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The Norfolk NATTERJACK

Website: www.nnns.org.uk

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Toad-in-the-hole....

My thanks for all the contributions and my apologies if your article is not in this issue as unfortunately we have had to bid farewell to no fewer than four prominent members of the Society. Have a good summer and send in your observations. **FF**

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Research Committee are currently carrying out two surveys which it is hoped will lead to management plans, and a dissemination of results in future issues of Transactions and further records are invited from visitors to either site to be incorporated in our results.

Hapton Common is an important site in the Tas valley. It is served by a public footpath and in any case, is open access. The owner is anxious to have a management plan for the site, which lies beside the minor road towards Hapton from the B1113 about half a mile from Rattees corner. There is a small car park at the entrance, which is clearly signed.

Catfield Hall Fen is being resurveyed, (last done in 2000) following some changes in management. The owners welcome genuine naturalists with the proviso that they would like a 'phone call first so that they know who is on site. For the telephone number, please contact Alec Bull on 01603-880278. Records may be sent either to Alec, or our secretary, Janet Negal. Details for both are on the current programme.

Just the thing for the young'uns
during those long days of the
summer holidays!

Young Norfolk Nature Writer of the Year Competition 2005

Closing date: September 30th

Could you see yourself as a nature writer? Do you take an interest in what you see in the Norfolk countryside? Do you keep a record of the birds and butterflies that come into your garden? Do you take a close look at what goes on in your school or village pond?

If so, why not have a go at writing a short article or producing an illustrated diary about any aspect of nature in Norfolk.

You could win a £50 prize and a trophy. Entries will be judged in two categories: Up to 11 years and 11-15 years. Entries must be no longer than 800 words.


The prizes and trophies are being generously donated by Mrs Sylvia Seago in memory of her late husband Michael who devoted 60 years to studying and writing about Norfolk's birds and other wildlife.

Entries should be submitted by:
September 30th, 2005,
to the following address:

Young Norfolk Nature Writer of the Year,
Norfolk Wildlife Trust,
Bewick House,
22 Thorpe Road,
Norwich NR1 1RY.

If you have any questions, please telephone -
01603 625540.

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

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Invertebrates of maritime soft rock cliffs

Coastal soft rock cliffs are a much neglected habitat that provides the ideal habitat conditions for many rare insects, spiders and other invertebrates. Many of these species are only found on soft rock cliffs in the UK and so the protection and sensitive management of these areas is vital to their survival. Information on these habitats is limited; however, the current available data would suggest that the soft rock cliffs of the UK are some of the most important in Europe.

Local importance

With an estimated 12.7km of soft cliffs Norfolk has a significant proportion of the UK resource. The importance of local soft cliffs for invertebrates has been recognised through the notification of SSSIs at Overstrand and Sidestrand-Trimmingham, noting outstanding invertebrate assemblages at the sites. Sites which experience very rapid rates of erosion or which are inherently unstable are often of more limited invertebrate interest, as they lack the continuity and range of required microhabitats. Nevertheless, some species are restricted to such sites, Norfolk specialities being the rove beetle *Bledius filipes* and the ground beetle *Nebria livida* (also found on the Yorkshire coast), both of which are found at the base of cliffs.

What are Buglife doing?

Buglife have been awarded funding by the Esmée Fairburn Foundation for a three year project to study and promote the invertebrate biodiversity of soft rock cliffs in the UK.

The project aims to:

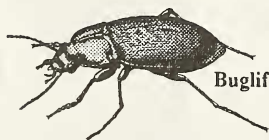
- * Increase our knowledge of soft rock cliffs and the invertebrates that inhabit them.
- * Identify the most important areas of soft rock cliff in the UK for biodiversity.
- * Ensure that these species and habitats are protected for the future.

The information produced by this project will provide an essential resource for the future sustainable management of soft rock cliffs and their immediate surroundings in the UK.

A request

The early stages of this project are concerned with the collation of existing data. If you have any records of invertebrates from Norfolk's soft rock cliffs, or any information on the past management of the cliff slopes and cliff tops then please contact me. Also, if you are interested in collecting new records during the 2005 field season then I would be very interested to hear from you.

Please visit our website www.buglife.org.uk for more information.



Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust

170A Park Road

Peterborough

PE1 2UF

Telephone: 01733 201210

Andrew Whitehouse

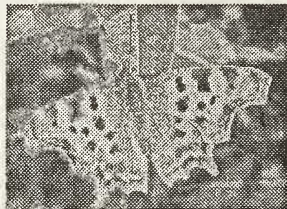
Project Officer

Andrew.whitehouse@buglife.org.uk

Observations of nectaring insects on Alexanders

I am employed as a gardener at Hopton Holiday Village four miles south of Great Yarmouth. The Park won the David Bellamy Gold Award for conservation in 2004 and this year I have been tasked with recording the wildlife on the site and producing a report at the end of the year.

Warren Road is situated to the north of Hopton Holiday Village and passes through Gorleston Golf Course onto Links Road in the town. (TG530010) At the point where the cottages are situated it becomes Warren Lane and it is here that many observations have been made during my lunch hour. The lane has a Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedge-row along its boundaries and there is an over abundance of Alexanders *Smyrnium olustratum*. This plant has been in flower since the 18th March and all blooms were out on the 14th April. On this day there were literally hundreds of Drone Flies *Eristalis tenax* nectaring on the blooms.



On the sunny day of the 16th April I observed a Comma *Polygonum c-album*, a queen wasp *Vespa vulgaris*, Several Yellow Dung Flies *Scathophaga stercoraria* nectaring from this crop. There was nothing else in flower along this lane except for Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. Nothing was nectaring from this and I assume the strong scent of the Alexanders was masking this. I am sure that all the species mentioned nectar from Alexanders and would be pleased to hear from anyone who has recorded any other insects on this pernicious weed.

Colin A. Jacobs



Not Only Moths Come To Light (4)

March saw very little activity in the moth traps, either moths or anything else, until the last week in the month and then very little other than moths. Burying beetles and in particular *Nicrophorus humator*, were much in evidence for several days after the 25th March and several green lacewings *Chrysopa cornea* agg. which had overwintered successfully, started to arrive from the 22nd onwards but then it was the doldrums again until nearly the end of April with just a single 2-spot ladybird on the 25th of March.

Between the 28th April and the 3rd of May there were numerous St. Mark's Flies, *Bibio marci*, in the traps but as soon as the night time temperatures dropped a little they disappeared. On the 29th April I was perplexed by a small winged insect that was like no moth I recognised. It was only when I looked at it in good light and with a decent pair of glasses (then with a microscope) that I realised it was a moth-fly. The Psychodidae are small flies thickly clothed with hairs and scales (hence the common name) and this one was the cosmopolitan *Psychoda alternata*. With larvae feeding in decaying organic matter it is common and wide-

spread. Yet again a cooler period for the first part of May meant that it was not until the 19th that I saw the soldier beetle, *Cantharis nigricans* which has black elytra that are heavily clothed with a grey pubescence giving them a superficial grey appearance and a week later saw the first of several of the orange/yellow soldier beetle, *Cantharis rufa* which does not have the same covering. In the same week, on the 23rd May, cockchafer, *Melolontha melolontha*, started to appear in the traps and still do in the middle of June. The water beetle *Ilybius fuliginosus* on the 25th May with the large caddis fly *Phryganea grandis* and the 14-spot ladybird, *Calvia 14-guttata* on the 27th were all of note until the cold snap during the first week in June meant virtually nothing again.

As the nights now start to become a little warmer it will be few days 'lag' before moths and other insects 'catch up' so hopefully the next two or three months will be more interesting.

Mike Hall

A Day with the Owls

One beautiful May morning a friend, visiting us for the day, and myself decided to check some of the nest boxes along the Yare valley. These large boxes have been put up mainly for the use of barn owls, but other species use them as well. This short resume tells of what we found.

The first farm at Postwick has five boxes, the first erected (1999) has now been in use for four years and sixteen young barn owls have flown from it. But this time it was empty, the owls had moved three hundred yards to a box set up in some old stables. There we found two youngsters alive and well also one dead and partially eaten chick and two infertile eggs. We disposed of the dead youngster and the eggs. Last year this box had been home to a family of stock doves.

The third box to be looked at was about half a mile away along the valley, this also had young barn owls, all healthy and well. The hen bird had flown from the box as we neared the oak in which it was placed, she went less than fifty yards

into a belt of conifers. We had a good view as she jinked between the trees, then a sparrow-hawk, probably with a nest in the wood, saw her and gave her a hard couple of minutes as the owl perched in a tree. The last two boxes were both empty, just a few pellets showing that owls were using them now and again.



We went onto Buckenham where we had two sites to look at, the first had a family of jackdaws in residence. The youngsters were just getting their feathers coming through, they certainly wouldn't win prizes in a beauty competition, all scrawny and pink, quite ugly. The second box looked more promising as two adult barn owls left the box and flew down towards trees on the edge of the fen. Unfortunately we found that our ladder was too short to have a look in, but I would think it was being used for nesting.

Two more sites were visited totaling four boxes, no more were found occupied but it had been an interesting day. It does help to have a pair of binoculars with you, as a close scan of the entrance hole can often give clues as to whether the box is being used. All boxes when made are treated with a wood preservative, brownish green in colour. When there are owls in residence a pale line is quite discernible just below the entrance hole where the claws mark the wood, also lack of spider webs and general debris give the game away.

Tony Howes



Paston Great Barn – Background and barbastelle bat update.

Dating from 1581, Paston Great Barn is of exceptional cultural, biological and architectural importance. As well as being an outstanding example of one of the few remaining Great Barns in the region, the barn also supports nationally and internationally important populations of bats. The site is owned by the North Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust and managed by English Nature for its wildlife.

Paston Great Barn provides a home for a range of wildlife, including one of the UK's rarest mammals, the barbastelle bat. The barbastelle is a rare and threatened species throughout its range in Europe and Paston Great Barn supports one of the few known maternity roosts in the UK. Barbastelle bats were first discovered at Paston in August 1996 by the Norfolk Bat Group as part of an ongoing programme of identifying summer and winter bat sites in the county. The discovery of the barbastelle bat colony at Paston Great Barn presented a unique opportunity to discover more about the requirements of this elusive species and in 1999 English Nature commissioned the Bat Conservation Trust to carry out research and monitoring work on the colony. This work has since continued annually and has provided a wealth of information about roost sites within the barn, the size and behaviour of the colony and their foraging activity in the surrounding area.

Monitoring work has also illustrated the importance of the countryside surrounding the barn and radio-tagging studies have shown the barbastelles to feed along Bacton cliffs and even along the strandline on the beach!

In total, seven species of bat have been discovered using the site: soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, brown long-eared, noctule, Natterer's and barbastelle bat. Some species, such as the Natterer's bat typically utilise a range of roost sites throughout the breeding season. Large barns with a variety of suitable roost locations can therefore provide important breeding sites for these species. The most recent species of bat discovered using Paston Great Barn is Nathusius' pipistrelle – a rare species in the UK with just a handful of known breeding localities.

The current monitoring programme at Paston aims to provide the following information:

- * Counts of adults and young throughout the breeding season
- * Dates and duration of site occupation
- * Roost locations in the barn throughout the year
- * Impact of temperatures/humidity levels on bats inside the barn.



The Bat Conservation Trust has recently produced its second annual monitoring report, covering the period February 2004 to February 2005, entitled '*A behavioural study of barbastelle bats (Barbastella barbastellus) at Paston Great Barn*'. The results presented in this report show that, despite population numbers in the barbastelle breeding colony been slightly lower than in 2003, they were still higher than during the previous four years. The maximum pre-parturition count was 35 in 2004 (compared to 36 in 2003), whereas the maximum post-parturition count (adults and young) was 50 in 2004 (compared to 55 in 2003). The continued success of this colony is testimony to the careful planning and execution of the repair works which are required to ensure the barn continues to provide suitable conditions for bats into the future.

If you would like to obtain a copy of this report or would like to more about Paston Great Barn, please contact me at: English Nature Offices, The Smithy Workshops, Wolferton, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE31 6HA or telephone 01485 543044.

Ash Murray-Site Manager, English Nature

The Maddest March Hare Story Ever?

It was eight o'clock on a March morning when my breakfast coffee was interrupted by a loud crash on the cottage roof and the sight of a furry brown body hurtling past the window. I rushed to look out and to my astonishment saw a hare tentatively shake each leg, then its head, before it ambled slowly away across the garden.

What could be the explanation of this hare-raising leap from space? I can think of only one. Saxlingham, near Blakeney, is surrounded by arable farmland where buzzards have become increasingly common in the last few years. Perhaps one over-estimated its ability to lift the hare, failed to maintain its grip and let go immediately above my panicles? I am delighted that it survived and will always remember the hare that paid me a flying visit.

June Hulbert

A Trap By Any Other Name

During the spring this year my wife was having problems with mice, or a mouse, eating off seedlings in the greenhouse and the offending rodent seemed oblivious to the live traps set all around. As a final measure she brought in a snap trap - 'The Better Mousetrap' - and baited it with peanut butter.

The next day the mouse was caught, unfortunately a wood mouse, and the trap re-set. A couple of days later a mature garden snail was firmly imprisoned but undamaged in the trap. Subsequently three more snails were similarly caught, all initially unharmed, and in all cases gardening instincts overcame natural history ideals with the snails being released and then stood on - but they were left out for birds who subsequently ate them. The moral from this tale is that snails go well with peanut butter - perhaps in more ways than one!

Mike Hall



Rusty Groundsel

To the Botanist and the non - botanist the common weed of gardens and disturbed ground, Groundsel *Senecio vulgaris* agg., is never worth a second glance. A closer look on the other hand may find you looking at the Rust *Puccinia lagenophorae* Cooke. This modern rust fungus is said to have come from Australia and was first recorded in the UK in 1961. At Hopton Holiday Village where I am gardener, this rust has decimated one stretch of pathway and all plants of the Groundsel are severely affected. Other plants on the site are unaffected. On looking through a binocular microscope the fruiting bodies are very beautiful indeed. They have orange circular discs with a buff edging and are uniform in size. In some cases the whole stem may be affected or just the leaves. In Darlington (1968) an illustration of *Coleosporium senecionus* looks to be very similar at this stage to *P. Lagenophorae*.

In the British Mycological Society database there are two records for East Suffolk. It is also recorded in Fungi and Slime Moulds in Suffolk

I have also recently found the Daisy *Bellis perennis* rust *Puccinia distincta* McAlpine on site, which is my only Suffolk record although for recording purposes can be counted for Norfolk. My other Norfolk record comes from Wacton near Long Stratton. This rust can decimate the daisy population, and according to your point of view is either a good or bad sign. This species was first recorded in 1997 after occurring on cultivated forms for many years. Yellowing leaves with wavy edges and raised areas are diagnostic; the plants are normally more erect than usual.

Please look out for either of these rusts. I would welcome any material for examination especially the Daisy Rust. These can be sent in empty film canisters with a note of how many plants are affected and the site / soil details, with the normal six figure grid reference to 22 Oxford Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR321TW.

Colin A. Jacobs

References:

- Redfern M. Shirley P, Aidgap British Plant Galls Field Studies Council
Darlington A (1968) The Pocket Encyclopedia of Plant Galls Blandford Press London.
Ellis M.B. & Ellis J.P. (1985) Micro Fungi on Land Plants Croom Helm.
Wurzell B. BSBI News no 80 Jan 1999 p. 20 Common Daisies under threat.

Acknowledgements:

Mrs J.P. Ellis for confirming the rusts and proof reading the article.
Mr. R. Maidstone for an update on the status of the Daisy rust at Wacton in Norfolk

Exchange Journals

1. British Journal of Entomology and Natural History (from the British Entomological and Natural History Society)
2. Systematics and Biodiversity (from the Natural History Museum)
3. Essex Naturalist (from the Essex Field Club)
4. Suffolk Natural History (from Suffolk Naturalists Society)
5. Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia
6. Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumbria

As always, copies of these and other journals to which the Museum and Museum staff subscribe are available to Society members when visiting the Shirehall. Please note all members can consult the books within the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society library by appointment. Please give me a call on 01603 493636.

Tony Irwin - Curator of Natural History
Norwich Castle Museum

Royal Norfolk Show

June 29th/30th 2005

This was our fourth appearance at the show, and what a success it was, being runner up, in the 'Best Rural Educational Stand' section, for which we were awarded a certificate and £200.

The success was down to the spiders! This was our main theme this year, along with the photographic gallery and the 'Notable Trees of Norwich' display.

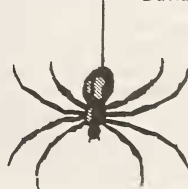
The 'Spiders of Norfolk', with live specimens proved very successful with the children and adults alike. Thanks must go to Peter Nicholson and Robert Maidstone for all the hard work involved in putting it together. The photographs, text and specimens from Peter were superb. The star of the show, however, was the Cave Spider (*Meta menardi*) collected and shown in an original drainpipe by Robert. To view the spider the drain cover had to be lifted - a test not for the faint-hearted!

Brian McFarlane's photographs, particularly his sequence of Barn Owl and Kestrel clashing in a mid-air tussle over a food catch, was stunning and caused much interest.

Rex Hancy's display of collected leaves and wood cross-sections from various tree species for people to identify also found much interest. This was the backdrop for Rex's book, 'Notable Trees of Norwich', just published by the Society in time for the Show. A good number were sold to the public, which were signed by the author.

Thanks must also go to those who helped on the stand over the two days. The question is, since we have set such a very high standard can we better this in 2006?

David Nobbs



Excursion Reports

Featuring:

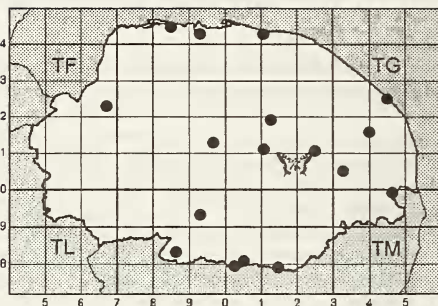
Gittin & Stubbin's Wood

Warren Farm : Warham

and Horsey Dunes

Great Hockham

● 2005-06 Field Meeting location
John Innes Centre
Indoor meetings



Gittin & Stubbin's Woods

Sunday 10th April 2005

A party of 20 or so members and others gathered in a layby on the A143 between Wortham and Botesdale on a pleasant April morning prior to moving off to see the rare unspotted or Suffolk lungwort. Such is the allure to botanists of this nationally-rare 'red data' woodland perennial herb of poorly drained, fertile soils, that one of the party had driven south from Yorkshire for the day to see it. *Pulmonaria obscura* is thought to grow wild in Britain currently at only three clustered Suffolk sites, namely Burgate, Gittin ('Gittin's' to the locals) and Stubbin's Woods. Access to these privately-owned ancient woods on the boulder clay, devoted now mainly to shooting, is very rarely permitted - apart from guided-tours on an open day on or about May Day, by which time other plants in flower perhaps outshine the lungwort - so special thanks are due to Mr. D. Laughlan for kindly allowing us to visit and explore freely the two latter of these ancient woods of the Suffolk boulder clay.

We were fortunate to have for our leader Martin Sanford, the BSBI Suffolk Plant Recorder, who has studied and written about the lungwort. In addition, David Orr, a local resident but long-time member of the Society despite living in 'foreign parts' south of the Waveney, was on hand to enrich the visit with his detailed local knowledge, current and historical. The woods, though once long ago essentially a single complex, are now

distinct and crown low hills because the flat hilltops were too wet to be economically cleared for agriculture whereas the hillsides could more easily be drained and eventually used for arable. Even the recorded ownership of the woods stretches back all of 1000 years.

We first visited Gittin Wood, containing much ash, field maple and hazel, and an impressively rich ground flora, not only in terms of number of species present, which include most of the 'usual' plants of the woodland floor that one can think of - wood anemone, bugle, wood dog-violet, sanicle, bluebell, herb bennet, moschatel, ransoms, yellow archangel etc., but also considerable spreads of some of these and, amazingly, of herb paris and purple-spotted orchid. Also present much less densely was twayblade, but this wood is unfortunately not in the Suffolk oxlip belt. Bee-flies were observed making the most of this floral variety, and the birders in the party were pleased to hear a lesser-spotted woodpecker.

We had entered Gittin from the south by way of its central ride, whereupon occasional plants of unspotted lungwort were immediately apparent at the wood edge with the flowers at different stages of maturity, thus ranging in colour from some pinkish to mostly bluish-violet shades. Though the Lungwort has been known to grow in these woods for at least 165 years, its identity was firmly determined rather more recently, especially once chromosome counts could be made. Most of us have to be content to differentiate Suffolk Lungwort principally by its unspotted, rather dark-green leaves, which are

lost in winter. The leaves of the one other native species of lungwort (*Pulmonaria longifolia*) are normally white-spotted and this plant is in any case native only to a small coastal area of central southern England. But unfortunately, the leaves of introduced species and of selections and hybrids which have long grown in and escaped from gardens in our region, though usually strongly white-spotted are not invariably so - and Suffolk lungwort itself can occasionally show faint pale-green spotting!

Martin pointed out that unspotted lungwort is now presumed to be native at its Suffolk stations because it has been rarely cultivated in Britain, it grows in semi-natural ancient woodland rather than being restricted to thoroughgoing man-made habitats, and it is recognised as native in neighbouring countries in comparable habitat-types and plant communities (albeit no nearer than 400km away in the Belgian Ardennes!). It's true that it was not first recorded at a really early date here (1842), but then it is rare and easily overlooked. In Gittin, the argument for its being native seemed persuasive to a number of members, for though many clumps grow near the principal rides, they are well distributed along them, and some plants can be found deep in the woodland interior. Like primroses, lungwort flowers are heterostylous, their styles being either thrum- or pin-eyed to promote cross-pollination, and production of seedlings is good. In Stubbin's (which we visited in the afternoon after lunch back at the cars), the lungwort is much more localised, growing mainly in a large and luxuriant patch in the sunny and



grassy rectangular clearing that almost splits the wood into east and west parts. The woodland ground flora generally was much less rich in Stubbin's (a wetter wood than Gittin) with plentiful perennial mercury, but the expanse of primroses which thickly carpeted this wide central clearing was magnificent - surely there can be no greater profusion anywhere in the county. The wood itself is notable for its hornbeam.

For Martin Sanford's full account (with C R Birkinshaw) of Suffolk lungwort, BSBI members can consult *Watsonia*, volume 21 part 2 (September 1996), pp.169-178. Many thanks to Mike Hall for securing access to the Woods, organising the visit, and taking bookings.

Stephen Martin

Warren Farm: Waxham - Horsey Dunes

Sunday, 15th May, 2005

It was a little after 11.00am that the group, who had gathered at the barrier on the roadway to the farm, set off towards the dunes. Almost immediately Marilyn Abdullah commented on the songs of Whitethroat, Willow Warbler and Stonechat coming from the scrubby woodland to the north of the road and at the same time Janet Negal pointed out a Marsh Harrier above the grazing marshes to the south. This was a good start to the day, which was bettered almost as soon as we got on to the dunes. Whilst still on the path into the dunes Bob Leaney pointed out what he thought would be the plant of the day - Dune Fescue, *Vulpia fasciculata* - which was in some profusion for several yards where the sand was somewhat compacted. This is only the third Norfolk record for this nationally scarce species, having been previously recorded from Holme and Yarmouth North Denes. We then divided into two groups, one going to the north towards Poplar Farm with Bob Leaney and Mary Ghulam and the other to the south towards Horsey Gap with Laurie Hall and Janet Negal.

Soon after moving into the dunes we were joined by two more members of

the Society, which brought our number to 13. It was immediately obvious just how widespread and prolific were the plants of Heath Dog Violet, *Viola canina* ssp. *canina*, which was one of the species we had come to see. The brilliantly blue flowers were outstanding but the leaves were more difficult to see and in some cases seemed non-existent. However, damaged leaves were noted and both Mary Ghulam and Hattie Aldridge found leaves that showed the distinctive damage caused by the caterpillars of the Dark Green Fritillary butterfly, with either just the mid-rib left or the petiole without any blade at all. Many leaves were untouched which is supposed to indicate a sparse population of the larvae but a little later in the morning Francis Farrow found a well grown caterpillar sunning itself but not on a violet leaf. This definitely proved the presence of the butterfly in this part of the east coast dune system and was the second of the species we had hoped to see.



When Margaret How pointed out an old nest with 14 pheasant eggshells this was thought to be a possible reason for the local sparseness of the caterpillars as they were likely to have been food for the chicks.

We were also hoping to determine the distribution in these dunes of Grey Hair Grass, *Corynephorus canescens*, another nationally scarce species known to the south of Horsey Gap. It was found to be widespread and Laurie Hall pointed out three dune hollows where it was particularly prolific, being the dominant species over several dozen square yards in each case. Early Hair Grass, *Airia praecox* was also noted within the dunes as were Lesser Chickweed, *Stellaria pallida*, Sea Bindweed, *Convolvulus soldanella* and Prickly Lettuce, *Lactuca serriola*, (common along the dunes on the north Norfolk coast) which was recorded from the east coast dunes for the first time. Scattered throughout the various dune grasses were

clumps of grey lichen, which Pat Negal pointed out and identified as *Cladonia rangiformis*. Mixed with the grasses were plants of Hawkweed, *Hieracium umbellatum*, with upstanding old stems and Robert Maidstone pointed out galls on these stems, which had been triggered by the gall wasp *Aulacidea hieracii*. Four Mouse-ears were found within the dunes; Sea Mouse-ear *Cerastium diffusum*, Little Mouse-ear *C. semidecandrum*, Sticky Mouse-ear *C. glomeratum* and Common Mouse-ear *C. fontanum*. On the Common Mouse-ear Robert spotted galled leaves caused by the aphid *Brachycolus cerastii*. The larvae of the fly *Phytomyza horticola* had also mined some of the leaves.

The particularly small vetch with bright pink/purple flowers which it was thought might be Spring Vetch *Vicia lathyroides* (described as having dull purple flowers) on closer inspection later was found to be a subspecies of the Common Vetch *Vicia sativa* ssp. *nigra* which is also known from maritime sand habitats.

Almost everywhere we walked we disturbed a small, drab moth *Glyphipterix fuscoviridella* whose larvae feed in the rootstock of Field Wood-rush *Luzula campestris*, which is widespread throughout the area. As the Clustered Heath Wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* ssp. *congesta* was unusually common this may well also be the larval foodplant. Robert found the day flying long-horned moth *Adela reaumurella* and the distinctive Lime-speck Pug, *Eupithecia centaureata*, with the tortrix *Cydia succedana* being seen around the Gorse. Several members of the group spotted both Small Copper and Speckled Wood butterflies and among other insects seen the Slender Ground Hopper, *Tetrix subulata*, the sand weevil *Philopodon plagiatus* and the largish ant *Formica fusca* were all found on bare sand. In the debris at the base of the vegetation Robert found some small snails which "smelt a little of garlic when rubbed" and were species of *Oxychilus* probably *O. helveticus*. A caterpillar of the Oak Eggar Moth was noted by Nick Elsley, that of the Smoky Wainscot was seen low in the grasses and leaf mines of the micro-



moth *Stigmella aurella* were spotted in several bramble leaves.

An area with oaks (some of which were well infested with oak marble galls), willows and some gorse at the back of the dunes, towards Horsey Gap, was where we saw the Large Red Damselfly, the Hairy Aeshna Dragonfly; a couple of weevils, *Phyllobius argentatus* and *P. pyri*, one with a green and the other with a bronze sheen; the gorse shield-bug *Piezodorus lituratus* and the green shield-bug *Palomena prasina*. Almost as soon as the call of the Whimbrel was heard Nick Elsey pointed out a flight of eight with another group of four seen a little later (possibly four of the first eight).

Near the Poplar Farm camp site at the back of the dunes was a damp area where Bob and Mary found the very rare Divided Sedge, *Carex divisa* which is more usually found in estuarine marshes. This was the first coastal record for East Norfolk. Blinks *Montia fontana* was abundant at this site and Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* was also well represented here. Close by the dyke Rubyna Sheikh commented on the large number of froglets – almost underfoot. We saw a Common Lizard scurrying away from our footfall; the evidence of both hare and rabbit with their droppings among the dunes together with a couple of rabbit burrows and a Muntjac, seen by Francis near the coast road.

Having had a really rewarding day in glorious sunshine, which was nicely tempered by a pleasant on-shore breeze, seeing a somewhat tired looking Small Tortoiseshell "cruising" beside us as we walked back to the cars probably summed up the delights of the day. We had recorded more than 90 species of plants and over 50 species of animals and the day was greatly enjoyed by everyone present. We all extend our thanks to Bill Mitchell who suggested the venue and made the initial arrangements but unfortunately could not be with us. I also thank Martin Collier for help with identification of the beetles and comments on some of them and Derek Howlett for comments on the snails seen.

Mike Hall

Great Hockham

Sunday 12th June, 2005

A small party met on a rather chilly morning after rain at Hockham Picnic Place off the A1075 road, to explore the adjacent forest. We were greeted by the sounds of a 'rave' deep in the woods to one side and motorcycle sports to another, but, infinitely more pleasingly, by our leader for the day, Eric Rogers, who had thoughtfully gathered a selection of leafy twigs from some of the trees that we would see on our walk, which he showed us beforehand to aid identification.

As a retired forester, responsible for the planting of some of the stands we saw, Eric was able to add interesting information on the history of the forest and the nature of the trees from a timber-producing as well as a purely botanical point of view. Of the conifers, the Scots Pine was originally the preferred species but has been greatly supplanted by Corsican Pine since forms of the latter yielding much better timber became available later in the twentieth century. Also occasionally present is Western Red Cedar and some Lawson's Cypress, though *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, with its striking red pollen, is not a good grower here, finding conditions too dry. There is very little Noble Fir in the forest, but rather more Silver Fir, from which comes the Canada Balsam used in preparing microscope slides. Of the deciduous trees, the Silver or Warty Birch (*Betula pendula*) is the one preferring the drier parts, whereas the Downy species (*B. pubescens*) tends to replace it in the wet. The Pedunculate Oak and the Sessile - the latter a lover of shallow, sandy, acid soils - are both to be found and there are some Turkey Oaks from southern Europe which are also fond of acid sands and therefore thrive, but unfortunately don't produce good timber. New plantings of Larch are normally of the hybrid, *Larix x marschlinii* (first noticed growing in Perthshire in 1904), rather than the European Larch with its yellowish twigs and the Japanese Larch with its red. Of the poplars, the Grey (a hybrid of the Aspen and the White Poplar but at least as old as the Bronze Age), is

the one usually found, but is not planted. The White Poplar is also not planted, as it grows poorly in Breckland conditions. The number of other tree and shrub species seen on our walk was surprisingly high and included Bird Cherry, Sweet Chestnut, Purging Buckthorn, Wych and hybrid Elm, Goat Willow, Wild Cherry, Holly, Ash, Elder, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Gorse and Privet. Particularly fine this year on many a tree at the margins or in open woodland were towering columns of Honey-suckle in full bloom. White Admirals are apparently seen thereabouts, but the few, brief sunny intervals were too wan to tempt them out. We did, however, see one or two other butterflies, including a Speckled Wood. Eric pointed out a good number of trees damaged either by animals or fungal disease, including sycamores ring-barked spectacularly toward the top by Grey Squirrels for their sap. Good sycamore timber now fetches more than oak.

Not only the trees provided interest. The Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Blackcap, Wren, Tree Pipit and Pheasant were all heard and some seen, and a Sparrow Hawk hung in the sky above our pleasant lunchtime picnic site. We were pleased to see bright red plants of nationally-scarce Mossy Stone-crop fairly plentifully along one track (surely now locally common on suitably dry, sandy, gravelly Breckland forest tracks which are well-trodden and often driven over). We were also lucky to have Robert Maidstone and Stephen Livermore with us so that the often-diminutive fauna associated with the trees and ground vegetation we passed was continuously spotted and examined. At one point a small cloud of *Nemophora degeerella* enabled Stephen to point out that the male has the longest antennae of any British moth.

Thanks are due to Eric for organising such an enjoyable and rewarding day.

Stephen Martin.



George Garrard 1919 – 2005

Time rushes on and it comes as something of a shock to note that George Garrard's masterly paper on Ringmere was published thirty-five years ago in *The Transactions of The Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society* Volume 22 Part 2.

Did his music pupils at the school in which he served have any awareness of the dedication and time involved in what to them would have been a strange project? The biology students may have had some inkling of the ongoing, meticulous study but almost certainly had no comprehension of the importance of the results.

Ringmere and its surroundings have long been associated with mysterious changes in water level and consequently the nature of the adjacent vegetation. The whole of Breckland was at the time of publication in the middle of a fundamental transformation. For some years it was still possible to spend all day in recording the flora and fauna without seeing another human. Before that, during the long period of George's record taking at Ringmere, the isolation could be all the more marked.

That period of study included the years of the near elimination of the rabbit which previously had a profound effect upon Breckland scene. The paper provides an invaluable insight into the influence of the once ubiquitous rodent and the consequences of its removal as well as the rise and fall of the waters.

Mention George Garrard to inhabitants of Drayton and Taverham with any duration of residence and they immediately recall his services to Drayton as choir-master and organist. Like the pupils, few knew of his contributions to our botanical knowledge.

Some of his near neighbours knew him rather better and were used to seeing him exploring the impoverished fields behind his bungalow and the damp wood between the road and the railway track which was a keen naturalist's delight. Recently, a story recently told to me told how a neighbour took him to see what was probably the last plover's nest ever found on the rough ground before masses of houses filled in the area and the wood was decimated by the builders in the cause of "tidiness". George carefully marked the site and returned with his camera to begin a photographic record of the nest and its family, which was added to his considerable collection of slides. Pictures, however good, are second-hand experience and the loss of explorable habitat was a sad loss to such a practical naturalist. I felt a mutual friend summed up George most neatly and concisely. She said, "He was an interesting and an interested man." May we all be so remembered.

Rex Hancy

Dr. Robert Jones 1919 -2005

Dr Robert Jones – 'Bob', was born in Cheshire in February 1919, one of three children. He joined the Royal Airforce as an airman in 1939 and served in various theatres, being elevated to Pilot Officer in Bomber Command for the entire duration of the war. Those close to him knew that he endured many fearsome experiences (over Germany and later in North Africa and the Far East) but was unstinting in his duty.

Near the end of the war he was posted to the Nutt's Corner airfield, near Belfast, for a much deserved 'rest'. Here, he met his wife to be of 59 years, Betty, whom he married in 1946.

In the same year Bob started a degree course in Biology at Queens University in Belfast. With family help the couple bought and managed a traditional corner shop (in what were peaceful times in Belfast and elsewhere) which they lived over to earn a living while Bob completed his degree course.

In 1951, pursuing his ambition to teach, the couple moved to Essex and later Nottinghamshire. Bob later accepted a position as lecturer at Strathclyde University where he achieved a PHD in 1968. The couple lived in Cardross, near Glasgow, during this period before retiring to Norfolk in 1980. He died on 4 January 2005.

Dr Jones is survived by his wife Betty who lives in Potter Heigham. He is fondly remembered by his beloved wife and caring relatives in Northern Ireland and Australia.

Roy Baker recalls "Bob Jones became a familiar sight at the Ted Ellis Trust reserve at Wheatfen in the 1990s. With his collecting bag, fine mesh net, small glass pipettes and collecting bottles he would wander off into the fens looking for water mites. When he first came to Wheatfen only one species of water mite had been identified and in a short time he had increased the records to 24 species from nine families. These included a species new to Norfolk. He would ask Derek Hewlett and I to gather freshwater mussels for him and we would take them to his bungalow in Potter Heigham where they were kept alive in aquaria until he was ready to examine them for water mites. He made some very interesting discoveries of mites in these freshwater mussels. Bob Jones was a national expert on water mites and was much admired in his chosen field of study. He will be sadly missed by his friends in Norfolk who used his freely given expertise in freshwater microscopy."

Tony Irwin recalls "He was very much one of the "old school" of naturalists - passionate about his chosen field and modestly knowledgeable about others. He published a number of papers on the Norfolk hydrachnid fauna."

Selected Bibliography of R.K.H. Jones

1985 *Lebertia sefvei* Walter, a most unusual water mite from Holt Lowes. TNNNS 27(1):66

1987 Interesting water mites (Hydracarina) from Breckland. TNNNS 27(5):374

1991 A check list of Norfolk water mites (Hydracarina) TNNNS 29(1):27-31

2000 Water mite information. TNNNS 30(1):28-29

Stephen Livermore

Dr. Geoffrey Watts 1927-2005

Geoffrey Watts, who passed away recently after a long illness, was a member of this Society for over forty years. Since the early 1960s he lectured in biology to trainee teachers at Keswick Hall College of Education where his extensive knowledge and drive enthused many students to take up natural history as a focus of their lives. On the annual marine field studies trips in March to North Devon and the Gower Peninsular in Wales he developed, and passed onto students, his wide expertise in identifying seaweeds and relating their form and structure to their ecological needs. Many specimens he mounted onto cards for ease of identification. Later he extended this work to studies of our native grasses. Many members will remember his beautifully exhibited mounts which he showed to the Society on a number of occasions. His collection is now housed at the Gressingham Museum. This love of grasses included one famous trip across America by Greyhound bus where at every stop he would dash out to collect grasses for his collection. The Americans saw him as an eccentric Englishman and he laughingly agreed with this description.

In 1974 he completed his doctoral thesis at the University of East Anglia on the allocation of resources in perennial plants. This involved him sampling vegetation at Holkham and Walberswick Nature Reserves and growing experimental plots of grasses, plantain and clover.

Geoffrey developed an interest in natural history photography where his eye for a good photograph came to the fore. In 1948 he was the photo editor of the Cambridge University Varsity magazine. This interest led him, with Bob Robinson, to initiate the photographic group within the Society so that colleagues could share technical knowledge and enjoy/criticise each others work. This group remains very active to this day and is a tribute to these two pioneers within the Society.

Geoffrey was also the driving force behind the Society's detailed survey of the Yare river valley through Norwich. He organised groups of experts week by week to visit parts of the valley and he brought the whole together in a report published in the *Transactions* which was used to guide both Norwich and Norfolk Councils on conservation and management of the valley. This organisational ability was used over twenty years ago to reorganize the constitution of the Society and give it a management structure of a Council and Sub-committees. Geoffrey became the first Chairman of Council and guided it through its first three years.

Geoffrey sang with various choirs including the Keswick Hall Choir, Melody, Acapella, Wymondham Choral Society and he founded the South Norfolk Singers.

On retirement Geoffrey and his wife Elizabeth planted and developed a 5 acre woodland near their home in South Norfolk. This remains a legacy to his love of the countryside and nature which formed so much of his life. In July the family will be holding a memorial service to be followed by a walk around this wood so lovingly created by Geoffrey.

Roy Baker

THE SECRET OF THE BROADS

Dr. Joyce Lambert 1917-2005

Dr Joyce Lambert, one of the Society's most distinguished members, died on May 4th at the age of 88. Dr Lambert was, as the Daily Telegraph obituary summed it up, "the botanist whose research revealed that the Norfolk Broads were created not by nature but by man". Her theory, initially greeted with scepticism but soon proved to be correct, was presented in her presidential address to the Society in April 1952 and published, updated with significant new data, in the *Transactions* for that year (Vol. XVII Part IV).

Dr Lambert, who for 18 years was lecturer in botany at Southampton University, returned to Norfolk on her retirement in 1979 to live in the house in Brundall that her grandfather had built. Bedridden but retaining all her mental capacity, she spent her final years at Oakwood House nursing home at Colney near Norwich.

It is hoped that a full obituary, recalling her Broads studies, will appear in the 2006 *Transactions*.



Would all contributors please send your notes etc. to the editor as soon as possible by October 1st, 2005 to the following address: Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8QD or by email to: francisf@virgin.net

