



# The Norfolk Natterjack

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*... Researching  
Norfolk's Wildlife*

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of the  
Norfolk & Norwich  
Naturalists' Society



# Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

Founded 1869

Reg. Charity No. 291604

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Co-opted Members: To be invited following the first meeting of the new council.

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**Cover image:** *Rose-ringed Parakeet\_female* (Hans Watson) - See page 9

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

Our world is facing the threat of 'Coronavirus' Covid-19 and the Government has restricted our movements through 'Lock-down' and Social Distancing to help stop its spread so as not to overwhelm those in the NHS front-line. Although restricted to home, garden or short excursions for exercise a number of great discoveries have been made. There has been a sighting of Large Tortoiseshell, a possible new Tachinid fly for Norfolk and sightings of uncommon hoverflies. As naturalists we can turn our study to our house and garden and for the August '*Natterjack*' please send details of your favourite find, any photos of interest or projects you are doing within the confines of your home. Please keep safe.

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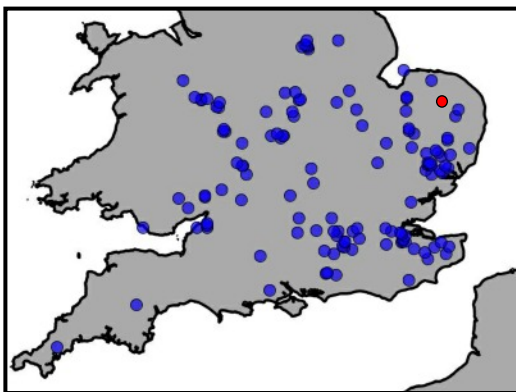
## Eared Leafhopper *Ledra aurita*

Alec Bull

Whilst I have been recording birds, butterflies, moths, fungi, bryophytes, plants etc, I have also made a note of anything else that I have thought might be of interest, e.g bugs, but without details of their distribution and occurrence this has been for my own interest. For example, for the above species which is very obviously something different I have listed it and not even thought that it might not be a regular in the Norfolk countryside until I noticed Francis Farrow's '*Notes from past Natterjacks*' in the latest Transactions.

*Ledra aurita*, Barrow Common Brancaster, August 18th 2012, sixth Norfolk record. As I have had this species repeatedly over a number of years in my moth trap, I have been looking back through my Miscellaneous Records and have found *Ledra aurita* as recently as August 2019 and as far back as August 2nd 2003. Whether this was my first record I am not sure but it will be obvious from the above that *Ledra aurita* must be recognised as a breeding species at Hillcrest, East Tuddenham, Dereham NR20 3JJ (TG093122).

*This is a good example where if you record a species that is not in your usual sphere of interest that record should be sent to the appropriate County Recorder - Ed.*



Distribution of *Ledra aurita* in England & Wales

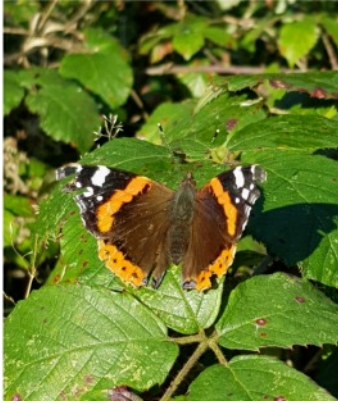
Map: National Biodiversity Network  
'NBN Atlas website at <http://www.nbnatlas.org>  
Accessed April 2020.'

● Approximate position of East Tuddenham 10km sq

# **Territorial Red Admiral.**

*Ben Moore*

On the 6th February I spotted my first butterfly of the year, a Red Admiral sunning itself on a patch of brambles within The Rosary cemetery in Norwich. The bramble patch was situated between a large holly tree and a young oak tree. As I sat observing the butterfly I noticed a Blue Tit within the holly tree. The Blue Tit proceeded to fly from the holly towards the oak tree approximately 1.5m above the bramble patch. The Red Admiral promptly flew up to



Red Admiral on Bramble

Image: *Ben Moore*

meet the Blue Tit in the air and proceeded to follow it very close behind until the Blue Tit had found a perch within the oak tree. Once the Blue Tit had landed, the Red Admiral quickly returned to sunning itself on the brambles. I wasn't quite sure what I just saw so stuck around to watch it some more. Within minutes the Blue Tit flew back across the brambles towards the holly tree. Once again the Red Admiral flew up and got within centimetres of the Blue Tit and began to what looked like 'mob' the Blue Tit whilst chasing it until it disappeared within the holly tree. Again, once the Blue Tit was out of sight the Red Admiral returned to sunning itself. The behaviour being exhibited by the Red Admiral was remarkably similar to when I have seen corvids mobbing Buzzards.

It is well described within the literature of intra-specific territorial behaviour of males of numerous butterfly species (including Red Admirals) where the males will defend their sunspots from intruding males by chasing them off before returning to its sunning perch. This behaviour is linked to finding a mate. It was interesting to see the apparent territorial behaviour in an inter-specific relationship between butterfly and bird where the butterfly was seemingly purposefully pursuing the Blue Tit away.

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## **Spring Hovers!**

*Francis Farrow*

If you are out insect spotting it may be worth keeping an eye open for furry spring Hoverflies. There are a number around and many are under recorded.

At the AGM on March 12<sup>th</sup>, Council member Tim Hodge brought along a furry hoverfly which he had caught at Horsey Corner. Tim suspected it to be the

relatively recent Norfolk new-comer - *Cheilosia grossa*. This furry bee mimic had previously been reported from Marston Marshes and Earlham Cemetery. Tim's dilemma at the time was that one of the diagnostic features of *C. grossa* was a pale-haired hind tibia and the present specimen did not really show this. Verification that it was indeed *grossa* came a few days later from Roger Morris of the UK Hoverfly Recording Scheme. In the meantime, Neil Marks at Waxham, just around the corner from Horsey photographed a fine example on March 10<sup>th</sup> and again on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Both these were females and were at ground level. It has been said that one of the reasons this early hoverfly is not readily observed is because it likes to visit Sallow blossoms high in the tree.



*Cheilosia grossa*

Images: Neil Marks

Not one to be put off I diligently searched various Sallows on Beeston & Sheringham Commons to try and find this attractive fly. It is known that the adult females lay their eggs in the stems of Marsh Thistles where the larva develop and the thistles are present in good numbers around the Commons.

I spotted a furry hoverfly, March 16<sup>th</sup> 'sunning' itself on a dry plant stem and I thought my luck was in, however, it turned out to be a close relative - *C. albipila*. Although I had recorded this hoverfly before for the area it was way back in 1994 so it was good to see it again. Its most striking feature are its orange antennae and it is slightly smaller than *grossa* with a wing length of 8.75 to 10.5mm as opposed to 8.5 to 11.75mm. Its larva are also associated with Marsh Thistle. If *grossa* is not yet present I'm sure it will turn up soon.



*Cheilosia albipila*

Images: Francis Farrow

# The Return of the Hop-garden Earwig, *Apterygida media*

Jeremy & Vanna Bartlett

The Hop-garden Earwig, *Apterygida media* (Hagenbach, 1822), also known as the Short-winged Earwig, is one of three species of earwig found in Norfolk. The others are the well-known Common Earwig, *Forficula auricularia* and Lesser Earwig, *Labia minor* (Irwin 1991).

Most people will be familiar with the Common Earwig with its prominent pincers or forceps at the end of the abdomen, especially in the male. They are readily separated from the Hop-garden Earwig by the presence of fully developed hindwings that are folded up under the shorter, hardened forewings (elytra), leaving the tips projecting as little stubs. In comparison, the Hop-garden Earwig's hind wings are so greatly reduced that they aren't visible at all. (Lesser Earwigs are much smaller than the other two species and shouldn't cause confusion).



Common Earwig



Hop-garden Earwig (male)

Male Hop-garden Earwigs have long forceps that curve gently inwards towards their tips, each with at least one tooth or sometimes two on the inner edge. The female's are much shorter and set close together.

Whenever we find an earwig, we take a closer look, just in case it is one of the scarcer species, but usually it is the Common Earwig.

However, in late October 2017 Vanna found a dead earwig in a box in her studio, a standalone building in our back garden (TG206082). Something about it wasn't quite right so she consulted Marshall and Haes and thought it might be a Hop-garden Earwig. She sent photographs to Tony Irwin who confirmed that it was a male Hop-garden Earwig.

Tony had already found the species in Norwich, on 2 September 1990. He was taking tea in his garden on Earlham Road in Norwich (TG213086) when a male Hop-garden Earwig fell onto his tray. He subsequently found a colony of Hop-garden Earwigs in his garden, inhabiting a honeysuckle growing over a pear tree (Irwin 1991). This sighting took place less than half a mile away from our own garden.

We assumed that the earwig Vanna had found in her studio came from the back garden, but we have

searched many times and not seen any more individuals here, although being nocturnal, it is possible we could have missed the species.

Our allotment is nearby, on the Bluebell Allotments site, just north of The Avenues in Norwich (TG204081). As well as fruit and vegetables, we grow a large number of flowers, some of which we cut and bring home to decorate the house. On 12 August 2019 Jeremy was putting Dahlia flowers in water in the kitchen when an earwig ran out across the worktop. It was quickly captured and on taking a closer look we realised it was a male Hop-garden Earwig. It was later returned to the allotment.



Hop-garden Earwig (female)

A female Hop-garden Earwig hitched a lift home in Dahlia flowers on 27 September 2019, followed by a male on 13 October 2019. Both were returned on the same day - a few Dahlia 'petals' kept them happy while in captivity. We haven't found a whole colony (yet).

We now think the Hop-garden Earwig that Vanna found in 2017 may have come from the allotment too. We store apples from the allotment in the studio and these often have small holes which could secrete an earwig. We can't be certain of this; only that Vanna placed the box in the studio in September 2017 and the earwig crawled inside at some time before late October and died.

The NBN Atlas currently has 200 records for Hop-garden Earwig (NBN 2019). The species is mostly found in Kent, Essex and Suffolk, though there are a couple of isolated records from South Wales. In Norfolk records come from the south-east of the county, with Norwich as the northern limit of distribution in the British Isles. The species was once a characteristic insect of Kentish hop-gardens, hence its common name (Marshall and Haes 1990).

It is well worth looking out for the Hop-garden Earwig. It climbs vegetation and will chew flower petals, commonly resting in flowers. In the winter it hibernates under bark and moss.

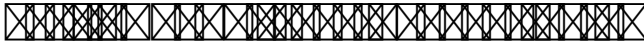
Images: Vanna & Jeremy Bartlett

#### References:

IRWIN, A.G. 1990. *Uncommon Earwigs in Norfolk and Suffolk*. *Trans. Norfolk Nat. Soc.* 29 (1) pp76 - 77.

MARSHALL, J.A. & HAES, E.C.M. 1990. *Grasshoppers and Allied Insects of Great Britain and Ireland*. Harley Books, Colchester.

NBN ATLAS. 2019. *Apterygida media* (Hagenbach, 1822), Hop-garden Earwig. <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0001387259> (Accessed 25th October 2019.)



Allan Archer

Hidden away, just a few hundred yards from the Wader Scrape hide at Pensthorpe Natural Park is a small sand quarry. Long abandoned by the Sand Martins which nested here until 2010, the quarry has been given a new lease of life by Reserve Manager, Richard Spowage and his team. Scraping the face of the quarry to remove loose and basal debris back to the substrate and clearing brambles. Whilst this has been done in an attempt to attract the Sand Martins back, it has transformed the quarry into an ideal habitat for mining bees.



On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, I spent a few hours investigating the quarry with Nick Owens. Nick had, from photo-graphs I had sent him, already helped me confirm that Yellow-legged Mining Bee (*Andrena flavipes*) and Cliff Mining Bees (*Andrena thoracica*) were present in large numbers with many nest holes observed. Richard and I were therefore excited by the prospects of his visit.



Small Sand Quarry, Yellow-legged Mining Bee and Cliff Mining Bee

Images: Allan Archer

The weather was pretty perfect as Nick and I entered the quarry. Within minutes, we had identified a previously unrecorded species for the reserve, the Painted Nomad Bee (*Nomada fucata*) a cleptoparasite of *A. flavipes*. An exciting start; well for me anyway as Nick took it in his stride, it being a relatively familiar species for him.

We continued scrutinising the two mining bee colonies; *A. flavipes* favouring the quarry face, whilst *A. thoracica* mostly chose the flat ground. Richard

arrived and we updated him on the species recorded thus far, which also included Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*), the satellite fly *Leucophora personata*, shadowing *Andrena flavipes*, Dark-edged Bee-fly (*Bombylius major*) and a few species of butterflies.

While we talked, we wandered about 20-yards to a relatively innocuous looking shallow sandpit. It was at this point that Nick got as animated as I was. He had just spotted a species of plasterer bee which has only been recorded at two sites in Norfolk in the past. Early Colletes (*Colletes cunicularius*) has “historically been largely confined to the coastal dunes of Wales, Lancashire and Cumbria”. The species first populated Norfolk in 2015, where there are currently nesting aggregations at Lynford Water and Stoke Ferry; and now there are about 100 nest holes at Pensthorpe Natural Park!



Early Colletes and Yellow-legged Mining Bees ('mating ball')

Images: Allan Archer

The bees forage for pollen predominantly from the willow family (*Salicaceae*) and nests in slightly inclined tunnels excavated in sandy areas (source: BWARS). It is large for a plasterer bee and lacks the white bands on the abdomen seen in most *Colletes* species. We now have eight *Colletes* in the county, with the arrival of this species and the Ivy Bee (*C. hederae*).

At Pensthorpe, they have chosen to nest in a small area where sand had been recently dug out for use around the park. The surface is mostly bare sand with some colonising Sand Sedge. The bees were not yet bringing in pollen.

Currently there are no recorded bee parasites of *C. cunicularius* in the UK. However, in Continental Europe they are attacked by the cleptoparasite, *Sphecodes albilabris* (source: Falk: Field guide to Bees of Great Britain and Europe). We are planning to try some emergence trapping at the Pensthorpe colony in April 2020, to continue research into this interesting topic.

Nick was clearly delighted to have discovered this small colony of about 100 nests and his excitement was not lost on Richard and me. The bee is listed as Rare in the UK (source: BWARS), so to have them present in the park is a real coup.

# A new Tachinid Fly for Norfolk

Neil Marks

Whilst photographing various insects on Alexanders (*Smyrnium olusatrum*) alongside a hedgerow in Waxham on 09 April 2020 I turned the lens to what I thought was 'just' another bee. I soon realized that it was a Tachinid fly but that realization coincided with it disappearing into the overhanging Hawthorn hedge, Fortunately I had a reasonable image and was left to decide between *Tachina ursina* and *Tachina lurida* (both of which would be unusual Norfolk records). Subsequently it was confirmed as *T. lurida* by Dr, Chris Raper of the NHM (the white facial hairs being a distinguishing feature).

Tachinid flies are parasitoids mainly of Lepidopteran larvae. The known host in UK is *Orthesia cerasi* (Common Quaker Moth) but in continental Europe various Noctuidae and Lasiocampidae are included.

*Tachina lurida* is widely but sparingly recorded and, as far as I am aware, this is the first Norfolk record.



*Tachina lurida*

Image: Neil Marks



(Map courtesy of iRecord)

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## Getting your eye in Derek Leak

While walking at Upton Fen on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 as part of my Government authorised "daily exercise", I discovered this fascinating and colourful fungus growing through the roots of moss emerging from a bog. I had never noticed it before and so looked it up. It appears to be Eyelash Fungus - *Scutellinia scutellata*.



## House Martins

*Eric Rogers*

I remember, about 50 years ago, seeing some hundreds of Hirundines flying south across the fens on their way to warmer climes, I have not seen anything similar since, and recent years have seen a serious reduction in numbers.

However, 2019 made up for some of the lost years. I was travelling from Swaffham to home in Great Hockham on 15 July and decided to visit the Wind and Water Mill at Little Cressingham. The Mill is no longer in use and the sails and cap have been removed; there is now a flat roof. Flying around, and sitting on the roof, were at least 150 House Martins, probably many more. I revisited the next day and they were all gone.



If this was not enough on 10 August I drove down to Great Hockham Church; the road cuts through a belt of mature hardwood trees. In front of the trees, on either side of the road, at least 50 House Martins were flying back and forth close to the ground. I could not see any insects which they might be feeding on. This was about 10.30 am I checked them again at 5 pm and again the next day when there were still around twenty flying back and forth.

Let us hope that the birds returning this spring have better weather than last year.

**House Martin** Image: [www.clipart.email](http://www.clipart.email)

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## *Exotic Aliens*

*Hans Watson*

At the beginning of the year there was a spate of reports on the local radio and in the local press, of the apparently established small colony of Rose-ringed Parakeets (also called Ring-necked Parakeets) in the west Norwich and Hellesdon area. Although these are brightly coloured birds, they can, on occasion, be very difficult to locate, especially when there are leaves on the trees. I find they are best located by their noisy raucous calls.

This species is now firmly established as a British breeding species, with thousands now in the London area, and other sizeable populations in the suburban parts of other large British cities and towns. Other European countries have experienced a similar colonization of this species. It is interesting to read that the very first record of Rose-ringed Parakeets nesting in the wild in Britain, occurred in 1855 at Northrepps Hall in Norfolk. Around this time, J.H. Gurney recorded five occasions when young had been successfully reared.



Rose-ringed Parakeet (male)

Image: *Hans Watson*

Rose-ringed Parakeets have proven to be popular with the general public, and have no doubt benefited from garden bird feeders, although they are not dependant on these food sources. They eat buds, fruit, berries, nuts, flowers, leaves and even bark. They, like most parrots, nest in cavities and holes in trees, and thus they compete with our native hole nesters, such as Starlings, Tits, Woodpeckers and Nuthatches. There have even been reports of competition with Owls, Stock Doves, and Jackdaws, for nest sites. Peregrines in London are known to prey on them, as do Sparrowhawks, and there is at least one record of a Hobby making a kill. They are social birds, and gather together in large communal roosts, the most well known of which is at Esher Rugby Club, in Surrey, where about 7000 roost in poplar trees during the winter. It is quite sobering to think that Rose-ringed Parakeets in Britain possibly outnumber the breeding numbers of Turtle Dove, Nightingale and Cuckoo. With current estimates giving a 30% increase in population per year, it is quite possible that we will see an increase in their population in Norfolk, but I personally hope that their rate of increase is not the same as another bird, that also came from Asia, the Collared Dove.

# North Norfolk Nature

Karin & Steve Hale



**Brown Hare.** One of several in the newly sown crop-fields near Cley. Very visible at this time of the year but they disappear when things get growing!



**Brambling.** It's not been a 'Brambling winter' along the North Norfolk coast this winter so this one near Cley came as a nice surprise.



**Sparrowhawk.** A regular visitor into our High Kelling garden, drawn to the garden feeders.



**Large Tortoiseshell.** This rare visitor turned up in our garden on the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - a real 'Lock-down' present!

*With more sightings around the UK lets hope that Large Tortoiseshell is following in the wing beats of Purple Emperor and Silver-washed Fritillary and will re-colonise Norfolk soon. - Ed.*

# Norfolk Highlights

Elizabeth Dack



**Bramblings.** These are winter migrants to us from Scandinavia and Russia. This is to avoid the harsh conditions of their home countries. They usually start to arrive here in September and stay until about April, although a small number sometimes stay through the Summer period. A very handsome bird in my opinion and one I always look forward to seeing. These photos were taken at Sculthorpe Moor.



**Isabelline Wheatear.** This was a first for me, which was on the beach at Cley. It was a great little bird to see and watch and seemed very sociable, not minding people at all as it hopped and ran around all the visitors who had gone to see it!! It is a migratory insectivorous bird, which breeds in Southern Russia.



**Snow Buntings** are one of my favourite little birds and must be one of the hardiest songbirds. Even though it has such an attractive pattern with a vari-coloured plumage they still manage

to have a knack of blending into their beach, shingle and saltmarsh surroundings and only be noticed when they fly off. There was a flock of about thirty the day I saw them on the shingle beach at Cley where they were hopping around the Sea Poppies looking for seeds.



Tundra Bean Geese breed in Northern Siberia. Although these were a way off at Buckenham Marshes, it was the first time I have seen them close enough to get a photograph of them. Not brilliant pictures but good to have as a record and to show they have been here in Norfolk.

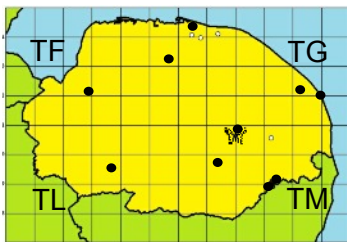


Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was one of my highlights. I have only ever seen one before as a silhouette at a distance a few years ago. Whilst out with friends at Thetford/Santon Downham we could hear them fairly close, calling and drumming. After scanning all the trees around us I spotted it fly over to our side of the river. We could hear it much closer, although their drumming is quieter than that of the Great Spotted Woodpecker. It seems to be a bird of rarity these days. Their preference for living high up in the trees makes it difficult to see and observe. After spotting this one, a male, it was hard to see as it was very high up on a dead tree and was continually excavating. With branches across it and the river behind me I only had a small space in which to photograph it. So I was well chuffed to get a picture of it, which was a first for me.

# Excursion

## Reports

- 2020-2021 Field Meeting location
- St. Andrew's Hall Eaton Workshop Centre



As you are all well aware all NNNS Field Meetings are cancelled under current Government Coronavirus restrictions until 1<sup>st</sup> July. A Programme Card has been produced but at present may not be available for mailing with the May 'Natterjack'. In the meantime part of the event programme is reproduced below, however, as restrictions may still apply please consult the website ([www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)) for the latest updates rather than assume a meeting will go ahead.

### 2020

Sunday  
July 12<sup>th</sup>  
1000 to  
1130hrs

#### **Morning wildlife walk mainly for insects at Earlham Cemetery, Norwich**

With Jeremy and Vanna Bartlett & the Friends of Earlham Cemetery (tel 01603 662225 but no booking necessary). Meet by the Cemetery Office & Gates at TG 212086 (postcode NR2 3RG) up the drive from the B1108 Earlham Road at TG 212085. Park on the entrance drive. Please note that dogs are not allowed in the Cemetery. *Participants can stay later if desired.*

Sunday  
July 19<sup>th</sup>  
1030 to  
1300 hrs

#### **An introduction to botany: Wild Flowers Revealed: Dersingham Bog NNR**

Join Bob Leaney, NNNS botanists & members of the Norfolk Flora Group to see and learn about wetland plants at this very rich acid valley mire site, including regionally-scarce common cottongrass, round - leaved sundew & cranberry. Park at Natural England Offices, The Old Smithy TF 6598 2865 (nearest postcode: PE31 6HA). *Note that WFR is a half-day event, but attendees are welcome to stay for an afternoon session*

Sunday  
August 9<sup>th</sup>  
1000 to  
1400hrs

#### **Wildlife walk for dragonflies at Roydon Common**

With Steve Rowland, NWT Warden (Work no 07748 654901)  
Meet end of Cliffe-En-Howe Road at approx. TF 689217, nearest postcode PE32 1BY. Cliffe-En-Howe Road runs east from junction with Chapel Road at Pott Row: TF 703219 (PE32 1BP). *Car share if possible. Participants can stay later if desired*

As we are spending a more restrictive lifestyle maybe the following project is of interest:

## Spittlebug Survey 2020

Did you know that the 'cuckoo-spit' that you see in spring is produced by the immature stage (nymph) of a spittlebug or froghopper? It is thought that the spittle is produced to protect the nymphs from drying out and from their predators. Once the nymphs emerge as adults, usually in late June, they leave their spittle 'nest' behind and become free-flying. The name froghopper reflects the fact that their face is rather bulbous and therefore froglike, and that they are one of the most powerful jumpers in the animal kingdom. There are ten species of froghopper in Britain. The so-called Meadow Spittlebug, *Philaenus spumarius*, is one of our commonest insects and has possibly the broadest diet of any insect, being known to feed on more than 400 species of plant.



Spittle on Cleavers

Interest in these insects has recently been heightened by the fact that they all feed on the liquid contents of the plant xylem tissue and are therefore capable of transmitting various plant diseases that reside there. One of these, the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, has recently been responsible for the death of millions of olive trees in southern Italy. Fortunately, the *Xylella* bacterium has NOT been found in the UK, but there is a danger that it could be accidentally introduced in imported plants (especially lavender, rosemary and olive trees).



Meadow Spittlebug *Philaenus spumarius*



We urgently need good data on two aspects of these insects to understand better how the *Xylella* bacterium would spread if it were ever introduced into Britain: the geographical distribution of the different species of spittlebug and what plant species that they feed on. Last year, we ran a very successful national survey, funded by the Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and coordinated through the RHS, focused on gardeners recording spittle on their garden plants, especially lavender and rosemary. This year, we want to encourage naturalists and the biological recording community to collect records from more natural habitats in the wider countryside.

Can you help? It would mean recording cuckoo-spit when you see it and especially the plant species on which you find it. Your plant identification skills will help us collect vital information. Please consider contributing to this important survey. Much more information and an online form for submitting your sightings can be found on our website at: [www.Spittlebugsurvey.co.uk](http://www.Spittlebugsurvey.co.uk)

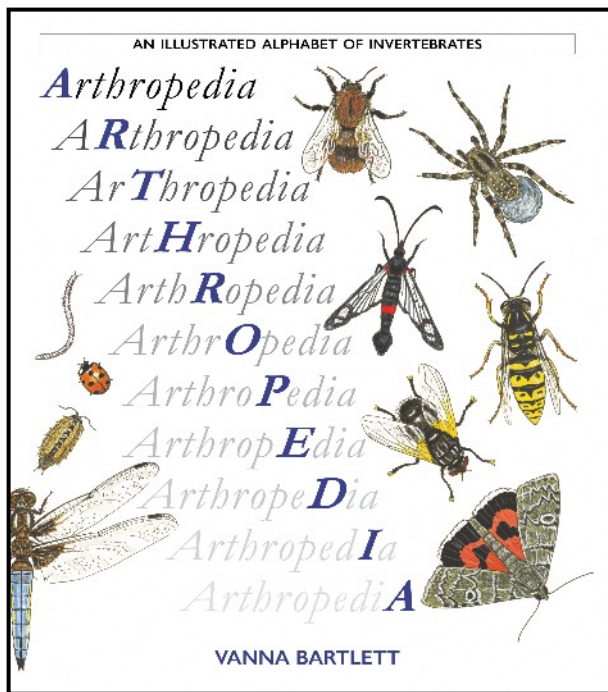
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*Should crawling around hunting young spittlebugs not fill your day then here are a couple of well recommended reads:*

### **Book review: *Arthropedia* by Vanna Bartlett**

Being familiar with Vanna Bartlett's wildlife artwork (and having also visited the wildlife garden that her and her husband, Jeremy, are rightly proud of), I was excited to receive an advance copy of *Arthropedia* to review. As the title suggests, the subjects of the book are terrestrial arthropods (insects, arachnids, isopods and myriapods), most of them Norfolk species and a good percentage seen in Vanna's garden. This localism is also extended to include the use of Norfolk-based designers and printers in the production of the book. The central thread of *Arthropedia* is a series of beautiful colour wildlife plates, one for each letter of the alphabet. The connection to the letter varies, sometimes it is straightforward (e.g. B = Bees), sometimes the link is a word (E = Emperors features a butterfly, moth and dragonfly) and occasionally the link is more obscure (K = Kaleidoscope, featuring a large mixture of species displayed in a kaleidoscopic fashion). These pictures have all been worked up from the author's own photographs along with field sketches and really capture the character of the organism.





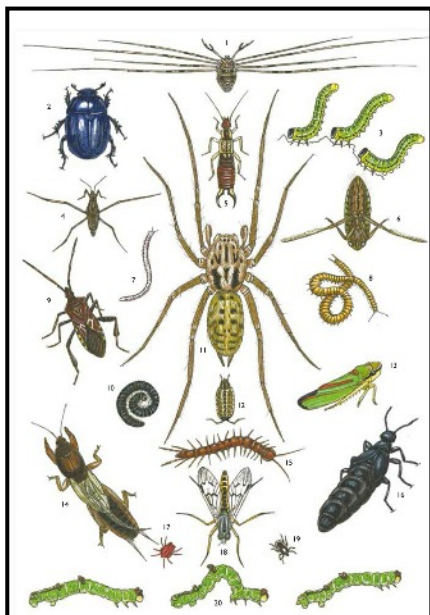
Each species is numbered and referred to in the text, which is also interspersed with many black-and-white drawings to illustrate additional species or aspects of behaviour. There are also additional topographic illustrations showing the different parts of the species referred to.

Whilst this book could stand alone as a volume of wildlife art, to treat it as such overlooks the large amount of information included between plates. The passionate narrative of the author and artist used to describe finding and observing the species

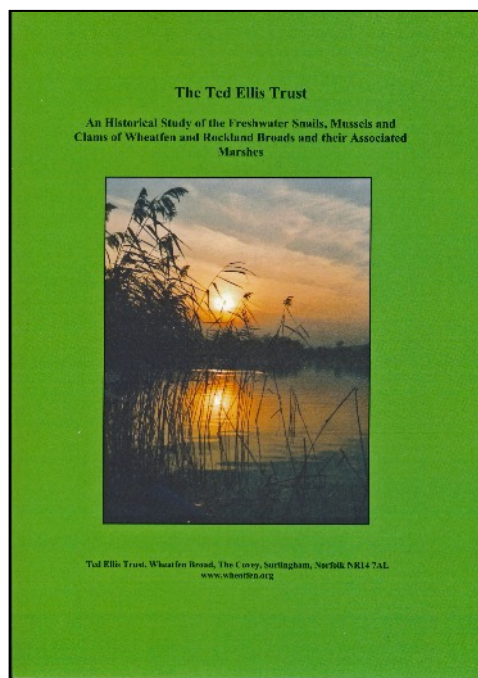
illustrated serves not only to connect with and inform the reader, but also to encourage him or her to seek out and value these species. This is done in part by the accompanying descriptions, but also more overtly in the final chapter that describes in depth the setting up and planting of the author's wildlife garden.

Due to the current pandemic the launch event for Arthropedia has had to be cancelled, and there is a risk that this wonderful book will not receive the attention that it deserves - I heartily recommend that you seek out a copy. You can find out more information about the project at <https://arthropedia.co.uk/> and can order a copy direct from Mascot Media via <https://www.mascotmedia.co.uk/books/arthropedia-an-illustrated-alphabet-of-invertebrates.html> (£20 incld. p&p)

James Emerson



## **Book review: *An Historical Study of the Freshwater Snails, Mussels and Clams of Wheatfen and Rockland Broads and their Associated Marshes* by Roy Baker & Derek Howlett**



This booklet is another in the delightful series looking at the different groups of natural history that can be seen at Wheatfen. This particular book could be described as a more specialised work as it deals with molluscs. Both Roy and Derek are very familiar figures at Wheatfen having spent many years exploring the dykes and waterways of this reserve.

As an introduction there is a comprehensive look at the historical background of Wheatfen's waterways and what contemporary conservation strategies have been undertaken, such as studies in salinity levels, water quality and dredging/mud-pumping. It is heartening that the authors can write the following: *"It remains an excellent example of how a broad can be restored through mud-pumping"*.

They do warn, however, against complacency though and the necessity of continued action to maintain the healthy populations of mussels.

The second part of the booklet deals with species accounts of the freshwater mussels and snails that have been found in the area. As well as detailed notes on distribution, habitat and local status, there are many historical references pertinent to the arrival of non-native species. It is a book for anyone who has a love of Wheatfen, particularly the way a site can change or be changed and how those changes can have an effect, in this case, on its mollusc fauna.

*Francis Farrow*

*The booklet can be obtained from The Ted Ellis Trust at Wheatfen (£3.00) or by post (£4.00) from: The Warden, The Ted Ellis Trust, Wheatfen, Surlingham, NR14 7AL.*



Duck Mussel



The next issue of ***The Norfolk Natterjack*** will be August 2020

Please send  
**all articles / notes and photographic material**  
to the editor as soon as possible by  
**July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020** to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,  
Norfolk, NR26 8QD. Email: [francis.farrow@btinternet.com](mailto:francis.farrow@btinternet.com)

*All photographs / images are very welcome, especially to accompany an article or document a record, occasionally however, because of space limitations, preference may have to be given to Norfolk-based images, or to those subjects depicting interesting or unusual behaviour, or are less commonly (or rarely) seen in print.*

## Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly *Natterjack* newsletter, and annual copies of the Transactions of the Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. A full summer programme of excursions and a winter programme of talks are also organised annually.

***New memberships and renewals*** can be made by credit card or 'PayPal' by visiting the Society's website at [www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)

Alternatively a cheque payable to  
'Norfolk & Norwich Naturalist's Society' can be sent to:

Jim Froud, The Membership Secretary, Westward Ho, 4 Kingsley Road,  
Norwich NR1 3RB

**Current rates are £20 for individual, family and group memberships**  
(£30 for individuals living overseas).

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