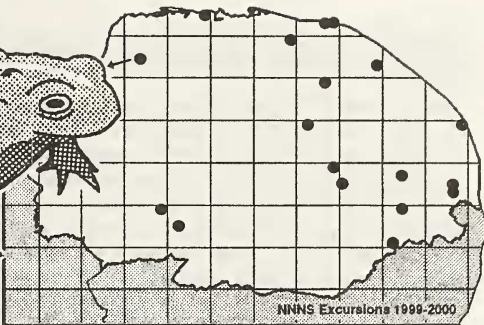
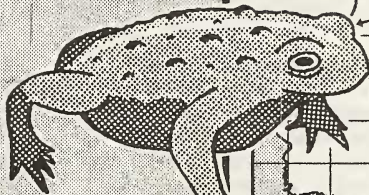


HISTORY MUSEUM

18 AUG 1999

EXCHANGE
GENERAL LIBRARY

THE NORFOLK NATTERJACK



From the Chairman...

We are on the move again - and for the first time the regular venue for our indoor meetings will be outside Norwich city centre. We hope you will understand the reasons for the change and will approve our choice.

When fire robbed us of both of our meeting places - the Central Library for our main Society meetings and the Assembly House where the photographic group had been meeting since it was formed - we camped out at a church hall off Ber Street, Norwich. It was not a pleasant experience and the numbers attending meetings dropped off alarmingly.

So when the Assembly house was restored and reopened, we gratefully moved in. Members returned in droves, and therein lies the problem. The Assembly House has rooms that hold a legal maximum of 50 or the far-too-large Music Room and Noverre Suite.

We have outgrown the smaller rooms and, combined with the fact that they are always grossly overheated, conditions have become impossibly uncomfortable. Many

members have complained, quite justifiably. There is also, depending on what else is on in the building, a shortage of parking space.

So, after I had "tested the water" at the February and March meetings and got an almost unanimous show of hands in favour, the Society's Council made the decision to move to the splendid new leisure and conference centre at Easton College.

There we shall have ample space in rooms that should be warm, not tropical, and there is plenty of parking.

The college is reached from the A47 Norwich Southern Bypass and is just a few minutes drive from either the Showground or Ringland roundabouts. A sketch map is enclosed with this issue of *Natterjack*. A larger-scale map with detailed advice on how to find the Easton College Leisure Centre and where to park will be provided with the next issue, shortly before the start of the indoor meetings season.

■ For many members, getting to meetings at Easton will be easier than negotiating through the city

centre traffic. But there will obviously be a problem for those without cars. So now is the time to do what we should have done some time ago: set up a simple register of members with cars who are willing to give other members lifts to indoor meetings and field trips. If you are willing to join such a register, will you please send me a note that need comprise only your name, telephone number and the approximate area from which you are prepared to pick up members, for example: "David Paull, 01603 457270, Eaton Village and Cringleford". I hope to be able to report in the next *Natterjack* that a good number of you volunteered and how members seeking lifts can make use of the service.

David Paull, Chairman

Toad-in-the-hole...

Just a small hole this quarter which means, of course, that you have sent in a good deal of material for "Natterjack" which is encouraging. In this bulletin we have giant slugs, rare fungi, more home birds, requests for information and important Society news. I am also pleased to report that many members have commented favourably on the new style. 'FF'

The quarterly bulletin
of the
Norfolk & Norwich
Naturalists' Society



Founded 1869
Registered Charity No. 291604

Number 65
May 1999

Past Issues of Transactions

Professor Hinde of St. John's College, Cambridge has delivered to me a number of back issues of the Society's Transactions. Many of these originally belonged to his uncle, Mr. F.C. Hinde, who was Honorary Treasurer of the Society from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s, having served previously as our Honorary Librarian. Prof. Hinde wanted these books to find a good home and was happy for me to fill some gaps in my own run. The bulk of the copies are available for other members who are trying to complete their sets. A list of dates and Part numbers of the run follows and are now available on a first-come first-served basis on application to the undersigned at:

6 New Road, Hethersett, NORWICH, NR9 3HH
Telephone: 01603 810318

Year	Volume - Part		Year	Volume - Part
1872-73	(not shown)		1919-24	XI 1 to 5
1888-89	IV V		1924-29	XII 1 to 5
1892-94	V 4 & 5		1929-34	XIII 1 to 5
1894-99	VI (bound)		1935-38	XIV 1 to 5
1902-03	VII 4		1944-48	XVI 1 to 5
1906-07	VIII 3		1949-53	XVII 1 to 5
1913-14	IX 5			
1914-19	X 1 to 5		1975	24 1

There are duplicates available for some of the years mentioned above.

In addition an anonymous donor left with the Wildlife Trust a further batch of more recent issues dating from 1980 to 1990 (including Bird & Mammal Reports) and these are also available if required.

Don Dorling

LOOK AFTER TOMORROW

Among the many birds that visit our garden are several Coal Tits. They seem to have a liking for Sunflower seeds, but they prefer to take them away from the feeders rather than eat them on the spot. I have watched on the occasion and seen many seeds taken one at a time to different parts of the garden, presumably to be eaten at leisure.

Last March, however, while tidying up the borders I had been surprised to find Sunflower seedlings popping up all over the place. In open soil, in among potted shrubs and in seed trays of small plants. It would appear this small feathery mite of a bird works on the same principle as its larger cousins and like Jays, Magpies and Crows it 'puts a bit away for a rainy day'.

Tony Howes

PLANTS ON ROOFS

I am preparing a paper on the vascular plants (i.e. excluding mosses and liverworts) that grow on roofs and in roof gutters, based mainly on several years' observations, often through binoculars, in West Norfolk. But I should be interested to hear from members in any part of the county who may have noticed plants growing in these unlikely situations, particularly if they have been seen in flower. Roofs and gutters are clearly unfavourable habitats for plants,

so I am making a note of these species which manage to reach the flowering stage perched aloft.

Thatched roofs in West Norfolk appear to be devoid of plants. Is this because they are too steeply pitched or perhaps the material is too hostile to plant growth? There is some evidence that wheat straw used in the West Country may be more favourable in this respect than the reed straw which is (or was) traditional in Norfolk. Have members any views on this?



Asbestos roofs appear to support a richer growth of plants than tiles, perhaps because of their alkalinity. Also, of course they usually have a flatter pitch.

Any observations to:

R. M. Payne
"Applegate"

Thieves Bridge Road
Whittington, PE33 0HL

HOME BIRDS II

Our garden, at Stanhoe near King's Lynn, unlike Geoffrey Kelly's (Natterjack no. 64 - February 1999) is completely enclosed with trees and shrubs and the only thing visible from the house apart from the garden and adjacent trees is some sky. We liken it to a clearing in a small wood through in fact once away from the garden, the area is largely arable.

We watch from a downstairs window, usually about a half an hour at breakfast time and shorter periods during the day. We have several ponds and well filled birdbaths so entice several birds to bathe, we also feed peanuts, sunflower seeds, small seeds such as niger (*Guizotia abyssinica*) and dripping in a log with holes.

The list opposite, in ranking order, is the total of daily sightings through 1998 made on 354 days, the others we were away. Birds seen over the garden rather than within are indicated with an *.

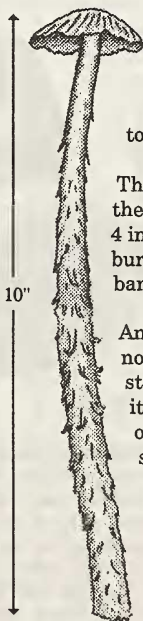
Having been watching intermittently from the same window for thirty or more years there have been many changes, for example, Great Spotted Woodpeckers have arrived only within the last 10 years, but then we would have had nesting House Sparrows, Swallows, Swifts and Starlings and regular Marsh Tits. A check through some old lists would make an article in itself.

Gillian Beckett

A Fungus Find

On March 29th this year I found three hard and dry fruiting body stems of a fungus that I had never seen before. They were in light, sandy soil on a bank overshadowed by a hedge, on the side of the road at Drayton (A1067), near the old David Rice Hospital.

After consulting the books it came down to *Battarea phalloides* (later confirmed by Mike Woolner). It appears to be a very unusual and rare fungus in the UK. The interesting feature is the long, thin stem. It is very rough and woody and



closely resembles a small pine tree topped by a tiny cap.

The average length of the stem was 10 inches, 4 inches of which was buried in the soil of the bank.

An article in Natterjack no. 60 (February 1998) states that at that time it had been recorded only on 42 occasions, so I was pleased that my walk along the Drayton Road had resulted in such an interesting find.

Tony Howes

1=	Chaffinch	352
1=	Greenfinch	352
1=	Great Tit	352
4	Blue Tit	351
5	Blackbird	342
6	Collared Dove	331
7	Gt. Sp. Woodpecker	306
8	Robin	291
9	Wood Pigeon	282
10	Coal Tit	268
11	*Jackdaw	237
12	Wren	226
13	Brambling	162
14	Nuthatch	148
15	Long-tailed Tit	125
16	Duncock	114
17	Mistle Thrush	112
18	Chiff-chaff	96
19	Siskin	89
20	*House Martin	84
21	Tawny Owl	78
22	Stock Dove	77
23	*Swift	74
24	Song Thrush	73
25	Blackcap	62
26	*Pink-footed Goose	53
27=	Pheasant	20
27=	Sparrowhawk	20
29	Black-headed Gull	18
30	Turtle Dove	16
31	Fieldfare	15
32	Willow Warbler	13
33	Starling	11
34	*Carrion Crow	9
35	Goldfinch	8
36	*Oystercatcher	7
37=	Green Woodpecker	6
37=	*Common Gull	6
39=	Tree Creeper	5
39=	*Curlew	5
41	Spotted Flycatcher	3
42=	Garden Warbler	2
42=	*Cuckoo	2
42=	House Sparrow	2
42=	*Swallow	2
42=	*Lapwing	2
42=	*Kestrel	2
48=	Goldcrest	1
48=	Bullfinch	1
48=	*Rook	1
48=	*Jay	1
48=	Redwing	1
48=	*Skylark	1
48=	*Red-legged Partridge	1
48=	*Egyptian Goose	1

(55 species recorded)

EUROPE'S LARGEST SLUG

Three years ago a momentous occasion for students of Norfolk's molluscan fauna passed with barely a comment from the Naturalist community. A specimen of *Limax cinereoniger*, Europe's largest slug had been found in old woodland at the English Nature reserve at Swanton Novers, Norfolk. It was the first time the species had been recorded in the county and only the second record for East Anglia.

Don't get me wrong. I quite understand when others do not love slugs as much as I do, but I was very excited having never seen this species before. Sadly I was not permitted to visit the site which I found understandable but nevertheless frustrating.

Limax cinereoniger is not common. It occurs in old or "ancient" woodland in southern and western Britain. It is apparently intolerant of human disturbance and its presence is considered a good indicator of healthy primary woodland. Normally reaching 20cms in length and rarely 30cms it is an impressive gastropod.

At the time of the Norfolk discovery I was ignorant of the first East Anglian record and so it was that on 4th September, 1997 a bright, sunny afternoon, I found myself passing Wolves Wood near Hadleigh, Suffolk. I was on my way to the Ipswich Museum to purchase Ian Killeen's work on the Land and Freshwater Molluscs of Suffolk.

Wolves Wood is an old, mainly coppiced wood run as a reserve by the RSPB. I thought I might just have a short poke about. I did poke about and found myself five specimens of *L. cinereoniger* in and upon a pile of rotten logs in the

deep shade of a Hornbeam grove.

Believing this to be a new East Anglian site and no doubt quite carried away with enthusiasm I took one slug for the RSPB who, after kindly letting me study the animal, arranged for the find to be confirmed by Michael Kerney of the British Museum.

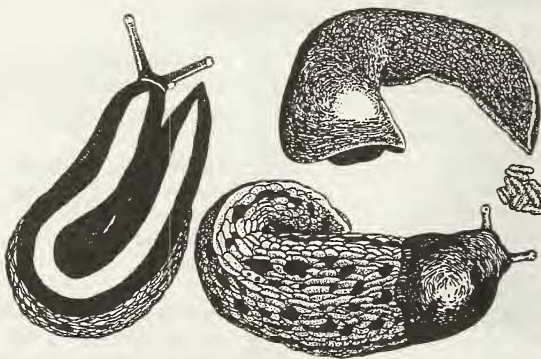
It was only later that day, having bought Mr. Killeen's book that I read of the two slugs found in Wolves Wood in 1987 but never seen again despite extensive searches.

These specimens were all of a uniform dark, brown, grey colour with a white "foot" or "sole". On a subsequent visit I found another one with spots and stripes and a jet black mantle. It also had the diagnostic tripartite "sole" as illustrated.

In 1998 I found numerous individuals under Beech trees in the Forest of Dean. Both these colour types were present and some in between. It appears to be a variable species.

This slug's nearest relative is the familiar and almost ubiquitous Great Grey Slug with aliases of Tiger Slug and Leopard Slug. These names refer to the beautiful markings on *Limax maximus*.

Having studied two specimens of *L. cinereoniger* I feel confident in stating that in behaviour it is quite a different beast to *L. maximus*. Unlike *L. maximus* it is generally very sluggish but can be roused to action quickly by picking it up. It cares not to be handled. Again unlike *L. maximus* which seeks shelter during the day this slug stayed exclusively on the surface.



LIMAX CINEREONIGER Wolf 1803

Both types described are illustrated showing tripartite sole, pale keel, the "hissing posture", the family's "fingerprint" folds on the mantle and some droppings. Similar species: *Limax maximus*.

Together with descriptions of form, colour and habitat in the text, absolute diagnostic features are: Only slug to have the tripartite sole, when present. Pale keel on back extends to halfway or more between tail and mantle (*L. maximus* only one third). Tentacles very finely spotted with minute dark spots (lens). Mantle is uniform dark colour,

A curious habit which I have not observed in *L. maximus*, was discovered when I first gave it its' nightly misting of sprayed rain-water (I treat my slugs like VIPs!). It instantly extends the front of its' mantle, drawing in head and tentacles in a surprisingly rapid and sudden movement accompanied by an audible hissing sound. I don't believe this is a defence mechanism as touching or picking up does not induce the reaction.

I fed each slug on a teaspoon of goldfish flakes supplemented with fresh mushroom every two days. The grow rapidly on this diet and produce copious amounts of slime and faeces. Their accommodation must be cleaned daily. Unlike humans they won't tolerate filth!

On 23rd September the first slug laid 99 beautiful, clear, spherical eggs, 3 mm in diameter on the surface of a carpet of moss. Between 3rd and 11th November 67 healthy young hatched. These, after being fattened on fish flakes, were returned to the site in Wolves Wood where I am pleased to say the warden and the RSPB are taking steps to ensure the slugs conservation.

When I met the warden he told me that large slugs had been seen, entwined, hanging from boughs on strings of slime in the wood. I should love to witness this, the strange mating procedure of *Limax cinereoniger*, an hermaphrodite mollusc.

I feel sure that Norfolk must have more sites for this animal. Please keep looking. For diagnostic features please see the illustration panel on page 4.

Garth M. Coupland



Anglian Water Osprey Project - In Partnership with the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Following an absence of over 150 years, attempts are being made by a team at Rutland Water Nature Reserve, to re-establish the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) as a breeding species in England. The translocations project is being run in partnerships Anglian Water and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and is the first of its kind outside the USA.

During the past three successive summers 24 young birds have been successfully translocated from thriving populations in Scotland and released at Rutland Water. Sadly, since migration, two of the Rutland young have been recovered in West Africa.

In spite of these losses the team remains optimistic that birds will return and believes that the project is now entering a new and exciting phase. By spring the young released in the early years will have reached maturity and although rather young to breed, it is possible that, from April onwards, some may return from their overwintering grounds to prospect for suitable nesting sites. As Ospreys like to nest close to the site where they first fledged it is hoped that returning birds may choose to settle within the locality of Rutland Water. Indeed, it is this aspect of the Osprey ecology that has allowed similar projects in the USA to succeed.

It is of course possible that returning birds may choose a more distant site. In order to extend coverage the project team are hoping to encourage members of bird clubs and wildlife groups to

look out for colour-ringed Ospreys. Each year Scottish Osprey chicks are ringed with a metal BTO ring and a coloured plastic Darvic ring. The colour coding changes from year to year. The translocated chicks bear the same means of identification, but carry rings on the opposite leg to the Scottish birds. For the past three years Rutland chicks have been ringed as follows:

1996 red ring/white lettering left leg
1997 white ring/black lettering left leg
1998 ochre ring/black lettering left leg



If you see any colour-ringed Ospreys the project team would be very interested to hear from you. Please try and record the time, date and place of the sighting and as much detail as possible about the rings. We would stress, however, that the welfare of the birds must come first and attempts at

reading colour rings should only be undertaken if the birds use a regular feeding perch where the leg may be visible. All sightings will be followed up and will be treated in confidence.

The project team can be contacted at:

Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre
Rutland Water Nature Reserve
Egleton, Oakham
Rutland LE15 8BT

Tel: 01572 770651

Fax: 01572 755931

website:

www.fineshade.u-net.com/rw/

If you would like to receive a leaflet about the project please forward an A5 s.a.e to the above address.

FIELD MEETINGS MAY - JULY 1999

Please note that start times are variable.

Sunday 16th May Berney Marshes

10.00 am. Full day, TG475051

This meeting was publicised at the last three meetings, including the AGM, and all the places have now been filled.

Sun. 23rd May Beeston Regis Common

11.00 am. Full day, TG165426

"Beeston Bog" is one of Norfolk's premier wildlife sites and was recently designated as a Special Area of Conservation. The habitats range from acid heath to spring-fed valley mire and the great diversity of plant life supports a wide range of invertebrates, many of which are rare. This is the first of three visits to the common this year and should be a good time for butterwort, early marsh-orchid and possibly Pugsley's marsh orchid.

Sunday 6th June Alderford Common

WILDLIFE 2000

10.30 am. Full day, TG126186

This SSSI is owned by Swannington Parish Council and managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. There are a variety of habitats here including heath, scrub, damp hollows, ponds and chalk grassland (which is unusual for this part of the county). The site is noted for newts, nightingales and turtle doves. Graham Larter is the volunteer warden.

Wednesday 16th June Marston Marsh

10.30 am. Morning only, TG217057

This is an attractive local nature reserve in the Yare Valley consisting mainly of grazing marsh with a network of dykes. With luck, there should be a good show of orchids. This meeting has been re-scheduled from last year's programme as the visit was rained off by a storm of near tropical intensity. Pessimists should bring umbrellas.

Sunday 20th June Pigney's Wood

WILDLIFE 2000

10.30 am. Full day, TG298324

Pigney's Wood was established by the North Norfolk Community Woodland Trust and since 1993 several thousand trees have been planted on what was arable land. As well as the new wood, the site includes

some existing woodland and 4.8 hectares of meadowland adjacent to the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. Many members will remember the excellent talk John Sizer gave us last September.

Sat. 10th July Snettisham Coastal Park

JOINT MEETING

2.00 p.m. Afternoon only, TF648335

Bordering the Wash to the north of the car park, this area has a very rich coastal flora and habitats include shingle bank, brackish marsh and damp grassland. It is also noted for its bird life. For those who wish to make a full day's outing, the RSPB reserve is to the south of the car park. Brian Sage is a well-known all-round naturalist.

Sun. 11th July Beeston Regis Common

11.00 am. Full day, TG165426

This meeting is the second of the three visits to the common and the summer flowers and butterflies should be at their peak. For those who are interested, there will also be a workshop on hoverflies.

Sunday 18th July Strumpshaw Fen

JOINT MEETING

11.00 am. Full day, TG341066

Not only is this a fine birdwatching reserve but the meadows support an excellent variety of wildflowers and the dykes are full of aquatic plants such as water-soldier and frogbit. It is also a good place to see the Norfolk Hawker.

Saturday 31st July Coldharbour Wood

11.00 am. Full day, TL784996

This is in a lesser-known part of the Breck where there are attractive forest rides mainly on chalk. We should see plenty of Breckland plants and insects. Gillian Beckett is the BSB recorder for West Norfolk, co-author of the new Flora of Norfolk and is currently joint president of the society.

N.B. Indoor meetings from September 1999 will be held in the Sports & Leisure Centre at Easton College. Further details will be published in the next issue of *Natterjack*.

Bob Ellis

Castle Museum

The natural history collections at the Norwich Castle Museum will not be available for general study as from July 1st 1999, until further notice, although it may be possible to have limited access until December. This is due to the refurbishment and reorganisation of the museum. It is hoped that the museum will re-open as early in 2000 as possible.

Please contact the following at the Castle Museum if you have any specific queries on:

01603-223642 (AGI)

-223643 (JGG)

-223644 (AJS)

-223645 (RJD)

- or via their URL

<http://www.paston.co.uk/users/ncm>

A note to CONTRIBUTORS.

The next *Natterjack* will be in August. It would be much appreciated if any correspondence could be sent to the following address, as soon as possible, and marked with NNNS on the envelope. For those with access to a computer a WORD document or an ordinary text file on disc would be most helpful.

'FF'

Francis Farrow

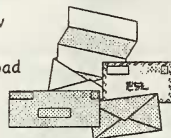
'Heathlands'

6 Havelock Road

Sheringham

Norfolk

NR26 8QD



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Members who pay by cheque are reminded that subscriptions fell due on 1 April, 1999.

Current rates are £10 for ordinary and family members and £15 for affiliated groups.

Please make cheques payable to **Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society** and send them to:

DI Richmond,
42, Richmond Rise,
Reepham,
Norfolk, NR10 4LS.

From:

Address:

.....
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