

9 DEC 2004

EXCHANGED  
GENERAL LIBRARY

# The Norfolk NATTERJACK

Website: [www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)Number 87  
November 2004

## Toad-in-the-hole....

Welcome to the final edition of 'The Norfolk Natterjack' for 2004. The year has seen a few changes as we say final goodbyes to old friends and of course welcome new ones too! As we head into winter we can dream of next years outings and hope for new discoveries in a world that is at peace - merry Christmas and a happy new year.

FF

## New Report Team

I am delighted (and relieved) to report that Rubyna Shiekh and Nick Elsey, who live at Stoke Holy Cross and joined the Society only last year, have taken over the distribution and sale of the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. If you need to contact them, their phone number (evenings only) is 01508 494823. Iris and I will continue to hold the stock of back numbers and handle casual sales of other publications. Our number is 01603 457270.

David Paul

## Buxton Heath - under new management!

At the end of May this year, something rather strange happened - after 12 years as Voluntary Warden of Buxton Heath, I left the country!

New management at Buxton Heath? Well, not exactly, as the new Voluntary Warden, Phil Davison, has been a member of Buxton Heath Wildlife Group for several years. Although Phil's main interest is ornithology, he has a good all-round knowledge of natural history, and has put in enough hours at the site to ably take over the conservation reins.

Supporting Phil in his endeavours will be Colin Thompson, another Buxton Heath regular for many years. Colin studies everything that moves, plus everything that doesn't, but perhaps his greatest passion is reserved for the Buxton Heath adders and grass snakes.

Other regulars assisting the dynamic duo will be David Ruthven, Paul Westley, Nathalie Kausch, Paul Woolnough, Liz Webb, and Rachel Hilsdon. Once again, the "regulars" will be joined by students from the University of East Anglia. For some students, the practical conservation work is helpful to their environmental studies. For others, it simply gets them away from the concrete of the campus. Whatever the reason for their presence, Buxton Heath benefits from the extra pairs of hands.

Buxton Heath Wildlife Group visits the site on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 1015 until 1630.

And what of me in Hungary? Well, I've formed the Mátrafüred Wildlife Group, and I've been logging and photographing species since I arrived. It's "business as usual" really, but in a different country. I've also been on field trips with the Mátra Museum staff, insect experts from Budapest Natural History Museum, and Gyuri Csóka, the renowned gall expert.

I intend to write again with tales of exotic species. Until then, best wishes to you all,

Colin Penny, ex-Voluntary Warden of Buxton Heath.

## Contents



page 1	Toad-in-the-hole.....
	New Report Team (Report distributor found), Buxton Heath - under new management
page 2	'Not only moths come to light! (Other insects).
page 3	The aquatic soldierfly <i>Stratiomys potamida</i> in Norwich Cemetery. A day on Mousehold Heath. Holtham Lake.
page 4	Badgers on the doorstep. Another world? (Senegal).
page 5	Excursion Reports. Belaugh & Horstead.
page 6	Ringstead Downs. Scole moth evening.
page 7	Natural History Day (Wheatfen). Kessingland Beach.
page 8	Bryological excursions (2004-2005 programme).
page 9	A compelling interest in Natural History (Ernest Daniels).
page 10	Leonard Wise 1929-2004 (Obituary). Books for sale



The quarterly bulletin  
of the  
Norfolk & Norwich  
Naturalists' Society  
Founded 1869

Registered Charity No 291614

© Norfolk &amp; Norwich Naturalists' Society

## Not only moths come to light!

I have been trapping and recording moths in my garden for many years and have been intrigued by just how many other invertebrates are found in the moth traps in the morning. For some time I have been trying to identify the insects I see and a selection of those seen in the last few months are mentioned below.

At the moment, on most mornings I find burying beetles in the traps – not really welcome as they are known to attack moths and can cause quite serious damage if left confined too long. Frequently there is the all black *Nicrophorus humator* which can be distinguished from the similar *Nicrodes littoralis* by the orange clubs at the ends of its antennae. Usually, in the early autumn, there are also one or two of the orange and black banded *Nicrophorus* spp. which can be distinguished from each other by the shape and completeness of the orange bands across the elytra. In the middle of August I found a most unusual beetle in the trap. The elytra of *Metoecus paradoxus* are much reduced in width, a dull orange in the male, come to a rounded point and leave much of the wings uncovered. The antennae in the male are very heavily bipectinate, looking quite like black antlers. Not only does it look unusual but it has a somewhat unusual life history. The larva starts as an internal parasite of a wasp grub (once it has found the right wasps' nest) later becoming an external parasite and devouring the whole of its host. According to Linsenn (Beetles of the British Isles, Wayside and Woodland series) it must be an underground wasp nest and it seems it must be that of the common wasp *Vespula vulgaris*, apparently not being found in the nest of the German wasp *Vespula germanica*.

Both these species of wasps are regular visitors to the trap and during recent weeks, when they have been particularly numerous by day as well, large numbers have added another hazard to handling egg trays in the half-light of early morning. Mixed in with the wasps on the 13<sup>th</sup> August was a distinctive fly with dark, diagonally transverse lines running across the outer veins of the forewings and with the inner area darkly mottled. This was *Anomoia purmunda*, a member of the Tephritidae, the picture-wing flies.

Its larvae attack the fruits of hawthorn (and sometimes other Rosaceae) and Tony Irwin tells me the adult is so strongly attracted to white spirit that the species can be a problem when house painting. Perhaps this and other similar solvents could be a source of pheromone substitutes for biological recording!

As August progresses many of the moths of summer are coming to the end of their flight period and just for a while the numbers of moths are a bit in the doldrums. However, it is about this time that caddis begin to appear in some profusion. For some time the particularly large one, *Phryganea grandis* has made irregular appearances in the trap and still occurs now and again but others that I see sporadically through the summer are now in greater numbers. One very obvious caddis is *Glyptotaelius pellucidus* which can be readily identified by the strongly notched outer margin of the forewing and a noticeably green abdomen which shows quite clearly through the wings. Another, equally numerous, that initially seems to have a similar notch is *Limnephilus lunatus* but closer examination shows this to be a pale crescent shaped marking on the outer margin of the normally rounded wing. As well as these and other larger caddis there are also several much smaller ones and the one I have seen most frequently in early September is *Mystacides azurea* which, as the name suggests, is blue/black all over the wings.

Not only do the numbers of caddis increase in August and September but so do the lacewings. For some time the golden-eyed green lacewings, *Chrysopa carnea* egg, have been present in the trap but now their increased numbers are joined by several of the much smaller brown lacewings. The two commonest in the traps at the moment are *Hemerobius lutescens* and *Hemerobius humulinus*. Although both are to be found flying from spring to autumn, in several overlapping broods, and both are insects of deciduous woods and hedgerows said to particularly favour hazel it is only at this time of year that I regularly see them in the moth traps.

It is also in the late summer/early autumn that various Hemipterans are apparently attracted to light. The distinctive shield-bug, *Pentatoma rufipes*, has put in several appearances and some of the more noticeable capsids have been recorded. Two that have been a little more numerous than most in late August

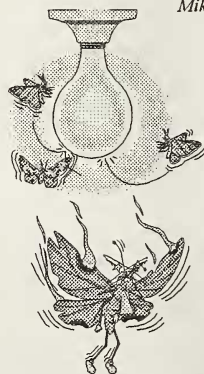
are *Oncotylus viridiflavus* and *Cyllecoris histronicus*. The former is abundant on hardheads and although Southwood and Leston (Land and Water Bugs of the British Isles, Wayside and Woodland series) say it is confined to south of a line from Suffolk to the Bristol Channel this was in 1959 and in his recent paper in the Transactions Ken Durrant tells us it is found in both Norfolk vice counties. *Cyllecoris histronicus* is usually found in June but occasional specimens survive until September and although both larvae and adults feed on oak (particularly the catkins), in later life the adults are predacious.

Hoverflies are also regular visitors to the light traps, particularly *Episyrphus balteatus* when there has been a large influx of migrants. A less common hoverfly, *Eupeodes latifasciatus* was in the trap on the 30<sup>th</sup> August and this is species I have seen only once before, in 1998 and that was also in the moth trap. Numbers are said to fluctuate considerably from year to year so perhaps when it is fairly common there is more night flying!

Many other species, from a range of orders, also find their way into the moth traps and I do wonder whether they are just attracted by the light or, as a significant proportion are predatory insects in one way or another, the presence of potential food is also a factor. Perhaps I should not have painted the traps with a white spirit based paint some fifteen years ago!

I am most grateful to all my friends within the Society who have help with determinations and confirmation of some of my identifications.

Mike Hall.





## The aquatic soldierfly *Stratiomys potamida* in Norwich Cemetery

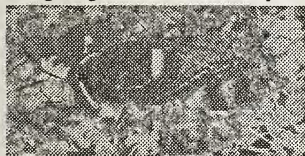
In the opening weeks of August 2004, flowers of a large evergreen spindle *Euonymus japonicus* in the old wooded part of Norwich Cemetery were attracting hundreds of insects with hoverflies predominant.

There were huge numbers of migrants : *Episyrphus balteatus*, *Syrphus* and *Eupodes* species making up the bulk of the assembly. A wren was present to take advantage of the situation, frequently snatching insects off the flowers to feed to a youngster in an overhead tree.

Aside from hoverflies there were many other flies including the Tachinid *Phasia hemiptera*, both the large distinctive males and smaller females. But by far the most unexpected sighting came on August 7<sup>th</sup> when a female of the aquatic soldierfly *Stratiomys potamida* was discovered , dwarfing all else as it moved awkwardly about the flowers.

Stubbs and Drake (British Soldierflies and their allies) say the adults of this striking species are nearly always found close to wet places where the larvae live but this was evidently a wanderer and the most likely source is the Wensum marshes about 1 km north of the Cemetery location. Tony Irwin tells me that the larvae can be readily found at certain Norfolk sites but sightings of adults are infrequent..

Stuart Paston.



*Stratiomys potamida*  
photographed on Beeston  
Common 15 Aug. 2004 -  
Francis Farrow

## A Day on Mousehold Heath

Tuesday September 21<sup>st</sup> was fine enough to tempt me out with the camera, I decided to take a stroll over Mousehold heath and search for fungi, but during the day I came upon a sheltered dell out of the rather strong wind, but catching the sun. I noticed many butterflies, some feeding from the last of the bramble flowers, others just basking on various bushes scattered about the area.

There were up to a dozen speckled woods, most looking rather tatty and near the end of their allotted life span, several large whites, a few green veined whites, one or two peacocks and red admirals. Also just one specimen of a lovely pristine comma, this was the rich golden form (Hutchinsoni) these are normally associated with the first broods in spring when the caterpillars are feeding during lengthening daylight hours, second broods, where the caterpillars are feeding during shortening daylight, usually produce the normal dark form which hibernates, (the butterflies of Britain and Ireland. -Thomas and Lewington).

Photographically all these butterflies were fairly easy to get close to, unlike high summer when they tend to be very lively in the warmer conditions, and are more inclined to fly early as you approach them. The speckled wood males were, as usual, very territorial, and would fly up and investigate any insect that flew into their patch. I spent several hours in this sunny glade, enjoying, like the butterflies, the last of the summer, - I never did find those fungi.

Tony Howes

## Holkham Lake

Walkers in Holkham Park generally make their way to the mile-long lake, which occupies a North/South depression N.W. of the Hall, dammed at the North end near the coast road. Bird watchers often head for this end, where the dam itself makes a good viewing point for e.g. the black-necked Grebe which turned up for two consecutive winters, staying long enough to moult into its spectacular breeding plumage. The other end becomes the winter home for hundreds (literally!) of coot and varying numbers of several duck species.

It is not particularly deep. In 2003 the summer was unusually dry, so much so that trips in the electric boat had to be suspended because it was constantly running aground, after the water-level dropped by nearly a foot. In normally wet conditions the lake is fed by a number of springs at the south end, one of which can be seen swirling into the water quite close to the road which runs past the Hall towards the ice-house.

Boat trips on the lake, wonderfully quiet because of the electric motor propulsion, reveal a number of things which cannot really be appreciated any other way. The two islands can be seen from the "other" side; both are used for nesting, by mallard, tufted duck and grey-lag geese. The ubiquitous Egyptian geese may be here, but as they nest in holes in trees they could be anywhere in the Park. In warm weather some of the increasingly large carp may be seen leaping from the water like miniature dolphins. Dolphins could at least take a gulp of air while airborne, but why do carp do it?

In places the banks are very steep, rising a good fifty feet above the water. Some of the beeches growing here show that unusual phenomenon of having branches growing lower than the roots! I'm not kidding you - have a look some time!



This steep section also conceals an underground boat-house, accessible through a stepped gully cut into the bank.

Over the years, especially at the Spring migration time, I have regularly seen common sandpipers flitting over the water and feeding on the narrow strip of gravel and mud round the edges of the lake. Other occasional sightings have been osprey and black terns and, mixed in with the large numbers of common and black-headed gulls in winter, up to three Mediterranean gulls.

*Paul Banham*

## BADGERS ON THE DOORSTEP

Up until recently I had not seen a live, wild badger, so when I learnt that the Pembrokeshire cottage that Wendy and I were staying in had regular visits from badgers I was very pleased, I thought maybe, with some luck, we might get a fleeting glimpse of one as it wandered through the garden. Then we were informed that the owner of the cottage would put food down each evening right outside the back window, and that the outside light left on would not affect them in any way. It sounded too good to be true.

The first evening we sat inside by the window, full of expectancy, the food, a mixture of peanuts and cat biscuits, was placed in an old baking tin within six feet of our vantage point. After a while the first visitors arrived - field mice - lots of them, they soon got the hang of pinching peanuts, picking one up and scampering back into the undergrowth, very entertaining to watch, but not what we were hoping for. Then just before 10pm a black and white head emerged from the bushes, our first badger had arrived, then a second one, they came straight to the tin and with loud snuffling and slurping noises, tucked in - we sat spellbound.

## Another world?

Slow-winding channels between high vegetation. A light breeze swishing the leaves, a small boat, a blue sky. The Norfolk Broads? No: a national park in northern Senegal.

It reminded me of my childhood, though: those occasional days with family or other young naturalists, messing about on the rivers in Norfolk.

Verging the channel were not Norfolk reeds but dark, silent tropical mangroves. We drifted in amongst them, came alongside a boat gently knocking against the thin trunks. In it, under a cloth, was a harvest of oysters. The gatherer was away, taking more shells from the tide-exposed bark.

We emerged back into the light. An African fish eagle flapped away from a roost above us, and around the corner there was the roaring din of a pelican colony, youngsters with their heads down parents' necks, chasing their food. Birds, noise and guano were everywhere. The place smelt like a serious incident at an anchovy factory.

The guides had a story for every character we met, including the solitary grey heron standing in the shade in the shallows.

"His wife tell him: 'Go get fish!'"

"He have to catch some and bring back to his family."

"But he prefer to mind his own business. Just sit by the river and have a very quiet fishing."

Suddenly it didn't seem so different from the Broads. Not for old harnser, anyway.

*Wanderer*

The rest of the week, as night closed in, I sat on a bench outside in the garden, camera and flash-gun on a tripod, the badgers took little notice of me provided I remained very still, the first two or three flashes made them nervous, then they were fine. It was noticeable that the mice stayed away while the badgers were feeding.

For better pictures I needed their heads up, so tried gentle whistles to attract their attention, to no avail, I tried tongue clicking, whistling loudly, even shouting at them, they just carried on eating, and only lifted their heads when it suited them. I had dispensed with the tin and was putting the food on and under the

gravel, this made it look more natural and also kept them feeding longer, they would stay about fifteen minutes, then just melt away as shadowy figures into the dark night.

Wendy and I both agreed, the badgers had made our Welsh holiday doubly enjoyable by their presence and acceptance of us, a lovely experience indeed.

*Tony Howes*





# Excursion Reports

Featuring:

*Belaugh & Horstead*

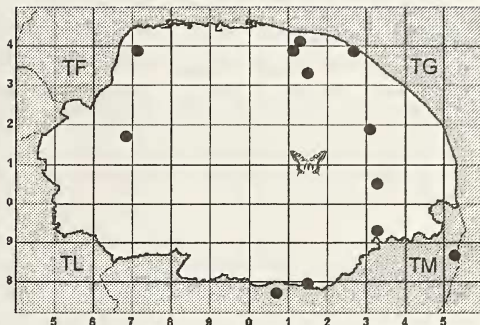
*Ringstead Downs*

*Moth night at Scol*

*Natural History Day*

*Kessingland Beach*

● 2004-05 Field Meeting location  
Easton College Indoor meetings



## 'Wildflowers Revealed' no.10:

### Belaugh & Horstead churchyards and a riverside & railway circular walk.

Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Some eighteen members and guests met at Belaugh Church on a morning initially rather dark and threatening, but which very soon improved to pleasant sunshine. Our leader, Bob Leaney, set the scene by describing the Norfolk Churchyard Conservation Scheme and its aims, and growing at our feet were some of the plants for which churchyards are now important refuges, including oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), lady's bed-straw (*Galium verum*) and burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*). The churchyard also supports common calamint (*Clinopodium ascendens*) and mouse-ear-hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), as well as one or two species of probable garden origin such as stinking hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*). The church tower and walls were rich in species, including good colonies of black spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*), some hart's-tongue (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*) and wallflower (*Erysimum cheiri*) with, on the churchyard wall, male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), a plant of traveller's-joy (*Clematis vitalba*) - presumably reliant on the lime mortar - and masses of the alien Mexican fleabane (*Erigeron karvinskianus*) and yellow corydalis (*Pseudofumaria lutea*). Joyce Jones, who manages the yard for conservation purposes, was very kindly on hand to welcome us and

show us an informative display of plant photographs and interpretative material inside the church. She made a heartfelt plea that non-churchgoing naturalists and others keen for their local churchyard to be conserved should, in these times of aging, dwindling congregations and reducing church incomes, volunteer to manage conservation areas themselves.

Bob Leaney himself undertakes grassland management up the road at Horstead churchyard, our next port of call, where the oxeye daisies were again splendidly plentiful. Much of our time here was spent identifying grasses and learning to distinguish the various yellow-flowered composites and speedwells in flower.

Previous meetings in the popular 'Wild Flowers Revealed' series have tended to concentrate on a single habitat-type, but this outing was more varied in that we next took a riverside walk along the east bank of the Bure from the road bridge at Coltishall upstream to Little Hautbois - the latter name prompting almost as much discussion as to its 'correct' Norfolk pronunciation as had been expended earlier on identifying the hawkbits and hawkbeards. A riverside dyke obligingly provided specimens of aquatic aliens from the Americas growing in close proximity: a sheet of the invasive water-fern (*Azolla filiculoides*) and a patch of the pale green least duckweed (*Lemna minuta*), with one or two darker-green, shinier fronds of the native common duckweed (*Lemna minor*) conveniently intermingled to make appreciation of some of the differences between the two diminutive duckweed species easy. Also present, rather surprisingly, was

a plant of greater spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*). In fact, yellow was rather the flower colour of the month along the river, with plentiful yellow water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), magnificent stands of yellow flag (*Iris pseudocorus*) and the occasional bright monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*). We picnicked on the bank under trees, watching passing canoes, after which the business of the day was resumed with renewed vigour as willows were identified and their 'taxonomically taxing' hybrids indicated. Those with an interest in more than the flora pointed out banded demoiselles and large red, blue-tailed and azure damselflies.

At Little Hautbois, we joined the path alongside the Bure Valley Railway south towards Coltishall Station, where orange-tip, red admiral and a couple of painted lady butterflies were flying. The gravelly and sandy trackbed and pathway supported an entirely different suite of plants of dry and barish ground, though some once-fine specimens of a Norfolk speciality, the nationally-scarce hoary mullein (*Verbascum pulverulentum*) - and possibly other mulleins - had unfortunately been chopped off just above their basal leaf rosettes during grass-cutting operations. In the end however, a specimen spared decapitation was seen. At the foot of the wire fence Alec Bull found a plant of knotted clover (*Trifolium striatum*) next to the attractive silver hair-grass (*Aira caryophyllea*) and near more plentiful hare's-foot clover (*Trifolium arvense*).

At Coltishall Station we identified our last umbellifer of the day, wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*). Thanks are due to those Society botanists who gave generously of their time to prove once



more that enjoyment can be combined with instruction in learning more about our flora, especially Bob Leaney whose indefatigable enthusiasm and patience meant that wild plants were still being asked about and identified at the roadside and over garden walls as we walked back to our parked cars at Horstead after a long and satisfying day.

Stephen Martin

## 'Wildflowers Revealed' no. 11 Ringstead Downs

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2004

It was very encouraging to find that 27 people had turned up for this meeting, many traveling from 'the East', and all ages were represented from 10 upwards. The weather forecast was not terribly encouraging but in the event the morning was dry and the on-and-off 'soft weather' didn't start until the afternoon.

The great attraction here is that Ringstead is one of the few areas of unimproved chalk grassland in the county. It consists of a dry valley cut through the chalk strata by glacial meltwaters, and the south-facing slopes support a rich variety of plants. The area is managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the presence of the Flying Flock, together with a considerable amount of clearing has improved the area in recent years. En route to the 'best bit' many common flowers and grasses were noted such as ragwort, *Senecio jacobaea*, festooned with cinabar moth caterpillars, germander speedwell, *Veronica chamaedrys*, many of the terminal leaves galled by the midge *Jaapiella veronicae*, and the attractive yellow oat-grass, *Trisetum flavescens*.

When we reached the slopes the appeal of the chalk flora was revealed. Long-stalked cranesbill, *Geranium columbinum* with its dainty purplish-pink flowers in pairs on long stalks was abundant. There are scattered records for this plant elsewhere in Norfolk, but it is mostly found only in small numbers on chalky soils. Rock-rose, *Helianthemum nummularium* was common and the strong-smelling greater wild thyme, *Thymus pulegioides* occurred in bright patches on both the south-facing and the north-

facing slopes. Squinancywort, *Asperula cynanchica* was still well in flower, sometimes looking pinkish, sometimes white, as the corolla is white on the inside and pale pinkish-lilac on the outside and close by, another member of the bedstraw family, field madder, *Sherardia arvensis*. Bob pointed out that the explanation of the name common gromwell, *Lithospermum officinale* lay in the hard, shiny white seeds, literally 'stone-seeded'. Ploughman's spikenard, *Inula cynariza* whose basal rosettes so much resemble those of the foxglove, was obviously much favoured by the sheep. Dropwort, *Filipendula vulgaris*, which this year has made a tremendous show, not just here but also on the road verges in the area, was also much chewed. Other chalk-favouring plants were catmint, *Nepeta cataria*, salad burnet, *Sanguisorba minor*, and burnet saxifrage, *Pimpinella saxifraga* not yet fully in bloom, eye-bright, *Euphrasia officinalis* agg. and dwarf thistle, *Cirsium acaule*. The 'star' plant, a single specimen of white horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*, was much photographed if not admired as it was well past its best. There were 9 plants here in 1995, perhaps its only native site in Norfolk. Knotted hedgeparsley, *Torilis nodosa*, was new - not recorded for the site in the Flora, and we found that some of the patches of basil thyme, *Clinopodium acinos*, had violet flowers and some white.

Paul Westley found a white-letter hairstreak, *Strymonidia w-album*, which was presumably breeding in the elms, nectaring on ragwort, *Senecio jacobaea*, and was a new record for the site. Other more common species included numbers of grasshoppers, both common field, *Chorthippus brunneus*, and meadow, *C. parallelus*. A humming-bird hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum* was active despite the overcast skies as were several of the commoner butterflies including both small and Essex skippers, *Thymelicus flavus* and *T. lineola*.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day out in good company: my thanks to Bill Mitchell (and to all who contributed) for doing the plant card which produced a list of 185 species, to Francis Farrow for producing a list of the fauna and to Robert Maidstone for his list of galls and other taxa.

Frances Schumann

## Scole Moth Evening

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2004

A small but select group of members gathered at Scole just as the heaviest rain shower of the day was finishing. The prospects for a good moth evening were really quite poor as rain for much of the day had cooled the atmosphere and made conditions less than ideal for moth flight. Nevertheless, after replacing wet sheets and uncovering lamps we lit up and waited more in hope than expectation.

We were fortunate in that it did not rain again and eventually there was a sporadic stream of moths to be seen. Species ranged in size from quite tiny Pyralids and Tortricids to the impressive Privet Hawk-moth, *Sphinx ligustri* which had the largest wingspan of any of the moths recorded. We also saw both Elephant Hawk-moth, *Deilephila elpenor* and Poplar Hawk-moth, *Laothoe populi* but equally impressive were the two female Oak Eggars, *Lasiocampa quercus* which settled immediately after arrival and did not move again.

The busy, blustering Large Yellow Underwings, *Noctua pronuba* soon made their presence felt, and they were quickly joined by several relatives, Lesser Yellow Underwing, *Noctua comes* and Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, *Noctua janthe*. The yellow flash from their hindwings contrasted quite attractively with the velvety red of the Ruby Tiger, *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* and the camouflage, when at rest, of the Chinese Character, *Cilix glaucata* impressed all present. This comparatively small moth looks exactly like a bird dropping when it settles but the name describes the grey/black marking on a basically white forewing which can only really be seen in set specimens. However, on a number of the other moths that came to the light it was possible to see the features that had given rise to their vernacular names. The black and white speckling on the wings of the typical form of the Peppered Moth, *Biston betularia*; the very noticeable white stigma on an otherwise black forewing of the Dot Moth, *Melanarcha persicariae*; the two circular thoracic tufts looking like glasses when the





moth is viewed head-on, of the Spec-tacle, *Abrostola tripartita* and the appropriately positioned brown lines and pale stigma of the Bright-line Brown-eye, *Lacanobia oleracea* together with the confusingly similarly named Brown-line Bright-eye, *Mythimna conigera* are all admirably described in the names given to these species more than a century ago. The Bright-line Brown-eye also has another name, the Tomato Moth, which it has gained from the habit of the larvae feeding on and in ripening tomatoes. We also saw a Varied Coronet, *Hadena compta* which is another species very much associated with the activities of man. This species was first recorded in Britain, southeast Kent, in 1948 since when it has spread rapidly through south eastern England with the larvae feeding on the ripening seeds of sweet william and occasionally bladder campion.

Among the many Yellow-tails, *Euprocitis similis* (another very aptly named white moth with a golden yellow tuft at the end of its abdomen) whose larvae feed on hawthorn, blackthorn, oak, sallows and many other trees we saw a single Brown-tail, *Euprocitis chrysorrhoea*. This is a moth that used to be regarded as a coastal species outside the south eastern counties of England and then only as far north as Yorkshire. At times it is now much more wide-spread in Suffolk and Norfolk but this is the first record for Scole. It has an even wider range of larval foodplants than the Yellow-tail, can reach pest proportions in some urban areas and with the larval hairs causing severe skin irritation it is a species to treat with some caution. Another newcomer to the site was the yellow form of the Dingy Footman, *Elema griseola* ab *stramineola* although the typical form has been recorded for many years. Perhaps the most interesting moth of the evening was a Pyralid which was not identified at the time. However in daylight the next morning it was immediately recognisable as *Calamotropha paludella* which is described as occurring very locally in large wet fens and marshes and on the margins of flooded gravel-pits and broads with the larvae feeding in mines principally in the leaves of reed-mace, *Typha latifolia*. This is a

plant that has swamped a pond at Scole and the moth has been recorded at the site once before. (Subsequently in 2004 it has come to light on a number of occasions) The authorities do say it is probably overlooked elsewhere.

During the three hours the lights were on we recorded more than 50 species, which is a reasonable total when the cooling effect of almost a day's rain is considered. Although not an extensive list most of the families of the larger moths were represented and those present were impressed with the variety and beauty of many of the species seen. I am grateful to all those who came to the evening, for their help in replacing wet sheets at the start and for packing up at the end and particularly to John Sutton for recording the species we saw.

Mike Hall.

## The Natural History Day Wheatfen

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2004

This year we were again blessed by the good weather. The thermometer in the car park read 120°F but a more accurate reading by the cottage repeated last years 93°F. There were many exhibits on display including a fine dragonfly and other insects display by Ken Durrant. Francis Farrow showed a large variety of hoeverly photographs and Martin Collier had a good collection of beetles with some great literature to go with it. This year as usual Robert Maidstone came up with a great display of deer pelts, skulls, wasp nests and all the "Dirty Nature" like creatures found in decaying animals etc. The display of his study of Wacton was most inspiring especially as he had named the site or road that each plant or creature was recorded. I certainly learnt a lot about that and will copy his recording plan for my own means at Lowestoft. There were many children this year which will in time become future Naturalists and I was adopted by one of them, a young girl called Katie Bussey. Alec Bull and I were tasked to do the fungi this year, in which, we were ably assisted by Katie, who after helping us with the labeling of our collection proceeded

to match the agarics with the colourful poster behind us and remembered the names The Foray produced 26 species of fungi including death cap and a diminutive fungus on holly leaves called *Trochillia iliici*.

The Wildflower Society were with us this year and no doubt found the reserve much to their liking. As always it gets the public and members alike together. I for one enjoyed meeting Ken Durrant.

Lets look forward to another year in 2005 and hope we are again blessed with such fine weather. Our thanks also to Wheatfen warden, David Nobbs for organising the event.

Colin A Jacobs.

## Joint NNNS/ Great Yarmouth Naturalists Society Shingle Flora visit to Kessingland Beach.

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

Shingle is one of the harshest environments on earth. Shingle in Suffolk might be a storm beach ridge like those at Thorpeness. Or semi permanent beaches such as Kessingland. In Suffolk there are 859 hectares of vegetated shingle, which represents 20% of natural resource. Kessingland Beach is a bit like Winterton Dunes, Thorpeness Beach and Langard Point but has no protection from any ecological groups.

Five Great Yarmouth Naturalists, Two Lowestoft Field Club and four Norfolk Naturalists Including myself spent the day exploring the southern Tetrads TM5284 at Kessingland Beach in Suffolk. We were lucky enough to have some eminent botanists with us who added many records to my 76 recorded here already. On the semi permanent shingle. specialties like yellow horned poppy *Glaucium flavum*, sea kale *Crambe maritima* sea pea *Lathyrus japonicus* ( which were eaten by the group soon after I announced they were delicious) and a few scattered sea holly plants *Eryngium maritimum*.

Jo Parmenter found two good clumps of rock sapphire *Critthum maritimum*. and David Lester found lesser





hawkbit *Leontodon saxatilis*. On the dryer parts of the shingle there was great stands of rosebay willowherb *Chaerium angustifolium* and well over, biting stonecrop *Sedum acre*. As we walked southwards to the River Hundred for lunch a painted lady butterfly and a couple of red admirals arrived in from the sea.

As we crossed to the dunes several interesting plants were found including plenty of sheep bit *Jasione montana* a good stand of polypody fern *Polypodium vulgare* agg. and narrow-leaved hawkweed *Hieracium umbellatum*. During lunch along the River Hundred we found rough clover *Trifolium scabrum* and the diminutive Jo Parmenter found a close to pupating elephant hawkmoth larvae on its food plant rosebay willowherb. Apparently small size is a basic requirement for finding these creatures! With Bob Ellis's hooked pole? He produced bladderwort *Utricularia australis* form the centre of the river. Also along this bank was false fox sedge *Carex otrubae* water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum* water cress *Rorippia* agg. marsh woundwort *Stachys palustris* and brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*. As we reached a patch of recently disturbed soil by the Sluice we recorded several interesting plants such as musk mallow *Malva moschata*, milk thistle *Silybum marianum* coastal fiddle-neck *Amsinkia macrantha*, green nightshade *Solanum physalifolium* and a single plant of the apple of Peru *Nicandra physalodes*.

On the way back we passed a strip of sandy verge where we found a red fescue *Festuca rubra* agg. We made a probable identification of sub species *litoralis*. Finally along a bank below the caravan park we found long headed poppy *Papaver dubium* and Duke of Argylls tea tree *Lycium barbarum* which was particularly abundant. The total taxa recorded were 112.

Finally we found several common field grasshoppers *Chorthippus brunneus* and mottled grasshopper *Myrmeleotettix maculatus*.

This area has been my patch since I was ten and it was an honour to play host to both societies and to produce such a good list. This tetrad creeps into Benacre NNR so I expect the list will increase a lot more. The day after our visit I went to photograph the rock samphire and was passed by a clouded yellow butterfly as it arrived in from the sea!

In 2006 I have planned a visit to Herringfleet Hills which has recently been opened to the public by the Broads Authority.

Colin A Jacobs.

## Norfolk & Suffolk Bryological Excursions 2004 - 2005

The following excursions are planned for the Autumn & Spring of 2004-2005. Beginners will be most welcome; the only equipment needed is a hand lens (x 10 or x 20), and some paper packets for collecting into. Meetings will only be cancelled if it snows, or there is hard frost. All meetings will start at 10.30 am, unless otherwise stated. For further information, contact one of the names below.

**Saturday 6 November 2004 Swangey Fen, Attleborough, The Otter Trust.** Very wet fen and carr. Turn west off the A11 at TM 026 934 onto road to Great Ellingham and then immediately turn left onto road to Fen Farm. We will collect here as the reserve car park only holds about four cars and we may need to bunch up. The Warden, Richard Shuter, hopes to join us.

**Sunday 21 November 2004 Burnt Fen Broad & Marshes** by permission of Mr William Nickerson. Turn north off the A1062 road in Horning into Letheringtons Lane, then right into Burnt Fen Road. Park at Burnt Fen, TG 339 184.

**Saturday 4 December 2004 Royal Orchards, Flitcham.** A site rich in epiphytes. Would be interesting to see if different varieties of apple are hosts to different epiphytes. Meet at TF 719 283 and park in the field next to the orchard.

**Sunday 19 December 2004 Sea Mere Study Centre, Hingham,** by permission of Mrs Judy Watson. A 20 acre circular lake formed by glacial action, 50 acres of deciduous woodland, of which 35 acres is an SSSI, Turf Meadows, a marshy, species rich area of 35 acres. Meet at Sea Mere Study Centre, TG 039 014.

**Saturday 1 January 2005 Whitwell Hall Country Centre & Whitwell Common.** Park at Whitwell Hall Country Centre, TG 087 215. The Warden, Mr Kevin Hart, hopes to join us in the afternoon.

**Sunday 16 January 2005 Hills & Holes, Great Hockham, Forest Enterprise.** Park on lane just south of Great Hockham at TL 952 916. Retired forester Eric Rogers hopes to join us.

**Saturday 5 February 2005 Sennowe Park, Guist,** by permission of Mr T R Cook. Enter Lodge Gates just north west of Guist and go along the Norwich Drive and park at TG 986 254.

**Sunday 20 February 2005 Honeyput Wood, East Dereham, NWT Reserve.** Park inside the wood at TF 934 143. The barrier will be opened at 10.00 am.

**Saturday 5 March 2005 Captain's Pond, Westwick** by permission of Mr John Alexander. We should find *Riccia fluitans* in this eutrophic water. Meet at the side of the road where fishermen usually park at TG 278 271. Space is limited so please join up in cars.

**Sunday 13 March 2005, East Winch Common, NWT Reserve,** for mosses and liverworts, NNNS meeting led by Robin Stevenson. Meet at 11.00 am in reserve car park on by-road south of A47 at TF 698 162. Beginners welcome.

**Sunday 20 March 2005 Antingham Ponds, Antingham** by permission of Mr P Gray of Antingham Lodge and Mr Alan Davison of Roughton Service Station. Park in Lodge Drive at TG 265 325.

Robin Stevenson, 111 Wootton Road, King's Lynn, PE30 4DJ. Tel: (01553) 766788. Email: crs1942@liscall.co.uk

Richard Fisk, 35 Fair Close, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9QR. Tel: (01502) 714988. Email: richardfisk@onetel.com

John Mott, 62 Great Melton Road, Helmersell, Norwich, NR9 3HA. Tel: (01603) 810442. Email: jmott@lineone.net





## "A compelling interest in the natural world"

Ernest Daniels, the Society's longest-serving member, who died on June 29th, had an abiding passion for the study of natural history in almost all its forms, said his younger son Tim at the funeral service on July 7th.

Born in Norwich, his home all his life, on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1911, Ernest could hear the rumble of the guns on the Western Front, before they fell silent on his seventh birthday. He went to the City of Norwich School, where he excelled academically. Like most working class boys of that era, he was not able to go to university but instead he put his intelligence and skills in languages (and, surprisingly, shorthand) to good use with the Norwich Union, rising to be a senior investment supervisor, until his retirement in 1971, with one big gap for WW2.

If routine was to characterize Ernest's working life it certainly did not apply to how he spent his leisure time. From his early youth he had a compelling interest in the natural world. In the 30s he was part-owner of a gun-punt in which he explored the Broads while they were yet a tranquil haven for wildlife. He took mountain climbing holidays in Europe at a time when this was something of an exotic pastime.

In 1941 he was called up into the Army, joining an armoured reconnaissance regiment, leaving behind his young wife Bessie and year-old son Mike. He saw active service in North Africa and Italy and would not return home until late 1945. "There is no doubt the war changed Ernest," said Tim. "He saw too much of man's inhumanity to man. He felt he had lost what should have been the 'best days of his life'. War made him in some ways a harder, less patient, man. But what did not change was his love and devotion to Bessie and to us children, and his commitment to their parents."

But there was fun as well! Tim recalled happy days on the North Norfolk coast, full of simple pleasures, much of which revolved around "mucking about in boats"... and nature. The pursuit of rare migrants was an adventure, well before it degenerated into the "twitching" of the current day. The first recorded rustic bunting since 1904, all the way from Siberia, spotting one of the first arrivals of the collared dove and a remarkably tame hoopoe remained vivid memories to this day.

Ernest was "not really a man of his time", said Tim. "I always felt he would have been better suited to the role of a Victorian gifted amateur. Here was a man of considerable talents. Acute observation, an expressive turn of phrase, a sharp and inquisitive mind, he was also no mean sketcher (as shown in his little cameos of places in Italy during the war). Even in his 80s, he was capable of reading a French botanical work in that language.

"Ernest's abiding passion was his study (and I do mean study) of natural history in almost all its forms: mysteriously, only fungi seemed to elude him. He was one of the first members of the first 'conservation' organisation in the country, the Norfolk Naturalists Trust, while the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society admitted him to membership at the earliest allowable age of 16. Ernest was an energetic member and office holder with the Society and he lived to complete a record-breaking 76 years of membership just three months ago."

His early love was birds and insects, particularly caddis flies and water beetles, but as these all succumbed to the depredations of agro-industry and development after the war, Ernest shifted his focus and developed a deep interest in botany. His ambition in retirement was to see every single British wild plant in its natural habitat. He and Bessie managed well over 90% and saw most of the UK in the process. Among the other projects of his retirement was a systematic survey of the ferns growing in every Norfolk churchyard: he was also a major contributor of data to A Flora of Norfolk.

"I and my children recall that a country stroll with him was always a voyage of exploration and unexpected discoveries. My daughter recalls a feature of these walks as 'his posterior protruding from hedgerows 50 metres behind the main party, complete with flat cap and walking stick' as he explored something which had caught his eagle eye. She adds that 'his general appreciation of the whole natural world, from tiniest plant upwards will stay with me forever, and I'll endeavour to pass it on to future generations.' A tribute Ernest would surely be delighted with."



## Leonard Wise 1929 - 2004

It is with great sadness that we report the death, on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004, of Leonard Wise, known to all simply as "Len", who was a founder-member of Buxton Heath Wildlife Group.

Len was born in Hackney and lived in London throughout the war and the blitz. He joined the Post Office Telephones Test Section (research and development) at age 16, and later did National Service in the Canal Zone and Cyprus. Once back in civilian life, Len returned to his former work, eventually transferring to the International Office. He married Betty in 1955, and soon after, accepted a transfer to Norwich in order to provide a better environment for family life.

Len retired from British Telecom in 1989. His interests included first-aiding, pistol and rifle shooting, classical music, natural history and conservation, local history and archaeology, and astronomy.

I first met Len on a conservation task with the Sunday group NEWS (Norwich Environmental Weekenders) in 1990. Soon after, we visited Buxton Heath together, and I suggested we start a group to care for this site on a regular basis. Typical of Len, he thought this a "cracking idea", and so the BHWG was formed.

During the early years of the Group, Len used to dash about the site, seemingly doing the work of two men, but gradually, worsening arthritic joints slowed him down. Even so, he hardly ever missed a Saturday visit on the grounds of ill health. Sometimes, he really wasn't well enough to be there, but he would never, as he put it, "let us down".

In the last two years before his death, Len found the Buxton Heath terrain very difficult to traverse, and instead, spent most of his time keeping the pathways clear for visitors. What we call the Western Track will always be known unofficially as "Len's Track" - he spent so many hours working there.

I will always remember Len as a real gentleman, who gave a cheery welcome to all, whether Norfolk-born or students from far away countries.

*Colin Penny*

### BOOKS FOR SALE

A Text Book Of Botany Lowson Revised by Howarth & Warne 1962.

A Manual of Zoology Borradaile 6<sup>th</sup> edition revised 1930.

Practical Zoology Marshall & Hurst Revised edition 1924.

Agricultural Zoology Theobald 1913.

A Laboratory Guide to Vertebrate Dissection Appleton 1929

Elementary Botany W. Watson 1926.

Elements of General Zoology W.J. Dakin. 1928.

Life of the Wayside & Woodland By T.A. Coward Colour photograph of Tiger beetle on book cover 1923. Has original dust jacket. Excellent condition

Common Weeds of the Farm & Garden Harold G Long  
Signed copy 1910.

The Life of Vertebrates Young 1955. 767 pages.

Insects of British Woodlands R. Neil Chrystal 1937 with dust jacket.

Flowers of the Fields Rev C.A. Johns 1948.

I am open to offers on the above. All are in good condition.  
Please telephone (01502) 569136.

*Colin A Jacobs*

### Date for the diary:

Tuesday 21st December - 1930hrs

**A PRESENTATION BY THE  
NORFOLK FLORA GROUP**  
*With festive refreshments*

Easton College Conference Centre

Would all contributors please send your notes etc. to the editor as soon as possible by January 7th, 2005 to the following address: Francis Farrow, Heathlands, 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8QD or by email to: [francis.f@virgin.net](mailto:francis.f@virgin.net)

