Naked and small I wonder how they survive the northern winters or the filthy water some live in. I marvel at their ability to grow new limbs after amputation. I take my hat off to them!

Returning to intelligence one final observation reminded me why I love studying natural history which always throws up questions with each new experience. I was in Glen Coe one spring and found a male Palmate Newt crossing a fast flowing tributary of the River Coe some eight feet wide by means of a fallen bough. Did he know he would be swept away by the current? Did he deliberately seek out the crossing to reach the swamps and ponds beyond? Did he remember from another year the crossing point? When credited, by Man, with an instinct to walk downhill to find water why did he climb up and then over the bough? Why did he not fall from the three inch wide bridge? What incredible odds would be needed to make chance or coincidence the answer to the riddle of the newt's bridge? Surely intelligence far greater than we credit him with was involved? Surely responses to stimuli far more complex than we believe him capable of was involved?

Garth M. Coupland



Every two years or so, the Society and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust jointly make the above award to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to nature conservation in the county. We are delighted that this year the medal is to be awarded to Alec Bull, co-author of the magnificent new 'Flora of Norfolk' and currently joint president of the Society. The medal will be presented at the Trust annual meeting at the new Ecotech Centre, Swaffham on Friday, October 15. We hope that Society members who are also Trust members will try to get to the meeting to support Alec on this very happy occasion.

HOME BIRDS III

Our garden at Watlington, near King's Lynn, is very different from those of Geoffrey Kelly and Gillian Beckett, but perhaps for that reason some notes on the birds we have seen here over the last eight years may be of interest.

The garden is small, but pretty wild, and with a number of trees and shrubs, including conifers and two large Lime trees. Arable land is on two sides, and we have a high, mainly Elm and Ivy hedge in front.

Unlike the previous articles in this series, our list comprises only birds seen actually in the garden, i.e. at or below the level of the bungalow roof. We put food our all the year round, including nuts, meat, fats and bread on the ground, and nuts and sunflower seeds in suspended containers.

The 25 species shown opposite have been seen each year (1992 - 1999). They are listed roughly in order of frequency, as we have kept no records of actual numbers seen. Another 23 species have been only rarely noticed.

RM & SM Payne

Annual species:-

1 Starling
2 House Sparrow
3 Collared Dove
4 Greenfinch
5 Chaffinch
6 Blackbird
7 Blue Tit
8 Great Tit
9 Dunnock
10 Robin
11 Jackdaw
12 Magpie
13 Coal Tit
14 Black-headed Gull (winter)
15 Pied Wagtail (winter)
16 Rook
17 Song Thrush
18 Long-tailed Tit
19 Jay
20 Wren
21 Wood Pigeon (more frequently in recent years)
22 Common Gull (winter)
23 Pheasant
24 Goldfinch
25 Sparrowhawk

Rarely noticed species:-

26 Mallard - occ. 2 or 3 on lawn (nearest large pond 250m away)
27 Fieldfare - Jan/Dec 1996
28 Redwing - Mar 94/w. 96-7/Feb 99
29 Siskin - Feb 94/Feb 95/Ma-Ap 98
30 Linnet - 1992-97 only
31 Mistle Thrush - Mar 96 / May 99
32 Tree Creeper - Nov 93 / Jan 99
33 Spotted Flycatcher - 1992 / 1994
34 Red-leg. Partridge - not since 97
35 Swallow - (resting in nos. on roof evening 27/8/94)
36 House Martin
37 Moorhen - Dec 1991
38 Goldcrest - Nov 92 ?overlooked
39 Green Woodpecker - Jun 1993
40 Heron - Jan 95 (no pond)
41 Bullfinch - Jun 1995
42 Willow Warbler - Aug 1996
43 Nuthatch - Jun 97 (eating seeds)
44 Budgerigar - (escape) Apr 1997
45 Whitethroat - May 1997
46 Gt Sp Woodpecker - June 1997 feeding on nuts
47 Kestrel - taking prey June 1997
48 Turtle Dove - June 1999

REMINDERS

A reminder to those who have not yet paid their subs - £10 please ASAP to the Treasurer. Cheques payable to Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.

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

With bird records in mind could members also please remember to send their monthly records to the County Bird Recorder for the Society:

Giles Dunmore
49 Nelson Road, Sheringham,
Norfolk, NR26 8DA

Europe's Largest Slug (*Natterjack* - no. 65)

Unfortunately part of the last sentance in the inset illustration panel on p4 was 'lost'. For those who wish to add it to their copy it is as follows:

never marbled or large spotted. Larger skin tubercles than *L. maximus*.

HAWKS AND HAWKERS

HOOKED BEAK BRIGADE

Earlier this year I had been given as a present a day with a falconer. After a rundown on the various birds and the different methods they use to catch their prey a display followed.

The falconer put different birds through their paces. The most magical for me was a Saker Falcon, the great speed and power of this bird as it came to the lure was breathtaking, often so low that the wing tips were skimming the grass. Or again, coming in from a higher station it was moving at such speed that the sound from its wings as it passed reminded me of fizzing pop. The sheer elegance of this bird in flight was amazing, at one point the other guest and myself were asked to stand just a yard apart, the falconer then swung the lure in such a manner that the Saker came hurtling down the meadow and between us at head height. This contrasted greatly with the Barn Owl's slow, silent flight.

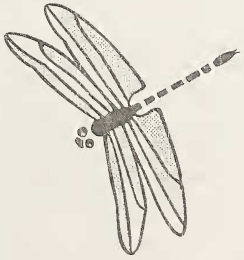
A walk through the woods with a Harris Hawk showed yet another method of catching your dinner. Sitting it out watching for movement this bird followed us through the trees for about a mile, never far away, its leg bells could be heard as it flew to catch up, it was just like taking the dog for a walk.

I enjoyed seeing so many different birds of prey, I had watched the diminutive Kestrel adept at catching mice and voles, and the mighty awe inspiring power of the Bald Eagle capable of killing a Roe Deer. The crushing grip of this mighty bird, weighing in at $10^1/_2$ lbs., required the use of a special glove.

Tony Howes

A WELCOME VISITOR

My eye caught a movement near the garden pond, I stood by the window and watched, then a large dragonfly came into view. I went outside as quickly as possible, it was still there, hovering over the water near the lilies. Much to my surprise it was a female Emperor, the first time I had seen one round the pond in the three years since it was put in. It settled on a lily leaf and began laying eggs - I charged back inside for the camera. On getting back outside the insect was in flight again and within a few seconds it went over the fence out of sight. But with luck I should have a few eggs that maybe in two years time will hatch into these beautiful dragonflies.



They have the largest wingspan of any British dragonfly, the male is a brilliant blue on the abdomen with a black stripe, and the female is green. This was indeed a welcome visitor.

Tony Howes

LIQUIDATED!

We have all heard the phrase "Red in tooth and claw" - but drowning? I was intrigued by a letter in *The Times* from 10-year-old Eleanor Batchelor from Hampshire. She described how she saw a bird of prey trying to drown a Blackbird in a puddle-filled pothole. It sat on the Blackbird so that it was completely submerged. Was this, she asked, a common phenomenon? Incidentally, the blackbird survived because Eleanor scared away the hawk. The letter brought this response from Chris Dowsett, of The Grange, Burgh Castle: "Eleanor Batchelor wonders if birds of prey often drown their victims. Three years ago my wife and I sailed up the River Yare in Norfolk and observed a Black-headed Gull swoop and gather up a mouse from the river bank. The gull then settled on the water and held the mouse submerged until its struggles ceased."Have any members observed this ingenious if rather gruesome method of killing prey?

David Paull

I think it may be more usual for gulls to drown their prey, particularly the larger species. I have seen Gt. Black-backed Gulls attack and subsequently drown Redwings as they were crossing the North Sea in October.

'FF'

Michael J. Seago

An era in the history of ornithology in Norfolk ended on 9th July with the death of Michael Seago, aged 73. He began his interest in birdwatching in the early 1940's with regular visits to Breydon where his particular interest in wading birds developed. He joined the Society in 1943 and was soon having observations published in the Society's *Transactions* and elsewhere. In 1953 it was felt that the county should have a dedicated annual bird report to be published jointly by the (then) Norfolk Naturalists Trust and the Society and Michael was persuaded by Bernard Riviere, Dick Bagnall-Oakely, Ted Ellis and others to take on the role of editor.

The first edition under his leadership appeared in 1954 covering the events of 1953 and in the Autumn of 1998 the forty-fifth annual publication, dealing with the records for 1997, was published with Michael still acting as senior editor, a unique record in British ornithological recording. During this long period he was responsible for the introduction of a number of features now taken for granted in such publications, namely line drawings and photographs, the latter having been in full colour since the 1986 Report. These innovations and a much more detailed Classified List in recent years, have received national recognition by awards in the 'Best Annual Bird Report' competition organised by the magazine *British Birds* - joint first for the 1995 edition and a second place for 1997. The Society alone became responsible for the report after the 1992 edition and as a result of sales and Michael's ability to attract sponsorship, the ever increasing size did not result in any substantial additional costs to our funds.

In addition to his role with bird reports, Michael produced two editions of his book *Birds of Norfolk,* first published by Jarrolds in 1966 and has been a regular contributor to the local press for almost half a century; for the last 12 years, as a member of the team writing the daily 'In the Countryside' column in *The Eastern Daily Press.* For the last two years much of his time and effort has been dedicated to the preparations, with a team of friends, of a definitive history of The Birds of Norfolk which is due for publication in August. It is a great sorrow to all those involved with this book that Michael did not survive to see this monumental work of over 600 pages complete with his selection of line drawings and coloured photographs, reach fruition.

All his adult life Michael has been very active in supporting local natural history organisations, holding various offices with the Great Yarmouth Naturalists' Society, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, where he served on the Council for 33 years and the Society. He was the Society's President in both 1962/63 and 1993/94. At the time of his death he was a Vice President of both the Trust and the Society. He has also devoted much time and effort on conservation matters particularly those associated with reserve management and the protection of rare breeding birds. Until his retirement from a full time career at the Norwich Union Insurance Group in 1986, all these activities were carried out in his spare time. In recognition of his long and dedicated service to conservation in Norfolk Michael was presented with the Sydney Long Memorial Medal at the Annual General meeting of the Trust in 1993.

He will be greatly missed by all those many people who he has in-spired and encouraged through his writings and wide circle of personal contacts to treasure Norfolk's wildlife, particularly its birds. We extend to Sylvia and her family our deepest sympathy.

Don Dorling

Dr. C.P. Petch

In my paper on Norfolk Botanists, (*A Flora of Norfolk*, Beckett & Bull 1999), I stated that the late Dr. C.P. Petch returned to his family home at the Manor House, Wolferton on his retirement. His son, Dr. Michael Petch, has written and pointed out that in fact,

Dr. Charles Petch was born and brought up in North Wooton and is buried in the churchyard there, only buying the Manor House at Wolferton on his retirement. I apologise for the error and am sorry for any distress this may have caused.

Alec Bull

A note to CONTRIBUTORS.

The next *Natterjack* will be in November. Could you please send all correspondence/disc to the following address, as soon as possible, and marked with NNNS on the envelope. *'FF'*

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