

# CLEVELAND NATURALISTS'

## FIELD CLUB



## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Volume 12 Part 3

Spring 2021

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Ordinary Members	Daphne Aplin, Colin Chatto, Vic Fairbrother

### Membership Details

The Club seeks to promote an interest in all branches of natural history and to assist members in finding out about the living things that they see in the countryside around them. The present membership includes those who have particular interests in birds, insects, slugs and snails, lichens, fungi, flowering plants, mosses and liverworts. Members with interests in other fields would be very welcome.

In spring and summer there are evening, half-day and whole-day visits to investigate the natural history of a particular area. During the winter months there is a series of meetings held in the Marton Community Centre, Cypress Road, Middlesbrough TS7 8PZ. If you have any difficulty getting to this venue, please speak to any committee member and we will see if we can arrange a lift for you. A meeting usually takes the form of a talk given by a club member or visiting speaker. The annual subscription is £8.

Members are entitled to attend meetings of two affiliated organisations:

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union.

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

Details are available from Eric Gendle 01642 281235 and our web site

<http://clevelandnats.org.uk/>

## President's Address 2020 -2021

This is a difficult year to write a President's Address since, like all similar groups, our formal Club meetings were all suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic lockdowns and restrictions.

We had to cancel the AGM in March and the summer programme of field trips. The Committee, with special thanks to Hazel Stokeld, did research the COVID-19 Guidelines and meeting rooms in-case we were able to meet indoors for the winter season but this also proved impossible. The Elgee Memorial lecture, which the Club is due to host, was also postponed by the Dorman Museum until December 2021. The situation was dire.

Sadly, I have to report that a long standing member of the Club, Aubrey Colling died in June 2020. Aubrey was an expert mycologist and led Club outings on fungus forays many times. We often "lost" him, when his adventurous spirit took him further and higher than the rest of the group, but Edith never worried, she was always confident he would reappear. I remember a few anxious moments when we wondered where he had got too. His photographs of fungal spores from the specimens she collected were superb. He was an inspiration to novice mycologists and was more than willing to share his knowledge with patience and good humour. Aubrey had a green burial in a lovely spot in Westerdale on the North Yorkshire Moors. An obituary for him will appear in the next issue of the Proceedings.

A quorum of the Committee met once outdoors in September to discuss our strategy for the year and it was agreed that the existing Committee would stand for another year and that existing subscriptions would also cover the year 2020-2021.

When lockdown eased in the summer up to six members did manage to enjoy a few outings. The visit to Bishop Wood near Selby looking for the Silver Washed Fritillary went ahead and was a very successful outing. A few *ad hoc* trips were arranged locally to North and South Gares, Greatham Creek, Bowesfield Ponds, Hartlepool Headland and Scaling Dam. A far cry from our usual full programme but it kept us in touch.

I felt it was important to have some contact with the Club membership so I produced the occasional Newsletter and my thanks go to all the members who produced articles and sent in wonderful photographs to make that possible.

I would like to thank the Committee for their continued support of the Club and to thank Tony Wardhaugh, who has resigned from the Committee, for his sterling work over the years. The Committee accepted with thanks Tony's offer to continue editing the Club's Proceedings. Thanks also go to Linda Stephenson the Club's Auditor.

The vaccine is being rolled out as I write this, so I am hopeful that we will get some kind of summer programme this coming year although I think we will still need to be very careful. It remains to be seen whether we can meet indoors for the next Winter Season but again I am hopeful. It is unlikely we will be able to meet for the next AGM in March 2021.

It just remains for me to wish all our members good health and I hope we can meet up again soon.

**Jo Scott**

## **Acknowledgements and Note to Contributors**

The editor would like to thank all those who have contributed to the current issue of the Field Club Proceedings.

Contributions can include scientific articles, records, historical or biographical articles, poems, artwork, in fact anything which documents or celebrates natural history in Cleveland. These can be sent in at any time of year.

**For the Spring issue in any year please send contributions by 1st March.**

### **For electronic submissions please:**

- use either MS Word or Pages, including for any tables (please do not submit tabulated information as a spreadsheet).
- avoid using any paragraph formatting and line spacing other than single.
- send any images as separate .jpg files with the caption as a separate Word or Pages file. These are always most welcome.
- when naming species provide the vernacular name, where a widely used one exists, followed by the appropriate scientific name in italics and bracketed. If no vernacular name exists please provide just the scientific name in italics and unbracketed.
- Send to [tonyandmoirawardhaugh1@virginmedia.com](mailto:tonyandmoirawardhaugh1@virginmedia.com)

### **Where electronic submission is not possible:**

Please post hand-written or typed articles to Dr A A Wardhaugh, 13 Captain Cook's Crescent, Marton, Middlesbrough TS7 8NN.

## Vincent Jones: an obituary

Vincent Jones was born on 10 December 1947. He moved to the village of Ingleby Greenhow when he was six as his father was the school head-teacher. Vincent never lived anywhere else and in fact never travelled abroad throughout his life as there was enough to interest him in Yorkshire and the UK.

All Vincent wanted to do was to be a teacher. He went to Yarm Grammar School, then Birmingham University and gained a BSc and MSc in mathematics and a PGCE at the University of York. He was a maths teacher and was fond of saying that he taught only the high achievers in the only school he taught at in his life: South Park Sixth Form College in Normanby. He was a fantastic historian and had a real passion for literature. He chose the most difficult crosswords, eschewing the easier ones: the Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Times crosswords. He was also a very good bridge player.

Vincent was an eccentric and he was passionate, almost obsessive about the things he liked, and had little time for the things he did not like. He kept meticulous records of his petrol consumption and would travel everywhere at the most efficient speed of 40mph. He was proud of never having smoked or drunk alcohol and was well known for paying his cricket match fees at the end of the season and by cheque. Most things Vincent did he was very good at, such as village cricket.

Vincent was a prominent member of the Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club for many years. His botanical skills reached a high level when he undertook to study the Hawkweeds (*Hieracium*) of Yorkshire. On this he spent some thirty years of dedicated field work and in time produced keys which culminated in the publication of his impressive book Yorkshire Hawkweeds in 2014. He became BSBI recorder for North-east Yorkshire VC62 in 2006, the area between the river Tees, Filey and York, hitherto severely under-recorded. His commitment to the role was total. Few if any other Vice-County recorders could name Brambles (*Rubus*), Dandelions (*Taraxacum*) and of course Hawkweeds. I consider him one of the few of a very select band of botanists who really knew the Hawkweeds. Vincent even has a species named after him, *Hieracium jonesianum*. David McCosh and Tim Rich have recently published three new (for science) *Hieracium* species that Vincent discovered in the Yorkshire Dales. His extensive herbarium is now in Leeds Museum.

Vincent had suffered from Alzheimer's disease and apparently also from dementia with Lewy bodies. His illness really took hold when I was botanising with him in 2018 and in the winter of 2018/19 he deteriorated very quickly. He was taken into a care home in the spring of 2019. I continued to take him out once a week to do some botanising which he really enjoyed as it gave him something to look forward to. He deteriorated even more when he was given a drug which had a massive negative impact on him. He never really recovered from that. He died on 14 July 2020.

Vincent will be remembered for his somewhat eccentric ways, his undoubted botanical skills and as a kind and helpful man who always tried to help beginner botanists of all ages.

*Dave Barlow*

## Walking with Vincent



I had the joy of exploring the North York Moors, the Yorkshire Dales and the Howardian Hills with Vincent for over 20 years on a weekly walk, summer and winter, discussing a wide range of subjects un-connected with botany. Here are my recollections of Vincent and his idiosyncrasies.

Vincent's fear was to be wrong! I recall him saying that he hated A Level Physics "practicals" because his colleagues would know if he got the wrong answer. Such humiliation! Botany was the same. He either knew a plant or he did not know it. He would speculate on hybrids but would identify them by careful study. Speculative answers could become certainty in somebody else's mouth, which could be attributed back to Vincent much to his annoyance. I always felt that he liked to know things he could not be challenged about, such as Latin or cricketing statistics. His lack of practical knowledge was amazing. After driving home for many years, on the A19, near Felixkirk, passing that sign "Pallets wanted" he suddenly asked what a pallet was!

He had a fear of technology and was proud of his ignorance, boasting that he could not wire a 3 pin plug (odd for someone with A level Physics) and that he had never flown or been on an escalator or even in a lift in a shop. When he bought a new PVR recorder he came to me saying that the instruc-

tions were all gobbledy gook. I had to insist that he read the instructions, saying that his cricketing friends could be ditch diggers or farm hands (but would not have an MSc in maths) but they read the instructions and could use their PVR's. He succeeded without my help! His new car caused similar difficulties. After several weeks driving he asked why he had two speedometers. I tried to explain that one was a rev counter but without any success, until I took him back to his cycling days and three speed gears. He finally grasped that when going up-hill he pedalled a lot but went slowly whereas when going downhill he pedalled slowly and went fast. He finally grasped that a rev counter would be measuring his pedalling rate not his road speed. I once commented that like most cars, I had a low fuel level indicator giving me about 80 miles to empty. He asked what his car might have. I suggested that different cars might be different and he should check his handbook. He looked at me as though he would need to go to London to have it translated from Tibetan. I have no doubt that he never did, as he never ever checked his oil level (if he knew where the dipstick was) because the salesman had told him he would never need to (but not necessarily after ten years usage). Warnings of possible catastrophic engine failure were ignored. He was obsessive about his wing mirrors. If the road was at all narrow he would pull in and flip his wing mirrors in to protect them from approaching vehicles.

He could be characterised by the phrase "Never do anything for the first time". I would remind him of the phrase "A man who never made a mistake, never made anything". When "Serve yourself" petrol pumps became normal he would always use a garage where a little man in a brown coat would leave his office to fill up his tank. When PIN numbers became the norm he was lost because he had thrown away the note from his bank with the PIN unread, so he had to make a special journey to get a new PIN. He burned a lot of wood which he sawed up by hand, even though he had a box of tools inherited from his father, which included an excellent circular saw which I, with difficulty, eventually showed him how to use, though I had fears for his fingers, such was his impracticality. It was difficult to imagine how he was such a competent batsman.

He had a love of all things English, and especially all things Yorkshire, though not towns, not even Yorkshire ones. Even on holiday in Anglesey he would sometimes return home early in order to get back to his garden, even if only for a few days (gardening often started at 4am). He loved plain English food, no pasta, spaghetti or pizza, though one could tease him about fruit and his love of oranges, bananas, peaches and other none native fruit. He never drank anything but water, orange juice or cocoa (even after four years at university!). He left the UK only once to go to Guernsey for a few days botanising, though he was probably homesick. His homesickness manifested itself in visits to his beloved sister Molly and her husband who lived a little way up a farm track in Ugthorpe. He used to go there and enjoy a superb Christmas meal and stay that night. One year the track was so ice bound that he had to stay another night! Because of this one incident he would never visit them again at Christmas.

He was a private person in some ways and was extremely annoyed to receive a letter (as one does) offering cheaper car or house insurance. (How do they know my name and address he muttered?). He was a thrifty person, who boasted that he had never paid for a haircut in his life and could not understand why people spent more than he would on a new car.

His personal beliefs seemed somewhat contradictory. He was very strongly against all religions, pinning most of the troubles of the world on their shoulders, yet he was an arch royalist almost worshipping Queen Elizabeth the 2nd (and Elizabeth the 1st as well) though he feared for the monarchy when Charles takes over in times to come. His head was full of dates of birth, marriage, coronations and deaths throughout the centuries. With his hatred of so much of modernity, I always felt that he

should have been born about 1810, as lord of the manor of Ingleby Greenhow of course, and married to Jane Austen. He would have lived in the age of Dickens, Trollope and other 19<sup>th</sup> century authors he so much enjoyed, and reread them regularly.

Vincent was a unique character and we will all miss him enormously

*Eric Gendle*



**Another First for County Durham: Psychidae (Bagworms)**  
***Luffia ferchaultella* (Stephens, 1850)**

*Daphne Aplin and Keith Dover*

There are twenty species of this family in the British Isles, although one is doubtfully British and another is thought to have been accidentally imported.

The Psychidae can be difficult for the beginner; winged adults and larval cases of the larger species are often easily identified but care is needed with the smaller species. Larval cases are constructed from granular material which is incorporated within silken portable cases, thus they are somewhat like a caddis fly. Looking for these is the best way to search for this family. They can be found in this stage feeding on lichens, mosses, the living and decaying leaves of many plants, and dead insect fragments. Some of these materials are used in the building of the case.

In most species the female is wingless (apterous). A few species are parthenogenetic i.e all individuals are female and produce eggs capable of development without being fertilised. One of these is *Luffia ferchaultella*.

*Luffia ferchaultella* is widespread and locally abundant in Southern Britain. However, it was unknown in VC66 (County Durham) until the larval stage of one was photographed at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park in Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees (NZ483253), on 17th November 2018. It was found on a Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) trunk by Daphne Aplin. The photographs were passed to Dave Wainwright from Butterfly Conservation and to Keith Dover, County Moth Recorder for VC66. Daphne had suggested a psychid as a possible identification for the larval case as a result of her friend Jill Cunningham, a member of Darlington Naturalists' Field Club, having done some research on the web. Keith Dover suggested it could be a *Luffia* species due to the tilted cone-like shape and, as the only other species, *Luffia lapidella*, is a rare moth occurring only on the very tip of Cornwall, it was likely to be *L. ferchaultella*. In the meantime Dr. Wainwright had sent the photographs to Phil Sterling and Mark Parsons, both micro-moth experts. Very soon we had confirmation that it was *L. ferchaultella*. The case in fact contained a dead larva rather than the exuvia (i.e. pupal skin remains) of an emerged individual. This 'first' was now imported to the County Durham moths database. There are no records of this species from Northumberland (VC67/68) but there are 14 records from ten sites in Yorkshire, first recorded in here in 1993.

As an update, 15 larvae were seen at Cowpen Bewley on 1st January 2019. Of these 13 were grazing on the original Silver Birch trunk and one each on two adjacent Silver Birches. Two were found in 2020, one on 1st January and one on 29th November, again on the original Silver Birch. This tree is on the very edge of the wood, in full sun by a railway line.

Only the parthenogenetic form of this moth has been recorded in Britain. It frequents damp, shaded, lichen-covered tree trunks and branches, notably those of Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) and can also be found on posts and sometimes rocks. The granular material of the larval case is often added in such a way that it forms rings of different colours. The young larvae overwinter in the case. After emergence the exuvia is retained in the larval case.

It is exciting to know that we still have a lot to learn about the unusual lifestyle of *Luffia ferchaultella*.



*Luffia ferchaultella* larva (length 4mm)



*Luffia ferchaultella* larval case



*Luffia ferchaultella* dead larva

## A look at the Invertebrates of Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, Billingham

(NZ472256 - NZ483256)

*Daphne Aplin*

One positive outcome, for me, during this difficult year is that for my daily exercise I could access Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park easily to see what wildlife I could spot. One of the drawbacks was that a lot of people, particularly with dogs, also descended on the Park and the ensuing disturbance was probably one of the reasons why I haven't seen the deer or Fox around or Hedgehogs come to think of it. I have seen Grey Squirrels and Rabbits and also evidence of Moles though and on a couple of occasions disturbed a Sparrowhawk on a kill! One day I was near the small mound when I heard Buzzards calling and when I looked up I saw three circling quite low overhead – it made me laugh to myself as it made me think of vultures looking for their next victim! Being careful about the time constraints and social distancing I concentrated on looking among the trees and undergrowth for creatures that I could either photograph going about their business or collect for identification at home before release. I have had the opportunity to really look at creatures I haven't taken much notice of before and to really appreciate their everyday battles for survival.

The following is a list (all verified) of just some of the invertebrates that I have seen in the Park this year although one noteworthy observation actually took place just over the border of the Park on the Greatham cycle track where I saw two Pied Shieldbug nymphs (*Tritomegas bicolor*) on a Bramble leaf. Hopefully one year they will fly over the fence thus bringing the number of Shieldbugs recorded in the Park to nine.

All the Hemiptera records are first ones for the site and all records were sent to E.R.I.C. North East.

ORDER	COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
HEMIPTERA	Lucerne Bug	<i>Adelphocoris lineolatus</i>
		<i>Agnocoris reclairei</i>
		<i>Alloeotomus gothicus</i>
		<i>Atractotomus magnicornis</i>
	Common Green Capsid	<i>Lygocoris pabulinus</i>
		<i>Megacoelum infusum</i>
		<i>Megalocoleus molliculus</i>
		<i>Orthonotus rufifrons</i>
		<i>Orthops basalis</i>
		<i>Phoenicocoris obscurellus</i>

		<i>Pyllus palliceps</i>
		<i>Plagiognathus chrysanthemi</i>
		<i>Polymerus nigrata</i>
		<i>Psallus haematodes</i>
		<i>Psallus perrisi</i>
		<i>Pseudoloxops coccineus</i>
		<i>Anthocoris nemoralis</i>
		<i>Tremulicerus vitreus</i>
		<i>Conomelus anceps</i>
		<i>Muellerianella fairmairei</i>
		<i>Cymus melanocephalus</i>
		<i>Gastrodes grossipes</i>
		<i>Myrmus miriformis</i>
COLEOPTERA		<i>Amara aulica</i>
		<i>Anaspis maculata</i>
		<i>Anthocomus rufus</i>
		<i>Byturus ochraceus</i>
		<i>Cantharis flavilabris</i>
		<i>Demetrias atricapillus</i>
		<i>Donacia vulgaris</i>
		<i>Euophryum confine</i>
		<i>Isochnus sequensi</i>
	Hawthorn Leaf Beetle	<i>Lochmaea crataegi</i>
		<i>Malthodes marginatus</i>
		<i>Othius punctulatus</i>
	Fan-bearing Wood-borer	<i>Ptilinus pecticornis</i>
		<i>Tachyporus obtusus</i>
	22-spot Ladybird	<i>Psyllobora vigintiduopunctata</i>
	Melanic quadrimaculata form of 2-spot Ladybird	<i>Adalia bipunctata</i>

	10-spot Ladybird	<i>Adalia decempunctata</i>
	Cream spot Ladybird	<i>Calvia quatuordecimguttata</i>
	Kidney-spot Ladybird	<i>Chilocorus renipustulatus</i>
	Parasitised 7-spot Ladybird	<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>
	Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>
HYMENOPTERA		<i>Cratichneumon culex</i>
		<i>Homotherus locutor</i>
		<i>Ichneumon sarcitorius</i>
		<i>Ophion ventricosus</i>
		<i>Diadromus collaris</i>
	Alder Wood-wasp	<i>Xiphydria camelus</i>
		<i>Arge cyanocrocea</i>
		<i>Nematinus steini</i>
		<i>Tenthredo notha</i>



**Two-spot Ladybird (*Adalia bipunctata*, melanic *quadrinaculata*)**



*Diadromus collaris*



Sallow Kitten Moth larva (*Fercula fercula*)



**Pine cone bug (*Gastrodes grossipes*)**



***Lochmaea crataegi***





*Notodonta ziczac* with wasp cocoons



Pied Shieldbug nymph (*Tritomegas bicolor*)

## Remembering Frank Elgee (1880-1944)

*Stephen Harrison*

*Frank Elgee spent his entire professional career as assistant curator and then curator at the Dorman Memorial Museum in Middlesbrough, from where he made formative contributions to the natural history and archaeology of the North York Moors. He is best remembered as the author of three influential books on the region, whose impact as key texts endured well into the second half of the twentieth century. After a lifetime of chronic illness, Elgee and his wife moved to Alton, Hampshire, in 1938, where he died six years later, and was buried in the town's Old Odiham Road New Cemetery.*

Every generation tends to throw up unusual talent out of the most unlikely of circumstances and from the most obscure of places. Frank Watson Elgee is a case in point.

Frank Elgee's life story is that of an ambitious outsider attempting to escape an impoverished background, a minimal formal education, and the confines of chronic ill-health. Above all else though, it is the story of an unconditional commitment to uncovering the hidden truths of the natural and man-made world in which he moved.

As a talented, regionally inspired pioneering naturalist and archaeologist with a hawk's eye for detail, Elgee made important contributions to the extension of knowledge. For his time he was a remarkably acute scholar of rare intellectual and emotional discipline, a tenacious man driven by ambition and curiosity, skill and determination, and absolute resolve, who devoted much of his adult life to the systematic and careful examination of the origin, natural history and early human occupation of the North York Moors.

### ***Beginnings***

Frank Watson Elgee entered the world on 8 November 1880 at North Ormesby, then on the fringes of, but soon to be engulfed by, the rapidly expanding industrial town of Middlesbrough. He was the eldest of four children born to Thomas Elgee (1851-1939), a pay clerk / book-keeper with a local ironworks, and his wife Jane (1851-1907). For as yet unexplained reasons, both parents had experienced some 'tragedy' when they were young, resulting in 'a transition from a happy comfortable home-life to unhappiness, poverty & hardship.'<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning, Elgee's life-journey was not an easy one, as he himself acknowledged in a retrospective note written sometime around 1940. Looking back on his life's work with evident satisfaction, he wrote of the 'adverse circumstances' from which his achievements stemmed, 'I lacked means, health, scientific training, received an elementary education and lived in an essentially commercial and industrial environment in which things of the mind held a subordinate rank.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Typed account of Frank Elgee's childhood by his sister Amy for Harriet Wragg Elgee,' undated typescript, p.5, Frank Elgee Papers, Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Elgee, 'How I came to write the Moorlands of North-East Yorkshire,' pp.2-3. Frank Elgee Papers, Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough.

When set against this background, his life-story builds into the record of a personal transformation, the story of how one man defied the limitations placed upon him.

Until the age of seven he was home-schooled by his mother. His formal education, when it began, was disjointed, regularly disrupted by illness. ‘Before I was ten I had had mumps, measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, influenza, and, I believe, bronchitis. My attack of [scarlet] fever [in 1888] was not severe, but it affected my ears, rendering the right ear deaf, though not the inner ear ... The left ear was also impaired. In later years catching a cold often made me stone deaf ... The fever also made me very short-sighted.’<sup>3</sup>

In 1894 he contracted pneumonia, which left him with two initially undiagnosed and, in the days before antibiotics, potentially lethal complications: empyema and bronchiectasis. Briefly, empyema is an accumulation of pus in the pleural space between the outside of the lungs and the inside of the chest cavity, and bronchiectasis is a long-term condition where the airways of the lungs become inelastic and abnormally widened, leading to the build-up of excess mucus that can make the lungs vulnerable to infection; if left untreated and repeated cycles of infection occur, the lungs become progressively more damaged, which is what happened in his case. By the time a diagnosis was finally made four years later, Elgee was seriously ill and close to death. An emergency operation at the North Riding Infirmary at Middlesbrough successfully drained the empyema and removed part of a lung, but the accumulated damage was considered too great and he was not expected to live.

Somehow, against all the odds, he did survive. The protracted illness, however, was a searing experience, leaving him with life-long, frequently debilitating, health problems, regular bronchial infections greatly aggravated by his sensitivity to cold and damp, which makes his achievements all the more remarkable. All his subsequent fieldwork and writing, his employment, took place in the shadow of constant insecurity: ill-health and the aches he lived with, and an ever-present feeling that he would not live to complete his self-appointed task.

Against this less than ideal backdrop, Elgee had left school at age fifteen without any formal qualifications, entering the world of work as a junior clerk with a Middlesbrough iron and steel merchant. This turned out to be a short-lived experience, brought to an abrupt end by his hospitalisation and operation, following which he was unemployed until 1902. Between then and 1904 he worked as a clerk with a Teesside shipbroker. It was this latter employment that gave him, for the first time, the financial means to begin to embark on a journey towards his own imagined future.

### ***The road taken***

As already noted, Elgee grew up in straitened circumstances. As a counter-balance, both parents were highly cultured, instilling middle class values into their offspring. Frank ‘inherited from [his mother] both courage and patience, and from his father ... a love of philosophy and literature and the brilliant art of conversation.’<sup>4</sup>

Thomas Elgee fostered a deep sense of natural history in his children. ‘Frank’s interest in Nature,’ wrote his sister Amy, ‘never flagged, and was always increasing. Indeed, I do not remember when it first manifested itself, for we were always encouraged by my father to take an interest in nature. It was the background of our upbringing ... This habit was maintained through many years, my father

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<sup>3</sup> Elgee, ‘How I came to write the Moorlands of North-East Yorkshire,’ pp.9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Harriet Wragg Elgee, ‘Per Ardua ad Astra’ [Obituary], *North Western Naturalist* 19 (December 1944), p.264.

and he being closely associated in his early studies of the moors, natural history, geology, ornithology, conchology and many other things.<sup>5</sup>

If Thomas Elgee was the starting point, the Rev John Hawell (1855-1904) of nearby Ingleby Greenhow was the pivotal figure in his intellectual formation. During the 1890s, Hawell, a respected and influential naturalist, fostered the young Elgee's embryonic interests in natural history, reinforcing and extending his knowledge in botany, geology, conchology and astronomy, and, importantly, the local moorlands. As a role model, Hawell hugely affected the direction in which Elgee's own work would unfold.

In 1899, at Hawell's instigation, Elgee was 'elected' to the membership of the Cleveland Naturalists' Field Club. From the very beginning, he clearly made a positive impression, quickly gaining the confidence of the membership, becoming honorary assistant secretary in 1901, and then honorary secretary from 1908 to 1922, followed by spells as president and vice-president. It was in the club, surrounded by like-minded individuals, where Elgee found his intellectual feet, became more articulate in his pursuit of natural history and more assured in his ambitions; interactions in this milieu set him on a course that would shape the rest of his life.

### *Moving on*

Frank Elgee's moment arrived in May 1904 when he was appointed assistant curator of the about-to-open Dorman Memorial Museum, Middlesbrough's first purpose-built municipal museum, at a starting salary of £70 per annum. On the surface, it was a curious and unlikely appointment, given his background, persistent ill-health and an absence of formal training. Unfortunately, just how he came to be appointed is unknown. Whatever the precise circumstances, Elgee's intelligence, abiding interest in the natural world, his great industry, and perseverance with the tedious and demanding recording and marshalling of facts would, almost certainly, have been recommendation enough.

The museum was to be his institutional base for the rest of his career. The appointment not only allowed him to begin systemising, deepening and extending his knowledge and research interests, but also to develop an extensive network of contacts and close ties. And, just as importantly, it gave him, for the first time, a secure income.

### *The search for meaning*

As a naturalist and landscape investigator, Elgee was enthralled by the North York Moors. Throughout his life he self-consciously confined his field of vision to this 'most distinct and natural division of Yorkshire.' This moorland bio-region – rough, wild, empty, mysterious, elemental, a landscape of desolate tops, of heather and sedge and bog-cotton and peat pools, of rutted tracks, of long featureless ridges and false crests – was Elgee's appointed place, his subject and master, where he lived his most engaged and genuine life, converting the landscape into something that spoke to him, in the process making a formative contribution to understanding the physical development and human occupation of the North York Moors.

Outside of his paid employment at the Dorman, Elgee was, perhaps first and foremost, an independent scholar, intent on single-mindedly pursuing a self-imposed and self-defined programme of work. In following his personal vision, he willingly consigned himself – and with the agreement and encouragement of his wife – to a shoestring life. His researches were unsponsored and brought in little or no extra earnings. The lack of personal resources was a perennially besetting problem

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<sup>5</sup> 'Typed account of Frank Elgee's childhood by his sister Amy for Harriet Wragg Elgee,' p.3.

throughout his life. Against a background of adversity, much of quality was achieved, as his wife Harriet later wrote, by practising an ‘exhilarating economy.’<sup>6</sup>

Although Elgee’s moorland studies start in the later 1890s, it was not until 1902 that his researches began to take serious shape. If the long view is taken, it is clear that he had a habit of periodically moving sideways to colonise new subject areas, each shift building organically on what went before. Greatly oversimplifying a progression spanning thirty-odd years, and characterised by multiple detours and minor enthusiasms along the way, the core trajectory begins with entomology, moves on to botany, then geology, and ends with the human dimension.

A significant moment in Elgee’s intellectual development took place in 1905, when he enthusiastically embraced the newly emerging discipline of ecology, in the first instance almost certainly under the influence of University of Leeds lecturer Dr William Gardner Smith (1866-1928), who became an important mentor at this stage in Elgee’s career. Taking its lead from contemporary developments elsewhere in Europe, ecology was an effort to understand and disentangle the complex relationships between environment and vegetation, and which marked the beginnings of a more experimental approach towards the study of natural history. Elgee would spend the next half-a-dozen years applying science and reason in pursuit of an ecological explanation for the origin of the North York Moors.

After a decade’s worth of preparatory newspaper articles and academic papers, Elgee’s first book was published in December 1912. Handsomely produced in blue cloth and gilt embossed lettering, with seventy illustrations and two fold-out maps, *The Moorlands of North-Eastern Yorkshire: Their Natural History and Origin* is notable as the first regional survey in Britain to adopt an ecological approach to landscape investigation and interpretation. An assured and accomplished piece of writing, it was a book that promised a great deal of its author. It also remained the standard work on the North York Moors until the mid-twentieth century.

The Great War years mark an apparent absence of all research-related activity. Just what Elgee was up to at this time remains a mystery. Poor health precluded active military service; nor was he involved in any other war-work, as far as I can tell. And there is nothing to suggest that he was absent from the area during these years. At a time when the country was rife with suspicions towards anything and anyone out of the ordinary, it is entirely understandable that Elgee might wish to avoid the moors, more especially those areas immediately adjacent to the militarily sensitive North Sea coastline, in order not to draw attention to himself as a lone walker, a stranger pacing about and making notes, taking photographs even, thereby risking accusations of spying and, potentially, the inconvenience and embarrassment of being arrested as a suspected enemy agent.

In 1923 he was appointed curator of the Dorman Memorial Museum. His promotion was broadly coincidental with a shift of emphasis in his research interests, as was moving house from Nunthorpe on the southern fringe of Middlesbrough to live on the moors at Commondale in the upper Esk valley. Up until this point, he had focused on geology and the natural world. Now, his attention shifted to the man-made world of the North York Moors, especially the prehistoric and Roman periods. It’s as though he had laid the physical, environmental foundations and now began putting people into the equation, a change of direction which might be seen as the beginning of the end of a journey begun two and more decades earlier.

His archaeological investigations were published in 1930 as *Early Man in North-East Yorkshire*, another landmark study, a skilful construction bringing together disparate mute traces in a coherent

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<sup>6</sup> Harriet Wragg Elgee, ‘Per Ardua ad Astra,’ p.268.

interpretive narrative, which remained the standard reference work for the next fifty years. In it, Elgee set out to ‘describe the numerous prehistoric antiquities of North-east Yorkshire, and by their means to track down the succession of peoples who lived in this region before the Roman Conquest’ and to ‘show how the physical character of the district influenced its settlement by these people, and to give some account of their origin, way of life, and destiny.’<sup>7</sup>

If the value of any work is weighed against its survival, then Frank Elgee did rather well. His two pioneering studies – *Moorlands* and *Early Man* – need to be viewed together as a continuous narrative over time, individually and collectively shaping academic and popular perceptions and expectations until the middle of the second half of the twentieth century. The flaw that seams its way through both books is Elgee’s belief that the bleak moorland was an essentially static landscape, one that bridged pre- and post-glacial times, a sort of fixed landscape seen in time stopped, instead of the actual experience of an intimate landscape unfolding in time. In other words, reading back his contemporary moorland environment into deep time – it is thus and always has been, that is, ‘a natural’ landscape ‘more or less untampered with ... in a land where almost everything natural has been “improved” away.’<sup>8</sup> Because of this he could not imagine man’s occupation as anything other than a response to crises elsewhere, forcing people to relocate from more fertile areas into an inhospitable region.

### ***Endings***

Elgee resigned the curatorship of the Dorman Memorial Museum at the beginning of 1932 owing to ill-health; and, in a somewhat unusual move, Harriet Elgee was appointed in his place. In a near-contemporaneous move (9 December 1931), and perhaps further suggestive of the seriousness of Elgee’s underlying condition, the couple made a forced retreat from Comondale and the harsh realities of moorland living to the nearby market town of Guisborough, at the foot of the Cleveland Hills. The writing of *Early Man* was clearly something of an up-hill struggle. His follow-up and final book *The Archaeology of Yorkshire*, a county-wide synthesis published in 1933, and co-authored with Harriet, was an even more formidable task. ‘My husband finally broke down in health early in 1932, and the latter part of this county archaeology was written at his bedside, whenever he felt able to deal with it. I often wondered whether he would live to see it completed; I also had the added anxiety of knowing that he was too desperately ill for sustained thought, but he would not relinquish his task, however great his distress. We seized the most favourable moments for work, and at length the day dawned when we could at last say that it was completed.’<sup>9</sup>

*The Archaeology of Yorkshire* was another notable success, involving much collation of, even back then, a vast and scattered resource, as well as the demonstration of great skill in the art of concision. For its time it was a first-rate account but, like his other books, it has long since been overtaken by progressive increases in knowledge, overlaid by increasingly sophisticated theoretical perspectives and interpretations.

The rest of the decade saw his health steadily deteriorate; it is clear that he became progressively more physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted as the years went by. Against this background it is interesting to note that Elgee, after a lifetime as a non-practising Anglican, converted to Roman Catholicism in March 1934 (as did his wife Harriet), fervently embracing its creed and obligations.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Elgee, *Early Man in North-East Yorkshire*. Gloucester: John Bellows, 1930, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> Elgee, *Moorlands of North-Eastern Yorkshire*, p.37.

<sup>9</sup> Harriet Wragg Elgee, ‘Per Ardua ad Astra,’ pp.268-69.

Whether or not there is a direct connection to be made here between failing health, intimations of mortality and the taking up of religion is another matter entirely. The later part of 1937 seems to have been a particularly difficult time for Elgee, who was sufficiently worried by repeated and severe chest infections to seek the opinion of his doctor. The prognosis was not good, and ‘his doctor ordered him south as a last resource,’ in the hope that a milder climate might prove beneficial.<sup>10</sup> Harriet resigned from the Dorman, and in February 1938 the couple moved from Guisborough to Alton, a small market town in Hampshire. It’s not immediately clear why Alton was chosen, but it was possibly connected to the presence of Dr Sir Henry Gauvain (1878-1945), a nationally well-known respiratory specialist and founder of the town’s Morland Hall private clinic.

Although the move went smoothly, severing the ties that bound him to his beloved moorland was psychologically very painful for Elgee, bringing in its wake deep regrets, melancholy, and the feeling that his life had lost relevance. Once settled, he seems to have withdrawn into his inner world, taking solace from his deeply-held religious convictions, and, when health allowed, to working on a never-to-be completed autobiography. Harriet, on the other hand, perhaps in order to distract herself from, and ease some of the tension of, Frank’s ever-more deteriorating condition, threw herself wholeheartedly into town life, becoming active with the Friends of the Curtis Museum, the NSPCC, the Townspeople’s Guild, and among the local Roman Catholic community.

The hoped for improvement in health never materialised, and Frank Elgee died at Alton on 7 August 1944. His funeral service took place four days later at St Mary’s RC church, followed by burial in the town’s Old Odiham Road New Cemetery.

Harriet continued to live in Alton until the late 1950s. In time, after what seems to have been something of a peripatetic existence, she finally settled in north Wales, where she died on 25 February 1972 at the age of ninety-one. Her remains were brought back to Alton for burial beside those of her husband.

### *The significance of Frank Elgee*

Frank Elgee’s labyrinth-like exploration of the North York Moors needs to be understood as parochial in the most expansive sense. Elgee was a localist of the very best kind: he came to know his chosen place closely, but that closeness, his deep knowledge and sense of place, his familiarity and connectedness, his rootedness, his situated knowledge, served to deepen rather than limit his vision.

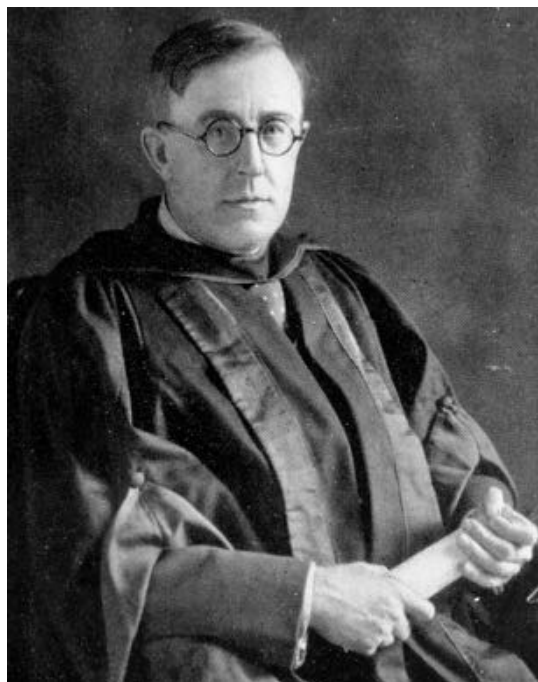
Driven by a deep investment in place, Elgee’s aim was to retrieve and preserve the echoes of lost moorland worlds and open a window on to the world. In doing so, he enhanced our view of the world and makes us feel that his task was an important act in an important place. He focused on the minute particularities of the local in order to expose within them traces of a greater world. Leaving aside subsequent increases in knowledge and the rise of ever-more disciplinary sub-divisions, no-one has yet come close to the achievements of Frank Elgee.

### *Acknowledgements*

My thanks are due to Louise Harrison, Access Officer (Curatorial) at the Dorman Museum, for providing material from the Frank Elgee archive collection held by the museum, extracts from which, © Middlesbrough Museums, are reproduced by kind permission. I would like also to thank Dr Malcolm Birtle and Jane Hurst for their particular assistance in various Elgee-related matters.

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<sup>10</sup> Harriet Wragg Elgee, ‘Per Ardua ad Astra,’ p.269.



Frank Watson Elgee, taken in 1933 at the time of receiving an honorary PhD from the University of Leeds for contributions to Yorkshire geology and archaeology  
(Source: *North Western Naturalist* 19, December 1944, Pl.12, opp. p.264)



Memorial to the memory of Frank Elgee on the North York Moors, erected 1953  
(Photograph: Stephen Harrison)



## Rievaulx Terrace: Naturalists' Rambles

*Tony and Moira Wardhaugh*

In May 2020 we were going to lead a Field Club walk at Rievaulx Terrace (SE5083) but this, of course, did not happen. Hopefully the walk can be rescheduled for a future date but meanwhile what follows are a few notes on what might be seen there at various times of year.

Rievaulx Terrace is primarily a winding ribbon-like lawn which runs along the top of a west-facing escarpment for about half a mile, flanked by a sloping meadow on the edge of the scarp. From here there are glorious views down to Rievaulx Abbey and across to Ashberry Wood and the Rye valley. To the east, the terrace is backed by woodland, partly youthful Beech and Ash, partly a variety of more mature trees and among these several dark, crumbling stumps, the last remains of long gone giants.



**Rievaulx Abbey viewed from the Terrace, October**



### **Rievaulx Terrace, northward view, October**

Rievaulx Terrace was conceived and landscaped in 1785 by Thomas Duncombe III of nearby Duncombe Park. The intention may have been to connect it via a scenic carriageway to a similar terrace near to the house on the Duncombe estate but this plan never came to fruition. Since 1972 the Terrace has been in the care of the National Trust and is normally open to the public daily from approximately February to October. It is perhaps best known for its twin follies, the Tuscan Temple at the south end and the Ionic Temple at the north. In the 18th century the latter was used as a banqueting hall and it is open and laid out in this style at present, with a lower floor given over to displays describing the wildlife and landscape history of the Terrace.

Beginning from the site entrance at the north end, a visit might begin with a stroll along the edge of the lawn, beside the meadow. March brings Early Dog Violets into flower, the two upper petals of each flower reminiscent of lilac rabbit's ears (this is a feature that Ian Lawrence would point out to those of us trying to learn the difference between this and the Common Dog Violet). In recent years during March it has been possible to find numerous Tawny Owl pellets on the lawn by the edge of the Tuscan Temple, suggesting that a bird habitually roosts here early in the year. Later in spring the tall magenta blooms of Early Purple Orchids appear, along with Primroses, Cowslips and their hybrids the False Oxlip, seemingly in endless variations on the two parental themes. At this time of year it is hard to miss the bustle and commotion of the large rookery near the south end of the Terrace.



**Early Purple Orchids with a view down to Rievaulx Abbey, May**



**Wood Forget-me-Not**



**False Oxlips**

July brings the bright yellow foam of Lady's Bedstraw, Common Spotted Orchids, Pignut, Betony, Hoary Plantain, Rockrose and that icon of summer days, the Harebell. On sunny days butterflies can appear in abundance; Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Brimstone, Common Blue, Painted Lady, Peacock, Small Skipper and others. These accompanied by a variety of bees, beetles and bugs.



**Brimstone**



**Painted Lady**



**Peacock**

Sitting on the grass by the upper edge of the meadow (with the benefit of a picnic) there is a panoramic tree-top view of Terrace Bank Wood sloping away below. This often provides a bird's-eye view of House Martins skimming over the wood, occasionally playing 'catch it and drop it and catch it again' with a small feather. Excellent eye-level views of Nuthatches, Great Spotted Woodpeckers and other tree canopy birds can also be had from here. Looking down into the wood on quiet days Roe Deer are occasionally glimpsed whilst among other mammals present quite tame Rabbits produce scratchings at the upper edge of the meadow and a seeming army of Moles are forever making their presence felt by throwing up hills on the lawn; it is not too unusual to witness earth being moved here and more than once we have seen a pink nose appear above the soil surface. Careful inspection of the molehills, and especially the rabbit scratchings, can reveal the empty shells of a number of minute subterranean snails, most notably perhaps the Blind Snail (*Cecilioides acicula*). With a shell just 5mm tall, and eyeless as its name suggests, it feeds on fungal hyphae. It has been found up to 2m below the surface and apparently one of its favoured habitats is among long interred bones!



*Cecilioides acicula*

In the woodland forming a backdrop to the Terrace a succession of flowers begins with Snowdrops. Then much Dog's Mercury appears, a poisonous plant traditionally associated with malevolent spirits, one of its local names being the Boggart Posy. Others present are Wild Arum, Woodruff, Wood Speedwell and Goldilocks.



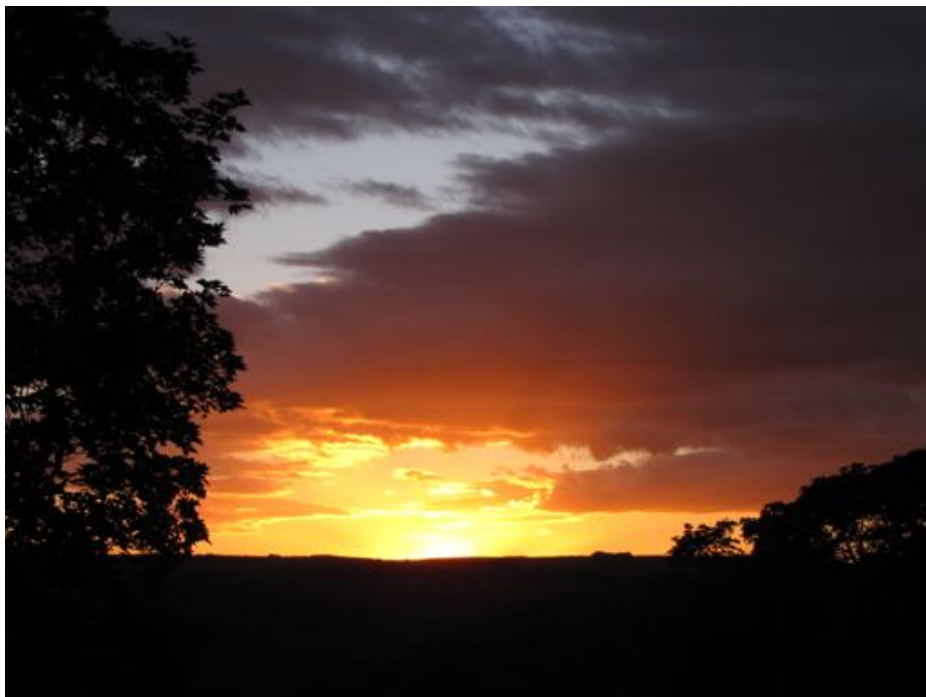
**Rievaulx Terrace Wood, March**

Here, during the warmer times of year, the trunks of Ash, Beech and Sycamore are a reliable place to see several snail species, these often present in very large numbers. Of particular interest is the Lesser Bulin which is blessed with the scientific name *Merdigera obscura* meaning the 'hidden excrement-bearer' so named because the snail often covers its shell with soil particles, tiny fragments of lichen or *Pleurococcus* (the microscopic green 'dust', an alga, that is so often abundant on tree trunks). Why does it do this? To our eyes it makes quite effective visual camouflage but from what predator is it trying to hide? Is it a bird such as the Treecreeper or is it instead a means of avoiding tactile or chemical detection by nocturnal predators such as certain snail-eating beetles? The answer seems to be quite unknown.



**Lesser Bulin (*Merdigera obscura*)**

On 21st June 2018, as a special one-off event, Rievaulx Terrace was open until dusk for the summer solstice. Views of the setting sun over the Rye Valley were truly spectacular.





## From Snow to Snowdrops

*Moira and Tony Wardhaugh*

We are all used to melting snow being followed by a profusion of spring flowers but does it usually happen quite so quickly?



Our very handsome snowman, built in the back garden on the 10th February, melted with indecent haste to be followed a week later by a garden full of snowdrops, in flower, looking at their best. Yes, before the snow arrived, the snowdrops had been visible above ground as 2 inch spikes of green, promising flowers to come but we did not expect them to come so quickly.



And not only snowdrops in flower but hellebores, daffodils, crocuses and winter aconites; there is even a pink rhododendron joining the throng.

From snow to snowdrops in record time?





## CLEVELAND NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

### NEWSLETTER - MAY 2020

Who would have ever thought that instead of our usual outings we would have to make do with a newsletter to keep in touch. In these difficult times, having to keep close to home, we are actually finding a lot of natural history on our doorsteps as the following records testify. As the weeks go on please do keep sending photographs or items of interest so that we can share our summer finds until we can resume normal service! Until then all take care and stay fit and healthy. Thank you to everyone who has sent snippets of information and photographs so far. I'll do another newsletter in the summer.

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**Vic and Eileen Fairbrother** had a sparrowhawk feeding in their garden.



I was interested to view so clearly how the female blackcap has such a rich brown (ginger - coloured) cap, while the male has the well-known black one. I'm afraid this bird flew, fairly gently, I'm pleased to say, into our window. I approached very quietly from behind, and took the picture from a distance (on my I-pad), then crept away, and it soon flew off.

**Norma Pagdin**



Natural history mainly from the garden where the most exciting sightings this month were Holly Blues, a female Brimstone, Orange Tips and two Willow Warblers.

Just to let you know, we went up to Cooke's Monument the other day and saw 4 Green Hairstreaks, and Swifts back in village.

**Ruth and Peter Waterton**

## Lockdown life in Darlington

Since setting up a new bird table, we've also attracted some more garden birds, including blue tits, great tits and the occasional coal tit. We've also seen a fair bit more of our local dunnock, although the robins don't seem to take very well to his presence.

Although regular visitors when we lived near the railway station, starlings are not a very common sight where we live now. Until recently, that is. I know that a group of starlings is known as a murmuration, but the dozen or so that have just discovered that we put out food out in the back garden could more properly be termed a street gang. The blackbird tried to dissuade the early scouts at first by making some aggressive low runs at them with his beak clicking furiously. He might just as well have saved his energy as they seemed to know it was all bluff and bluster. They now come along in numbers, every half an hour or so, to do a smash and grab raid by picking up vast quantities of meal worms in their beaks, so they obviously have some hungry broods somewhere. I suspect they're nesting in the church on Woodland Road, which is only a few hundred yards away as the starling flies.

We also have other town visitors, including wood pigeons, magpies, jackdaws and, often late in the evening for some reason, a collared dove as well. We do our best to shoo away the magpies and jackdaws as the other birds do not like them at all. Unfortunately though, their persistence beats our bird scaring arm waving antics. The wood pigeons can be quite amusing, especially when two try to fit onto the same small feeding tray at the same time to get at the fat pellets. Also funny was when a starling was trying to get one of them to shift once by jumping up and down on his back. I don't think the wood pigeon even realised he was there.

Our local squirrel appears quite regularly as well. How he remembers where he buried all those peanuts in our lawn last year amazes me.

We have been very short on bumblebees in the garden so far this year. The cotoneaster is just starting to flower and the catmint shouldn't be far behind, so we hope to see many more soon.

That's all from Darlington SpringWatch for now! Not very exciting stuff but it keeps us entertained during the lockdown.

**Neil Baker**

Saw nice green  
hairstreak  
butterflies on my  
last 2 walks on the  
moors--and for the  
first time over my  
garden-----a red  
kite!

**Alan Simkins**



I set up a simple hide in the garden using a camouflage net over the pergola so that I could practice photographing the birds. I thought it was a good way to start the day since I can't go very far. So with camera and a cuppa I spend the first hour seeing what visits the bird feeders. The Ring-necked parakeet was a surprise. I have been trying to get birds in flight but I'm not doing very well with that! Its either a bit of tail flying out of the shot or a blurry head flying into it. Hey ho! I'll keep trying. The squirrel was running along the fence carrying a rather large baby! I believe they do change their 'nests' occasionally.

**Jo Scott**



I thought you might like to know that I have updated my article on the Field Club website about the ancient semi-natural woodlands of coastal north-east Yorkshire (originally done in 2015). I have updated the information, clarified some points, added a few new images and also captions for all images (these got missed off the original version).

[http://barlow.me.uk/clevelandnats/Gills%20and%20Becks%20\(2\).pdf](http://barlow.me.uk/clevelandnats/Gills%20and%20Becks%20(2).pdf)

**Tony Wardhaugh**

## A Book Review

Over the years I have acquired a number of Natural History books - many of which, I am ashamed to say, have remained un-read, at least by me. I suppose it's the same old excuse that I have somehow just never found time to explore the latent promise of their pages.

Well, with plenty of time on my hands during the current enforced isolation I decided to dust off my book shelves. Which, to be honest, really means cramming even more books onto the shelves in some kind of esoterically pleasing order! While examining each book in turn I re-discovered some of the unread potential gems in my collection. Suitably invigorated I chose :-

"The Beauty in the Beast" by Hugh Warwick the Author of "A prickly Affair: The Charm of the Hedgehog". Publisher: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 978-0-85720-395-3 and what a delightful read it was.

He is a 43 year old Ecologist and writer who has studied Hedgehogs for 25 years and about to get his 1st tattoo. Why? He was taking part in a project called Extlnked. An artist called Jai Redman drew pictures of 100 species from the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan and wanted 100 volunteers willing to become ambassadors and to show their commitment by getting a tattoo. However after getting the tattoo of a Hedgehog he wanted to show further commitment to the cause by having the image of another animal tattooed on the other side of his leg. But being unable to decide upon which of the other 99 species in the project to champion he chose 15 potential candidates and went in search of their individual champions with the aim of seeing if one of them, by their passion for "their species" could persuade him to get the other tattoo.

This book is about Hugh's personal journey to meet each of the 15 candidate Ambassadors. These are all lovely, heartwarming stories of obsessive, passionate and often eccentric people and their love and devotion to the natural world.



One particular story relates to our own J Denis Summers-Smith and his love of House Sparrows. In an interview, held in Guisborough, Hugh learned about Denis' fascinating personal history and his phenomenal personal commitment to this "Little Brown Job"! What a story he has to tell.

Should anyone wish to read it - I can post it or bring it to the next outing/meeting whenever that will be. Stay safe and well.

My email is [doptix@virginmedia.com](mailto:doptix@virginmedia.com)

Daphne Aplin



I have seen quite a few butterflies , mainly orange tips and peacocks. We still feed the birds and have tree sparrows nesting in a box. I suspect that some starlings are in our roof because there are still a lot of them visiting the feeders in their usual noisy fashion.

We haven't had as many walks as we should but I'm usually looking at the botany. So far - greater stitchwort, crosswort, bugle, ladies smock, cow parsley, dandelion, daisies, ground ivy etc. My time has been mostly spent in the allotment and greenhouse which are just across the road luckily.



**Maggie and Graeme Boyd**

**Mark Stokeld** has sent some beautiful photographs taken on his daily exercise.



**Black caps**



**Chiff chaff**





Digger Wasp



Orange tip Butterfly



Short eared Owl



Speckled Wood Butterfly



Whitethroat

Tony and Moira Wardhaugh sent the following photographs from their own garden.



Wood anemone, which flowers in places where we are sure we have not planted it (19.03.2020).



Robin. Follows us around the garden asking to be fed, favourite food is finely broken up suet pellets (19.03.2020)



*Trillium chloropetalum* in flower (15.04.2020)



*Trillium rivale* in flower (15.04.2020)



Starling in the sunshine  
(20.04.2020)



Blue tit's bath-time (09.05.2020)

These are from the edge of a farm field, currently left fallow, in the Marton area (NZ5232.16403):



There are two oak saplings in this area each bearing several apple galls. On two of the galls we saw this spectacular little parasitoid wasp, *Torymus* sp. (04.05.2020).



May blossom. We'd never noticed how much the anthers change colour as they shed their pollen (04.05.2020)



# CLEVELAND NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

## NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2020

I hope you are all keeping well and are able to take advantage of the release in the lockdown rules. It was unfortunate that the government announced we could meet up with a few socially distanced friends outside and the weather changed! Nature is still getting on with things and there is plenty to see if you find areas that are not too busy. We still don't know what will happen later in the year but I'm staying hopeful that we may get together outside before the end of summer even if we have to stay distant. Thank you to everyone who has sent a contribution to the newsletter. I'll do another one in August so please send a contribution to that too. Thank you.

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### **Glebe Meadow**

Back in the days when Nats' biggest task was to set up the 2020 programme of events for the members, we proposed a trip to Glebe Meadow near Leyburn (SE 568 845). It is a 3-ha sloping field which has been in the care of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust since 1983 and its proper name is Leyburn Old Glebe. The date we set was 20 May as this should catch the green winged orchids and maybe the start of the burnt tip orchids which are at their best in June. All arrangements were in vain due to Covid.

However, the week before our trip was due, permission was given for people to drive any distance as long as they did not stay away overnight and only in the company of their normal household. We took advantage of this by going on our planned trip, sadly on our own. We did miss the company of other Nats members.



Leyburn Old Glebe is a traditional calcareous hay meadow and is a fragment of Ellershaw, a district well known to naturalists since the 19thC. The field was never ploughed or reseeded and continues to be managed as a traditional hay meadow.

The green winged orchids were a little past their best and we failed to find the burnt tips. It is possible that they have diminished. Apparently only 3 were found last year. The damp patch of ground where we have seen them previously was extremely dry but so was the rest of the field. The river Ure, flowing along the valley, was very low.



We did see cowslips, the start of yellow rattle, a good population of salad burnet and at least 2 different plantains. Eleven species of grass have been recorded in this field but there was not a lot of growth on the grass and so they were not easy to pick out. Presumably this was due to the dry conditions.

A butterfly survey was taking place and although there were mainly white butterflies visible. a brimstone had just been spotted on the riverbank opposite.

The weather remained glorious all day and so it was a worthwhile trip. However, I am sure we would have made a lot more identifications if other members had been there. We will put the event on again for next year.

**Hazel and Mark Stokeld**

## WATCH OUT THERE ARE "ZOMBIES" ABOUT!

On the 20th May, again at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, I saw a Ladybird sitting motionless on a nettle leaf. Thinking it might be a Harlequin I looked more closely and realised it was a 7-spot with a big hole in its elytra and it was clutching what appeared to be a cocoon. On doing some research it appears that the Ladybird had actually been parasitised by a wasp, *Dinocampus coccinellae*. The wasp larva hatches after about a month and then makes a cocoon between the Ladybird's legs - and then emerges as a wasp 6-9 days later. Not knowing how long the cocoon had been made I waited...and waited but nothing happened. In a facebook post someone suggested the wasp had already emerged through the elytra. I wasn't convinced and, as it was 31st May by then, decided to part said Ladybird from its cocoon. Well - what a struggle! - it wasn't particularly enmeshed it was just holding on very tightly and even when parted it tried to grab the cocoon back! My next course of action was to email Prof. Helen Roy at CEH who I was told would be very interested. Helen's response:-

*"Thank you so much Daphne. Wonderful to hear from you. I find this parasitoid fascinating. It is *Dinocampus coccinellae*. I also note the ladybird had probably experienced attack by a bird too given the damage to the elytra. It has had a tough time. Most of the *Dinocampus* that have observed emerging from the adult ladybird do so through the rear. There are some fascinating studies on this wasp and I'd be happy to send you some links if of interest."*

I have noticed that there are some interesting videos on utube showing Ladybirds actually freeing themselves from cocoons and I did read that some Ladybirds actually survive this horrendous ordeal and actually get parasitised again!! Now that IS bad luck!!

I'm afraid this all ended very badly...Poor 7-spot died and I "lost" the cocoon!! It was late at night and I went into the garden to search for aphids to see if the Ladybird would feed and I noticed a moth - I rushed in and grabbed the nearest pot and YES you guessed it - the pot with the cocoon in. Aargh!!

**Daphne Aplin**



**Andy Ferguson** phoned to report having seen 75 species of bird on his walks during lock-down. Some of them are listed below:-

Flatts Lane to Eston Nab - Woodcock

Flatts Lane - Tree Creeper and Woodpecker nest building, Willow Tits

Guisborough woods and fields - Buzzard, Yellow Hammer, Wheatear, Green Woodpecker.

Portrack Marshes - Grasshopper Warbler and Sedge Warbler



Chiff chaff bath in the garden



Common Blues at South Gare.



House Martins collecting mud for nests, Little Ayton

**Ruth and Peter Waterton**

## South Gare Blast Pools .28<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Warm 17c clear S E Breeze .

The first Mothing session of the year at above location , I was joined by A Simkins and A Hardie .  
Started at 9.45 pm till 1 am .

The South East breeze alternated from Eastly to SE , but settled down to a light SE, becoming warmer during the Night .

One 160 w MBV bulb and one 15W Actinic bulb was used, suspended over a white sheet .

The main Influx of Moths started around 11.50 pm . 18 Species Recorded

70.222	Petrophorachlorosata	Brown Silver-line
49.269	Eucosmacampoliliana	a moth
73.138	Longalatedeselymi	Lyme Grass
73.273	Hada nana	Shears
73.097	Hoplodrinablanda	Rustic
73.158	Apameasordens	Rustic Shoulder-knot
73.07	Pyrrhia umbra	Bordered Sallow
63.016	Ananiafuscalis	a moth
70.054	Xanthorhoemontanata	Silver-ground Carpet
72.024	Phragmatobiafuliginosa	Ruby Tiger
73.174	Oligialatruncula	Tawny Marbled Minor
69.002	Smerinthusocellata	Eyed Hawk-moth
73.317	Agrotisexclamationis	Heart and Dart
72.031	Tyriajacobaeae	Cinnabar
73.325	Agrotis puta	Shuttle-shaped Dart
70.1	Colostygiaplectinataria	Green Carpet
3.002	Korscheltelluslupulina	Common Swift
69.017	Deilephilaporcellus	Small Elephant Hawk-moth



Eyed Hawk-moth-  
Smerinthus ocellata





Small Elephant Hawk-moth-  
*Deilephila porcellus*



#### ALDERWOOD WASP

On one of my walks at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park towards the end of May I noticed four female wasps ovipositing in an Alder tree trunk. On my return the next day there were 5 females ovipositing and this is a photo of two of them (not socially distancing you'll notice!)

I did a bit of research on the internet and decided they were *Xiphydria camelus* (Alderwood Wasp). There are 3 spp. of *Xiphydria*. *X. prolongata*, *X. longicollis* and *X. camelus* the host plant of which is given as Alder and Birch. I have since had these verified.

**Daphne Aplin**

## Orange Tip Butterfly



On 17<sup>th</sup> May I found several Orange-tip butterfly eggs on some garlic mustard and cuckoo flower growing in the the garden so I decided to keep a couple in jam jars to watch their development. Being cannabalistic I had to keep them separated. On 19<sup>th</sup> May the beautiful bright orange eggs hatched into tiny clear caterpillars. They soon grew, changing colour eventually to a lovely green with a silvery sheen and white line along their flanks. I photographed them on 23rd May and 3rd June. On 7th June one of them had turned into a chrysalis and the other was preparing to. They over-winter as a chrysalis.

Jo Scott



## Lockdown life in Darlington

It's been busy in the home office recently trying to keep up with work by remote connection to my office pc, still ticking over nicely and untouched by human hand for 12 weeks now. I haven't been out in the garden as much as I would have liked, but I'm still keeping entertained looking out of the kitchen window when I'm in there.

The starlings have done well. The parents have now shown their offspring where there are easy pickings. The most I've counted at any one time is 27, although it's difficult to be accurate the way they all constantly mill around each other. The good thing is the youngsters have got over their very noisy begging phase now and they're stuffing their own faces quite contentedly. The bad news is that some of the mature birds are still flying off with food in their beaks to feed young that we haven't seen yet. Whether they are just slow developers or if it's a second brood on the way, I don't know.

They certainly made a mess of the lawn during the very dry May. With no rain to wash all the guano in, our lawn was as white as if some very drunken linesman had tried to mark out a football pitch. The early June rain has corrected that to some extent but we wait to see if the treatment has been good or bad for the long term health of our grass.

Other welcome visitors we have had in the past month include long tailed tits, who pass through the bushes quite often but never stay long. We've also been pleased to see a few house sparrows. It sounds so ridiculous to say that when they were ten a penny when I was young, but now sadly they've become quite a rare sight in the middle of a town like Darlington. They're totally unfazed by the overwhelming presence of so many starlings and pile in among them to feed on the same mealworms with no sign of intimidation whatsoever. Cheeky little blighters! The other birds are a lot more cautious. We've also had a couple of song thrushes come into the garden and they now appear quite regularly, but show all due deference to the resident blackbirds.

One of our male blackbirds is getting to be quite a character. He sits on the watering can just outside the kitchen door and stares in at us when he's hungry and wants feeding. If the door is open, we'll often find he has hopped into the kitchen itself, as if to say come on and hurry up with the Wensleydale cheese with cranberries, I haven't got all day.

Blackbirds are strange creatures. Up to four of them can appear in the garden at the same time. Then, completely oblivious to everything else including food, they seem to spend all their time just chasing one another around. Once the dominant male has asserted himself and got his territory back to himself, he's often too late for the food as the other birds have eaten it all up. Evolution may eventually change their behaviour to feed first fight later, but there's no sign of it yet.

There have been more bumblebees in the garden, particularly when the weather was warm and sunny. Recently, with the cooler wet weather their numbers are noticeably down. So far this summer, there have been very few sightings of any butterflies. Some plants seem to have flowered and gone over with very few visitors. We have to hope that things will pick up in that department soon.

One of the highlights for me in the last month has been the sighting of a beautiful small moth flitting among the catmint flowers on a very hot and sunny day. In full sunlight its colours were magnificent, a lovely shining amber brown with large yellow spots on its wings. Just when you need Eric or Mark to ask what it is, they're in lockdown elsewhere. However, retreating to the nature library, I think I identified it correctly as a mint moth (*pyrausta aurata*). Many may not find this exciting at all but for me, being the first time I had seen one and in our own garden, I was very pleased.

**Neil Baker**

## Some super photographs from Mark Stokeld



Dingy Skipper - 02/05/20



Wood Ant - 10/05/20



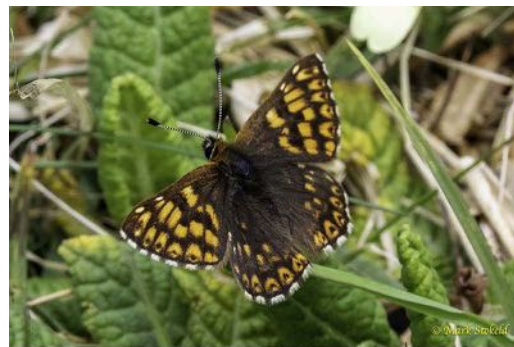
Whitethroat - 11/05/20



Willow Warbler - 13/05/20



Red Grouse with chick - 19/05/20



Duke of Burgundy Fritillary - 19/05/20



Song Thrush - 19/05/20



Swift - 22/05/20



## YORKSHIRE

From Yorkshire's Moors to Yorkshire's Wolds, o'er rolling hills or rocky folds.  
Coastal cliffs, carved, crumbling edges, with wheeling seabirds, windswept ledges.  
Ancient abbeys awaken history, crumbling castles of charm and mystery.  
Fir-clad forest, woodland glade, farmer's field, the patchwork's laid.  
River valleys in Yorkshire's dales, market towns and big sheep sales.  
Friendly folk in farm or hall make you welcome when you call.  
Colourful county with space to roam, we Yorkshire folk all call it home.



**Maureen Gendle**



## CLEVELAND NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

### NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2020

I hope you are all keeping well and have managed to enjoy something of the summer so far. The Committee is in contact with Marton Community Centre to see whether we will be able to meet safely indoors this winter. We will be in touch once we have done that. We have several members who have offered to do a talk if we can arrange a safe indoor meeting.

Our members have been busy out and about and have sent some lovely articles and photographs for this newsletter. Please keep them coming as I will do another newsletter in the autumn.

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#### **Waders from South Gare To Redcar Rocks . P.W.Forster 2020**

Dunlins *Calidris alpina* arrive at Redcar Scars around Mid August along with other wintering waders such as Sandling *Calidris alba*, Bar-Tailed Godwits, *Limosa limosa* and Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*, which tend to arrive early November. Good Numbers of Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* and Red Knot *Calidris canutus* can also be seen in good numbers.

All waders are mostly approachable and afford great opportunity to observe feeding behaviour as well as plumage maintenance in the form of bathing.

This year has been particularly good to observe and photograph the Waders, in particular the high Arctic waders as they change into Summer Breeding Plumage.

The Basin at the south gare has been very good this year especially at high tide allowing close proximity for photography, this was probably due to the lack of disturbance owing to the Pandemic and the lack of dog walkers.



**Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Adult Winter Plumage 23-02-20 Redcar Scars**



**Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Adult Male Breeding , Race schinzii**

**10-05-20 South Gare Basin**



Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Female Breeding Race schinzzii 11-05-20 South Gare Basin



Sandling *Calidris alba* winter plumage 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 Redcar Scars



Sandling *Calidris alba* Juvenile 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 Redcar Scars



Sandling *Calidris alba* Breeding Plumage 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 South Gare Basin

The wintering waders on Redcar Scars have been a regular occurrence for as long as I can remember and looking through my field notes of 50 plus years it seems that the numbers remain healthy, with some years better than others. The Main flocks tended to feed from Redcar Scars to the South Gare Basin and visa versa with the Scars being the most concentrated area. I have observed on early mornings, flocks feeding on the tide line between these two points, but only in small numbers. The area around Coatham Rocks towards the beginning of Redcar Flashes have very few birds, This is probably due to this being very busy, especially with `dog walkers`.

### Dunlin and Sandling at South Gare Basin Roost .May 2020



### Sandling 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 ` Dawn Flight ` South Gare `





## Bishops Wood - Selby - Jo Scott

Mark and Hazel were on the Programme to lead a walk around Bishops Wood on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July. They decided to go themselves and Eric and Maureen Gendle and I joined them to hunt for the Silver-washed Fritillary butterfly. The morning was very dull with drizzly rain as we walked the 'circuit' of the woods. Lunch back at the cars was dismal but being the hardy naturalists that we are we decided to do the 'circuit' again on the afternoon. Magic! The sun came out and so did the butterflies. Small and Essex skippers, comma, meadow brown, ringlet, peacock, and various whites were flying around and feeding on the creeping thistles and brambles. We had super views of the Silver-washed Fritillaries, 4 females and 1 male were posing nicely for photographs.



Female



Male

**Andy Ferguson** sent in photographs taken on his walks around the area. Dragonflies seen on Eston Moor, Common skimmer, Golden ringed dragonfly Damsel flies as well as a lizard and marsh cinquefoil. Wall brown butterfly taken on the Black path. Fungi taken near the Old Fan House in Wilton Woods where a Painted Lady Butterfly was also spotted. Fungi taken walking from Spencer Beck to Flats Lane. A young squirrel and queen bee were also seen.



## Neil Bakers account of life in Darlington

We're still spending a lot of time at home, but enjoying a few more trips out to the countryside now the lockdown has been eased a bit, although we still try and steer clear of weekends when there are more people about and it's harder to maintain social distancing easily. I find working at home difficult to do a full day's work as there are so many distractions and I don't have the self discipline to ignore them and crack on. Consequently, I find myself spreading three days work in the office over about four days at home. It's a nuisance, but at least it keeps my conscience clear when I collect the pay.

Our starlings still visit us, but not in the same numbers as before. I suspect this may be because the young ones are growing up more and exploring over a much wider area. We're not sorry to be sharing the pleasure of their company with others as they were costing us a small fortune in bird food.

Our blackbirds still stay loyal though. They don't go far. There are two juveniles who seem to hang around the garden all day, no longer begging food from their parents, but fending for themselves, and seemingly immune to their parents' apparent attempts by some half hearted chasing to persuade them to leave home and move on. There's clearly a second brood on the way from our main pair and also another younger pair who have also taken to calling around very often to see what's available in the way of food to carry back to the nests.

The male blackbird of this younger pair, a particularly handsome looking bird not showing any sign of wear and tear yet, is yet another character with his own peculiarities.

His trick, if the back door is open, is to land on top of it and duck his head down to look inside the kitchen and see if there's anything going. I'm sure he knows what the fridge is because, when we move towards it to get the ready prepared tub of crumbled bird cheese out, he gets all excited and starts running from side to side on top of the door. If we're a bit slow, he too will drop down into the kitchen and take a few impatient steps in. He knows what's going to happen next though because as soon as one of us moves to the door he takes up poll position ready for when we throw the cheese out onto the lawn. Our main blackbird must have got used to him by now as most of the time he just lets him get away with it. He does assert himself from time to time still, just to let the newcomer know who's boss and hops across to chase him off. The newcomer is a bit too quick and nimble for him though and always manages to get a beak full first.

The only problem with this arrangement is that we have venetian blinds on the inside of the door. I've had to attend to them a few times with a bucket and damp cloth. They've never been so clean for years. We have to be careful what we feed him. I'm not looking forward to when all the berries start to ripen.

I saw the old blackbird doing some good aerial acrobatics the other day when he flushed a moth out from among the rosemary and managed to catch it in mid air before flying off to cover to enjoy it in peace. I wasn't quick enough to identify what the moth was, which was a pity because it looked a good size pale brown one, fluttering madly to try and escape but with no chance from that vice like beak.

We've also been enjoying our other regular feathered visitors to the garden. We've had a few casualties, but it's hard to tell from what was left what they were. I've only seen him once but there is a sparrowhawk about. The one time I saw him he came like a bullet between the houses before banking sharp right to swoop over our back lawn. That was a failed attack though as I think he must have been put off by seeing me. All the birds took emergency evasive action and disappeared rapidly into the dense cover provided by the shrubs. However, I have had to clear away three lots of feathers, so the baby sparrowhawks aren't going hungry either.

The white buddleia that Eric gave us several years ago now is still doing very well and about to come out in full flower in another week or two. It's big now and helps screen us well from our neighbours. We're hoping for good weather as that never fails to attract a number of different butterflies. We had a bare patch appear in the garden recently when one of our old shrubs died off. We've taken it out and replaced it with a couple of orange ball buddleia from a garden centre. We were attracted to these as, even though still very small, they were themselves attracting plenty of small tortoiseshells to their sunny corner in the centre. We hope they will do as well for us in their new home when they mature.

While preparing the spot for these new plants, a frog came hopping out onto the lawn from under his cover. After taking a look at us to admonish us for disturbing him, he hopped back under dense cover up an untended end of the garden. That give me an excellent excuse not to have to do any work at that end for a while yet. Our neighbours out the back have a pond, we don't, so that must be where he came from. No doubt he'll make his way back there when the water calls him once more.

We've started seeing the pipistrelle bats flitting around our back garden to feed at dusk again. They seem to like our garden, probably because it's a lot less immaculate than most others so serves better as a good hunting ground for night flying insects. I dare say they have been coming for some while but the evenings have been too light for well after my bed time. As I'm getting older I find I'm sleeping more and more like a baby, especially when I don't get the chance for a quick nap sometime during the day. Probably not helped by getting up several times during the night to visit the loo. That's old age for you!

I must say that getting out into the countryside again has been most enjoyable and it makes you realise how much you missed it through lockdown. Our most recent excursion was along the Tees Valley Rail Trail from Cotherstone to Romaldkirk. It was a lovely sunny day and I've got the burnt forehead to prove it. What was particularly noticeable was passing loads of meadow browns along one stretch which suddenly changed into loads of ringlets along another stretch, with no apparent overlap between the populations. The habitat looked identical but there must be some explanation for this butterfly apartheid. I'll pay closer attention the next time I do that walk to see if I can figure out why it should be so.

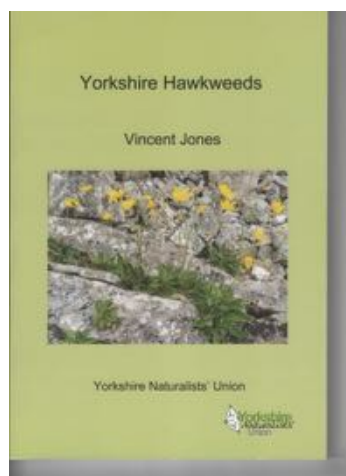
Best wishes

Neil

I think most of you will know that since Vic Fairbrother wrote this article Vince Jones has died peacefully so this is a lovely tribute to a valuable piece of work that Vince did. Jo.

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I was to have given a short presentation on Members' night concerning a remarkable achievement by one of our members.



Most of you will remember that Vincent Jones is the author of *Yorkshire Hawkweeds*, published by the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union in 2014.

Jo Scott our President provided vital assistance by typing the text from Vincent's manuscript and in preparing it for publication.

Some of you will have copies and may also be aware that Vincent already has the distinction of having identified a species new to science *Hieracium jonesianum*.

During the course of his 30-year study, a number of other taxa were found which did not fit existing *Hieracium* species described in the standard British *Hieracium* monograph by Sell & Murrell (2006), and there are references to such plants in his account.

Vincent is now in a Care Home and sadly no longer able to continue his work but his mentor David McCosh, together with Brian Burrow, who provided Vincent with numerous records from West Yorkshire and David Barlow, Vincent's Joint Vice- County Recorder have continued to work on the specimens in his *Hieracium* collection which is now deposited in Leeds Museum.

They have now been able to publish three new species on his behalf and under his name in the February issue of *British & Irish Botany* 2 (1): 56-63 2020. Published by Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland (BSBI).

**“Three new species of hawkweed are described in *Hieracium* section *Stelligera* from Northern England, based on the herbarium collection of Vincent Jones; *Hieracium laciniifolium* V. Jones, *Hieracium obovatifolium* V. Jones and *Hieracium pseudosubcyaneum* V. Jones.”**

D. J. McCosh, Holt, Norfolk, D. Barlow, Cleveland, B. Burrow, Lancaster, & corresponding author T. C. G. Rich, Cardiff.



*Hieracium laciniifolium* V. Jones: Laciniate-leaved hawkweed.



*Hieracium obovatifolium* V. Jones: Obovate-leaved hawkweed.



*Hieracium pseudosubcyaneum* V. Jones :False porrect-bracted hawkweed.

Full details of the article can be seen on the BSBI website.

This is a truly outstanding achievement by Vincent and a testament to his many years of dedicated fieldwork.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the authors comment that further work will be required to assess whether other taxa Vincent mentions also merit naming as new species.

**Vic. Fairbrother.**



## BUTTERFLIES

Meadow browns and Common blues, butterflies of many hues;  
 Green hairstreak, Marbled white, Clouded yellow in frenzied flight.  
 Patterned, painted, with wondrous wings, Swallowtail or Peacock's rings.  
 Queens and Dukes in royal array, Admirals and Skippers along the way.  
 Veined and varied, flimsy, fair, fluttering, floating, everywhere....  
 Field and forest, meadow, moor, perfumed plants of rich or poor.  
 Summer scenes surveyed by all who love God's creatures great and small.



Queen of Spain



Duke of Burgundy



Fritillaries



Maureen Gendle

Peter Waterton sent some super photographs taken from his garden.



Wool carder bee



Wool carder bees mating



Kestrel flying over the house



Peregrine over garden 31.7.20



Peregrine flying over the garden

Eric Gendle spotted this ferocious looking larvae of the Harlequin Ladybird.





### BARKLOUSE?

Can anyone help with this please? I was wondering if anyone has seen one of these before? I found it on a Beech tree at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park on 8 June. I believe it to be a female approx 5mm in size and comes from the Psocoptera family. The only mention I can find is *Mesopsocus immunis* which I understand is on Alder. It was a little devil to catch as it moves remarkably quickly - racing round the tree trunk! Fascinating and very striking in appearance. Any help gladly received. Thanks.

Daphne Aplin

### Some more lovely photographs from Mark Stokeld



Avocets 03-07-2020

Dark Red Helleborine

30-06-2020



Spoonbill 19-06-2020





Marbled White Butterfly 07-07-2020



Red-backed Shrike 09-06-2020



Bee Orchid 30-06-2020



Northern Brown Argus 02-06.2020



Reed Warbler 29-05-2020



Common Rockrose 17-06-2020



## CLEVELAND NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

### NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2020

I hope you are all staying safe. This year seems to have passed very quickly and here we are in autumn! There is lots to see, beautiful autumn colours and interesting fungi and migrant birds to look out for if local lock-down measures allow us to get out.

Members have been out and about over the summer and once again have sent some interesting items for this newsletter. It looks like the Newsletter will be our main form of communication for the rest of the winter season so please keep sending photos, article and bits of gossip and I'll produce another Newsletter at the end of the year.

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#### **Beetles that use their toilet as camouflage! - Daphne Aplin**

I don't know whether it's my imagination or whether it's because I have spent more time in Nettle and Thistle patches this year but I'm sure I have seen more Tortoise Beetle larvae. I believe most of these are Thistle Tortoise Beetles *Cassida rubiginosa* and what fascinating creatures they are. The Adults are green and, although not very closely related, look rather like Ladybirds but are more flattened resembling Turtles and Tortoises (hence the name I presume). The larvae (pictured) are green grubs with spikey edges which, apart from acting as some defence, helps to break up their shadow on the green leaves they graze on. They also have two tail spikes which they use to attach their old cast off skins (4 to become an adult) and faecal matter. The most amazing thing is that they can hold these spikes over their bodies rather like an umbrella which they use as camouflage when they feel threatened. They can also swing them like a club to frighten or dislodge any predator.



#### **Staring at Walls - Malcolm Birtle**

10, Avon Grove, Billingham, Co. Durham. TS22 5BH

[m\\_birtle@hotmail.com](mailto:m_birtle@hotmail.com)

6/10/2020

Beginning in May of this year I received some emails from Jill Cunningham in Darlington describing the activities of some insects on her garden walls. By coincidence, I was also spending a significant amount of time staring at a wall of my house watching similar activity. This has been a year of

staring at things and places I would normally ignore. I hope the reasons for this do not need explanation. If, dear reader, you are perusing this article at some time in the unknowable future I will leave it to your research skills to determine what I am talking about.

Jill and I had noticed insects investigating and using holes in brick walls. Jill described small black wasps, a large ichneumon, solitary bees and at least one species of Ruby wasp. At first, I only noticed solitary bees investigating holes in brickwork of my house that faces directly South and is bathed in sunlight all day from about 10.00am from the beginning of April to September. Jill constructed and installed a 'Bee Hotel' consisting of cut canes in a plastic bottle base against her wall. This inspired me to install an old 'Bee Hotel' attached to some board against the wall to see if it encouraged more activity. In my situation this led to the appearance of insects similar to that described by Jill in her email. The small black wasps seemed to be attracted to a flowering *Coenanthus* adjacent to the wall in my garden. This led to me think they were bees in the genus *Hylaeus* (Masked Bees) which I had seen in previous years. However, on examination, they were clearly wasps. They took a great deal of interest in the 'Bee Hotel' which consisted mainly of short lengths of cut garden canes.

Jill made a fairly confident identification of *Trypoxylon figulus*agg, Black Wood Borer Wasp using her 'Bee Hotel'. Jill also recorded the wasp *Sapyraquinque punctata*



*Trypoxylon figulus*agg,

Darlington



*Sapyraquinque punctata*

My black wasps seemed to be *Spilomena* sp. which are subject to significant debate over the various species. This seemed to be classic case where naming the organism to species is not something to obsess about. There seems to be no consensus about species demarcation and I am content with *Spilomena* sp.. *Spilomenids* predate nymphs of Thrips (Thunder Flies) and nest in wood borings and hollow stems of plants. About the same time *Spilomena* appeared at my wall so did a large ichneumon wasp. Unfortunately, it did not remain long enough in my garden to obtain an image or identification. However it was notable by its very long ovipositor. Jill identified her large ichneumon as *Gasteruption jaculator*.



*Gasteruption jaculator*, Darlington

Next, well into May and into June, a Ruby Tailed Wasp appeared in both our situations. Mine showed considerable interest in the 'Bee Hotel' and investigated all the canes over a number of days. Jill identified her Ruby Tail as *Chrysisignita*.



*Chrysisignita*, Darlington



Ruby Tailed Wasp, Billingham

Jill also recorded Leaf cutter Bee (*Megachile* sp.) activity. I have also noted Leaf Cutter activity in my garden but not associated with the wall. One cane in my 'Bee Hotel' was used and sealed by a Mining Bee (*Andrena* sp.).



Bee Hotel Darlington



It is interesting to note the similar mix of organisms albeit of different species in the same situation in different gardens.

Confinement to home and garden has revealed things of great interest. There are worse ways to spend a life (supplied with alcohol and food) watching the behaviour of insects in a sun baked situation. Hymenopteran insects in particular exhibit at least as much complex behaviour as any bird, butterfly or dragonfly. If this article has not convinced you read the works of Jean-Henri Casimir Fabre. If you have time, read about his life for inspiration on how to make the most of a life under constraints. Free copies of his works can be found easily on the internet.

### A Small Influx of Vapourer (*Orgyiaantiqua*)

In the days around 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020 a small influx of Vapourer (*Orgyiaantiqua*) moth larvae appeared round my house in Billingham. The first specimen was noted in a car. Specimens then started appearing in various places in the garden and around the outside of the house



## Cinnamon Bug - P.W Forster & J Forster

On the 19-09-20 at 45 St Margaret's way Brotton East Cleveland TS12 2UA my wife, J Forster came across this brightly coloured bug on a Hydrangea leaf in the Garden area of the building.

Further inspection identified this as one of the 'RhopalidBugs'. Cinnamon Bug *Coizushyoscyami*. ('Insects of Britain & Ireland Paul D Brock ').

This species was associated to the coasts of Southern Britain, but has now spread inland throughout England and Wales as far North as Yorkshire. Looking at NBN website the only record is for South East Yorkshire on 04-09-2016 at Burton Agnes hall VC61, as far as I can ascertain no records exist for VC 62 According to the NBA website.

The food plant is variable. The adult overwinters with new generations appearing in August and September. The Adult is 9mm. Nymphs are yellow, red brown in colour and hairy.



## A selection of moths taken at Eastfield Farm near Nunthorpe - Eric Gendle

I have permission to trap in a woodland on Eastfield Farm. The woodland is quite small, but has a good mix of native species. It is not an ancient woodland, no trunks more than about 12 inches in diameter, mostly 6 to 9 inches.

Canary shouldered Thorn



Gold Spot



Large Emerald



Old Lady



Lesser Swallow Prominent



Poplar Hawk Moth



Green Silver Lines



Rosy Rustic



Red Green Carpet



### An Unexpected Find - Jo Scott

I spotted this lovely little fungus when I was clearing the front flower border, cutting back some Phlox. Tiny cups growing along the lower part of the rotting stems. Identified as *Hymenoscyphus scutula*.

(Ascomycetes in Colour-Peter I Thompson).



1 septate spores 24 x 3.5µ in size.

## A Visit to Cod Beck - Osmotherley - Hazel Stokeld. (photos Mark Stokeld)

To lift our spirits and keep in touch with the outdoors, 5 of us went to Cow Green Reservoir. (prior to the latest constraints and following social distancing).

We parked in the main (larger) car park which was fairly busy at 10.00 am as the weather was fine and set off to walk round the reservoir. A one way system is in operation to help keep everyone social distanced. We followed the path at the far side of the reservoir as directed. At the far end we took the uphill path to the left and went through the wood taking the 'T' junction at the top of the hill and a small path to the right. By now there were not many people around but we saw a reasonable amount of the expected butterflies - small tortoiseshell and various whites.

Our best views were the fungi like 'The Blusher', a large group of large Fly Agaric, Sulphur Tuft and Candle Snuff (see photos).

A word of warning for anyone going here. Along the roadside are signs warning of fines for vehicles parked on the verges. Ignore them at your peril. As Mark and I left the area a traffic warden was busy sticking penalty notices on windcreens of the cars parked on the verge.



The Blusher



What a surprise when I checked the trail camera in the garden to find 2 hedgehogs and a fox together! They did not seem to mind each other.

**Jo Scott**

Some more lovely photographs from **Peter Waterton**



Male Blackcap - Garden



Female Blackcap - garden



Male Crossbill - Coatmoor



Migrant Hawker

## NO LOCKDOWN FOR RING OUZELS.

To my enormous relief *The Ring Ouzel: A View from the North York Moors* has finally been published and I would like to thank members for their interest, support and encouragement over many years. A special thank you goes to the members who kindly gave me permission to use some of their Ring Ouzel photographs.

Although our intensive study had ended, we had hoped to continue to maintain a general overview of the Ring Ouzel's foothold on the North Nork Moors again this year.

An early indication of problems ahead came when the annual meeting of the UK Ring Ouzel Study Group in Penrith on 21 March was cancelled in view of the imminent pandemic lockdown. Shortly afterwards, the BTO and RSPB suspended all survey work, nest monitoring and bird ringing and it became clear that our own observations were also going to be severely affected.

Although our ability to monitor them this year was severely disrupted, this remarkable bird's annual struggle for survival has continued on our doorstep. These are some of the highlights.





It was sunny with a cold wind in Rosedale on 21 March and with travel about to be severely curtailed, it was cheering to watch Curlews and Lapwings back on their upland breeding grounds but even more special was the sight of two Wheatears which are often the first migrants to arrive back in the dale. Sudden chacking at Nab Scar then revealed the exciting sight of the first Ring Ouzel of the year to return to Rosedale from North Africa.



As more ouzels gradually returned to local sites, small groups of ouzels some presumed to be passage birds were also reported from a number of locations during much of April.

With restrictions still at a high-level, the permitted daily exercise walks did though provide a real treat on 29 April, when a female Ring Ouzel was observed gathering nesting material at Sturdy Bank and taking it to a suspected nest site whilst the male was singing nearby. A week later, the female flew into this suspected nest site where she remained and was presumed to be sitting on eggs.

During the next few weeks, territorial behaviour by two more pairs of ouzels was also reported from Reeking Gill and Reeking Gill South and with the easing of restrictions in mid-May, slightly more detailed monitoring was enabled.



An increasingly rare sight and an experience to treasure occurred on 27 May, when a pair of Cuckoos flew in towards Reeking Gill, the male calling beautifully. When he came to the south end of the embankment a male ouzel promptly chased it away daleside. A few minutes later the male Cuckoo returned to land on a rock just inside the entrance to the gill. As walkers approached, he flew higher up the gill to land in the rowan tree opposite a

first brood nest site, at which the second male ouzel immediately chased it down and out of the gill.

Three days later two female ouzels were being closely watched at Reeking Gill. A male and at least two fledglings could be seen below the first brood nest site high on the NE side when one female flew up the gill and straight into a new and presumed second brood nest site, almost opposite the first brood nest site and close to where the Cuckoo had been evicted on 27<sup>th</sup>. To great surprise the second female then gave her nest site away by flying straight in to heather just outside the SE entrance of the gill and in the vicinity of the other Cuckoo altercation. The discovery of these new nest sites explained the agitated behaviour of the two male ouzels towards the Cuckoo a few days earlier. Later, the two male ouzels were heard counter-singing.

The welcome easing of restrictions eventually enabled eight nestlings to be fitted with BTO rings at Sturdy Bank and Reeking Gill. The three nests here and the one at Sturdy Bank all fledged young but a nest at Reeking Gill South was predated. Fledged young were also seen at Bank Top, Hob Crag

and Blakey on the west side of Rosedale, along with a number of rather inconclusive ouzel sightings. In view of the many constraints it is almost certain that other breeding attempts went undetected in the study area.



Ring Ouzels switch to eating berries as they prepare for migration and during our study, we had become concerned at the lack of regeneration among the scattered rowan trees in the study area.

The Ring Ouzel's remarkable link with the industrial heritage in Rosedale had been recognised during the Land of Iron project and we were delighted when as part of a number of bio-diversity initiatives a small-scale tree planting project was developed in an attempt to provide a sustainable supply of rowan berries.

It was a sunny day but with a strong chill breeze from the SW on 3 September when we decided to check how well the rowan tree planting was faring. There were widespread reports of good berry crops elsewhere and as we descended below the railway track and worked our way towards Blakey Swang from the south, we could see that the surviving mature rowan trees here were a splendid sight.



We then turned our attention to several small enclosures and scattered individual saplings carefully placed in the vicinity of mature trees along the steep escarpment. In some of the small enclosures we could see that numerous strong saplings had grown well above the tree guards. I pointed out a particularly healthy group in one of the highest enclosures and Ken looking through binoculars observed that one bore a small clump of berries.



At first, I thought that he was joking but the first fruits of the planter's efforts were there on display and I could not resist the impulse to climb the steep bank for a photo.

(with thanks to Ken and Rosedale's Updale Natural History Recorder).

**Vic Fairbrother**

## Nature Crimewatch UK

With lockdown having eased, which is increasingly looking like it may only be for a comparatively short period, it's been great to get out in the countryside again. We are still careful when we do so and just try to visit less popular places where we know we can maintain good social distancing. Unfortunately such places are few and far between, so the same few select places have become popular with us through necessity and we have seen a great deal more of them than we would do normally in a short time.

A number of years ago now, Malcolm Birtle gave our Club an excellent talk which he entitled 'A Naturalist's Notebook Extract'. That talk made a lasting impression on me and I have made a point of keeping my own notebook every year since. Here are some extracts from my entries for the last few months, which members may like to share.

I don't know if others agree but, with a few notable exceptions, we have found this year to be one of the poorest we have ever known for butterflies. On the other hand, we would nominate this year as that of the stoat and kestrel. Whether these observations are just because of where we have been walking or not, it's difficult to tell. Certainly with butterflies, it's not just been out in the countryside but in our garden as well that numbers seem to have been well down, so I'm inclined to attribute that more to the weather than location.

On Wednesday, 15/07 our garden was invaded by six or seven magpies that arrived all at once. I didn't get the chance to count them properly as I made a dive for the kitchen door to wave them off as they were upsetting the song birds. On reflection, I think it must have been seven. We haven't come into any gold so it can't have been six. A seven for a secret never to be told could mean anything, so I think I'd plump for that.

One memorable day on Friday, 24/07 we came across three stoats within no more than half a mile distance while walking around Blackton Reservoir. We saw the first one while we were sat quietly on top of a grassy bank eating our sandwiches. He clearly hadn't noticed us as he scampered up the steep bank from the water's edge. When he realised we were there he came to a sudden stop in total surprise within no more than six feet of us. He was up on his hind legs, in a classic meerkat like pose, staring at us while we just looked back at him for several long seconds. It was almost as if he suddenly came to his senses, realising that we both outnumbered him as well as being much bigger, before he turned tail and fled back the way he came.

As we walked on after our lunch, we soon happened across two more stoats, one after the other, but these were not such close encounters and they both made good their escape with plenty of time to spare. It was almost as if the first stoat couldn't believe his eyes and he got ahead of us on a couple of occasions for another look, but that can't have been the case, can it?

On virtually every trip we've made up to Teesdale this summer we've seen stoats, either darting across the road in front of the car or squeezing into impossibly small holes in stone walls as we approached on foot. So, most definitely a very good year for stoats, but we haven't seen so many rabbits as usual.

Saturday, 01/08 was an extremely hot day. We went out for a short afternoon walk in Newsham Woods by the side of the Tees. This was the one day this year when we saw plenty of butterflies. We counted 22 Peacocks nectaring on the few flowering teasels in one of the small open grassy areas. They made a lovely display of colour when gathered together closely as they were. In addition, we encountered about 40 Green Veined Whites, spread out quite well along the footpath by the side of the river. A short while later, walking along the field edge after leaving the woods we came across three Comma butterflies. It was good to see three together as we generally only happen upon them singly.

On the same day we stopped for our flask of tea on a grassy area of the levee embankment overlooking the river. It's a shame, but the footpath along the top of the levee has now given way to all sorts of plants and trees, so most of the time now you need to walk along the field edge at the bottom of the levee, the other side from the river. That walk is obviously not popular enough to ensure that walkers' boots keep the levee path clear. The sun was high and bright in the sky and it helped to make the two common brown hawkers going backwards and forwards along the river bank below us look really magnificent with their wings a beautiful iridescent bronze colour in the sunlight. They were both obviously on the lookout for any passing insects that came their way. There was an entertaining moment when a bit of thistle down blew past on the breeze. One of the dragonflies made an astonishing manoeuvre to expertly catch it in midair, only to spit it out in apparent disgust when he realised he'd caught the wrong thing.

I was cutting the back lawn on Monday, 24/08 when I could hear quite clearly, even over the noise of the mower motor, the excited sounds of a flock of long tailed tits. They were flitting among the bushes at the bottom of the garden. I took a rest from my mowing and retreated into the kitchen so as not to disturb them. There were nine of them in total, not a great number but hard to count accurately as they were so fast in their movements. The best view we had of them was when they came to the hanging fat ball feeders. It was amazing to see how many of them could hang on there all at the same time and feed together quite amicably without any bickering, unlike many of the other visitors to our garden. Unfortunately their visit was all too short before they moved on again to wherever it was they needed to go to next. That left with me with no excuse but to finish cutting the grass.

Sunday, 30/08 was a very pleasant day with almost no wind as we walked around Hury Reservoir. The surface of the reservoir was perfectly flat like a mill pond and providing some good reflections of the surrounding countryside. As we walked around the inlet where the underground water tunnel feeds into the weir, the surface of the water below us was broken only by the wakes of two otters as they slowly swam along together from one side of the inlet to the other. This was exciting for us as it was the first time we had seen otters in the wild. Presumably a reservoir counts as the wild for otters, even though it is well stocked with twice the usual number of fish by Northumbrian Water for the benefit of local anglers while Grassholme is closed for repairs. Help Out to Eat Out for otters in a way, I suppose. Their crossing of the inlet with a slow, rolling undulating swim was a joy to watch. I only wish I could swim as effortlessly as that instead of the slow progress I make and that only with plenty of splashing on the way.

On Tuesday, 15/09 we parked at the Hury Reservoir car park and we were rewarded with the sight of in the region of 250 house martins on the telephone wires going down into the valley. They were clearly assembling ready for a mass push southward. We were used to seeing several of them flying over the reservoir near the dam wall, but never anywhere near that number. They must have come from miles around. We were there again the next day but there were only a few stragglers left. Probably a few pairs still feeding up some late broods to build up their strength for the migration.

We were witnesses to a murder on Thursday, 17/09 while we were sat by the side of the stream that feeds Burnhope Reservoir in Weardale. A small bird, too far away for us to identify it for sure, was caught out in the open by a kestrel. The little bird was flying for his life when the kestrel attempted to take it in midair. In a situation like this, you always hope the underbird is going to make it. I think the kestrel must have made about eight attempts to catch it, but each time the little bird fell away at the moment of strike and the kestrel missed. It was amazing though to see how tightly the kestrel could turn for another pass, but each time he was unsuccessful. However, with nowhere to go for cover and with the little bird losing height with each attack, I fear the kestrel was eventually successful in making the kill as they both dropped out of sight into the long grass. This wasn't the end of this spectacle though as, only a few seconds after the apparent kill, the kestrel flew up again to land on a stone wall quite a number of yards off, without anything in his talons. What we hadn't noticed though was that there were three other kestrels close by and,

no sooner had the murderer flew off, then they flew in together to where the victim must have been left. I can only assume that this was a training lesson from a parent to his young on how to catch a snack when you need one. It was fascinating to watch and something I'd never seen before.

Out for a walk on Tuesday, 22/09 we stopped off at the bird hide near Low Birk Hatt by Blackton Reservoir. There was nothing to be seen on the reservoir itself, but there was a distressing sight inside the hide where we found two dead blue tits. It seemed that they both must have found their way into the hide through one of the knot holes in the wood panelling but then their little bird brains were not good enough to find their way back out again. There were plenty of droppings on two of the ledges by the windows where they must have both struggled in vain for some time to get out before they perished. It's a pity that the hide is that infrequently visited that no one was able to let them make their escape by the door. We make a point now, each time we pass the hide, to call in and make sure that nothing else has got trapped inside. Fortunately we have not found anything else since. It strikes me, however, that there must be a design flaw in these hides if there is not a clear escape route for any creature that inadvertently gets trapped inside.

On Saturday, 26/09 when we left the same bird hide, there were five guinea fowl perched on the wall outside Low Birk Hatt. This was the first time I had ever seen them close up and their plumage was really interesting. They were all pretty much the same blend of black, white and grey, but the patterns on their feathers were all quite distinct and varied, enough to be able to tell them apart as individuals. They were pleased to see us. I don't know if they thought the rucsacs on our back contained food but, as we walked past, they all got up and walked in single file along the wall behind us. As we walked faster, so did they. Four of them dropped back eventually, but the leader was making a determined effort to catch us up. Perhaps he didn't notice all his friends had stopped. In the end even he had to give up as we were too fast for him, and we can't say that very often at our age. We've been past a number of times since, but we've never seen them again. I don't like to think about that too much.

Later the same day we were again witnesses, but this time just to attempted murder. A kestrel was the perpetrator once more. We were proceeding in an easterly direction alongside the northern shore of Hury Reservoir, not far from the car park, when a kestrel suddenly stooped to the ground about 20 to 30 yards in front of us, followed immediately by an almighty hullabaloo. Whatever it was, it was hidden from our sight by the long grass. As we got closer, we could see it was two kestrels having a right old argy bargy. Our presence disturbed them, so they both took off to land on the perimeter wall, still only about another 20 to 30 yards in front of us. That wasn't the end of it though, because it all kicked off again very quickly. I think the victim was caught napping the first time but he was clearly narked and wanted to get his own back. Once more we disturbed them and they took off again into the fields above the reservoir and peace reigned once more. I think they must have come to their senses, shaken wings and called it a draw. I've no idea what started it all off, whether it was an attempted theft on the part of one of them or something the other had caught or if they were just a pair of neighbours from hell. Again, I've never seen a real scrap between birds of prey like that before, so another first for us following lockdown.

On Sunday, 04/10 we found ourselves the victim of a crime. I went out into the back garden to feed the birds and, on the way back in, I noticed that all our sunflowers had gone. We have a big garden tub in which we had grown seven sunflowers from seed, and they had all done very well. As this was the day after Storm Alex, my first thought was that the storm must have caused the damage. I looked around the base of the tub and in the bushes close by, but there was no sign of the missing flower heads. I asked Myra if she had cut them off as she had talked about saving the seeds for next year, but the answer was no. We both went out and looked forlornly at the miserable stalks that were left but, no matter how hard we looked it made no difference, the flower heads were most definitely not there. We came to the conclusion that someone had pinched them, as the stalks all looked as if they had been neatly cut with secateurs. We're separated from

the road by a seven foot wall and I checked the back garden gate and that was secure. Who on earth would go to all that trouble just to steal a few sunflower heads? Then I had a thought. The day before, I had seen a squirrel with what I took to be a slice of bread down the bottom of the garden. I did wonder at the time where on earth he had got that from. I went down to take a look and, sure enough, it wasn't the remains of a slice of bread, but the pithy underneath of one of our possible prize winning sunflowers, with plenty of black sunflower seeds scattered about it. The evidence was there and the crime was solved! It was a squirrel with his razor sharp rodent teeth and the MMO who had done such a neat job in decapitating our sunflowers. I checked again the next day and the rest of the sunflower seeds had also gone by then, so I presume he came back for the rest of his loot while we were not looking. We let him off with a caution. We had to admire how he must have clambered up the sunflowers, only supported by four flimsy garden canes and a couple of squares of twine, and managed to leave the stalks intact while just pinching the flower heads, not just one but all seven of them. Clearly a professional and practised first class thief.

We were enjoying a walk around Burnhope Reservoir on the afternoon of Friday, 09/10 when we spotted a red squirrel there for only the second time. The first time we had seen a red squirrel at that location was on Thursday, 06/08. We reported our first sighting to the Upper Weardale Red Squirrel Group and to Durham Wildlife Trust, but we were disappointed not to even receive an acknowledgement by email from either of them, so we didn't bother the second time. Perhaps they didn't believe us, but we know what we saw. There is only a small remnant of conifer woodland remaining by the side of Burnhope Reservoir, so we were very pleased to see one there. The nearest place that we knew there were red squirrels is Killhope, but that is several miles away. Now, whenever we go, we take a few peanuts with us and leave them near wherever we see some fallen fir cones, in the hope that they will help with his stash for the coming winter. Whether it is the red squirrel that finds them, or something else, we have no way of telling, but they do get taken!

If ever the corona virus becomes a memory, then we will start to widen our horizons again but, as you can tell if you have read this far, we have been enjoying our regular visits to some of the local reservoirs which are generally very quiet and peaceful, being far from the madding crowd. That's even without all the crime that you find there, as if there isn't enough robbery and violence on the television!

Best wishes

**Neil Baker**



Andy Ferguson sent in some photographs from a holiday in Jersey.

1. Fire Bug in a fire station yard.

2. Small tree mallow.

3. Harts Tongue Fern

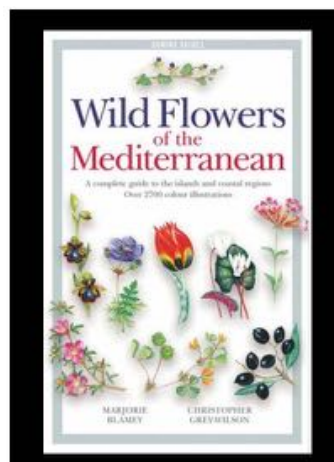
4. Dogs Tooth Violet

5. Rose

6. Butchers Broom

7. Large Cuckoo Pint

8. Spurge, flower and seeds.





## CLEVELAND NATURALISTS FIELD CLUB

### NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2020

I hope you are all staying safe and well and have enjoyed as much of Christmas as you could under the circumstances. At last there is some light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccine being distributed and I am daring to hope that we will get some field club outings in 2021! It will certainly be nice to see you all again.

I'll do another newsletter at the beginning of March so please send in details of anything you have seen or done, or photographs that may be of interest to the membership.

**All the Best for the New Year!**

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### **2020 - Flower trips**

We have been to a variety of areas this year. Flora on the whole disappointing. Locally in Little Ayton the Southern Marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) is rapidly disappearing swamped by vegetation. June 19th only 5 stunted plants. Previously in the hundreds.

A visit to Yatts farm June 8th area was pretty overgrown. Plenty of Rockrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) No Fly Orchid but 6 Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) and 2 possible Fragrant orchid var. but not in flower.

The Wood Cranesbill (*Geranium sylvaticum*) which is the only local site still manages to survive growing near a bridge on the Kildale road. I regularly kept an eye on it for Vince.

We visited Bishop Middleham Quarry 17th June but were too early to see Dark Red Helleborine in full flower. Just found a few looking a bit sorry for themselves so we went on to Thrislington N.R which was very colourful with Rockrose Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and Perennial Flax? (*Linum perenne*) plus a few Twayblade (*Listera ovata*).

On 26th June we headed to Old May Beck, Grey Heugh head and Billerhowe slack. Again generally disappointing but noted Slender St John's-wort (*Hypericum pulcrum*) and Common Spotted Orchid in areas very overgrown.

At the end of June visited Rievaulx and Ashberry meadow. Again very overgrown but finally found 3 Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*) just coming into flower after much searching.

July 7th we headed to Juggerhowe. It was a cold day and we found all areas pretty overgrown and lots of Bracken. The area where the Narrow-leaved orchid (*Dactylorhiza transteineri*) used to grow was so overgrown access was not possible. We retreated to the wood and Castle beck finding plenty of Meadowsweet and Common-spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) plus a few plants of Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) We then headed home wet and muddy.

A cold windy day 13th July we headed to Bransdale walking a road circuit. Little of interest other than Slender St-John's Wort (*Hypericum pulcrum*) and a few Harebells (*Campanula rotundifolium*).

28th July we decided to go to Esklets. Peter looking for Ring Ouzel myself any interesting plants. We found mud galore! Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) and a Forget-me-not which I think was Creeping (*Myosotis secunda*) found in wet acidic sites.

August we headed to North Tees area Greatham Creek and the long drag. Good for plants and birds. It was not as colourful as in June but but Sea Lavender (*Limonium vulgare*) Weld (*Reseda luteola*) Mignonette (*Reseda lutea*) Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*) Blue Fleabane (*Erigeron acer*) Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) were among thirty different flowers in bloom on a fine sunny day.



The next outing for Peter to hunt Dragon-flies at Brian's pond, early September, myself plants. I found only common moorland species Yarrow (*Achillea vulgaris*) Ling (*Calluna vulgaris*) Eyebright (*Euphrasia sp*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*)  
27th October went a walk in Sleddale. I was surprised to see Doves-foot Cranesbill (*Geranium molle*) still in flower.  
Considering the strange times we are experiencing this year at least we have been out and about enjoying the natural world **Ruth Waterton**

## Hartlepool Headland - 01.11.2020

On a windy but sunny day we parked near the Heugh in Hartlepool and set off to walk towards the Fish Quay. Although the tide was coming in it had not long turned and so quite a lot of rock was still exposed.



We were there for a sea and shore watch to see which birds were around. A good start whilst looking across the sea was a Red-throated Diver in winter plumage. It was a long way out and needed the telescope to view properly.

The rocks near the promenade were well populated with gulls (Black-headed, Herring and Greater Black-backed) and Oystercatchers. Amongst them we also identified RockPipit, Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Dunnock and Redshank.



We moved round to the Pilots' Pier and looking from there across the harbour we saw Red-breasted Merganser, Eider Duck, Guillemot, Cormorant and a brief glimpse of a lone seal.

We went back through the edge of the town to return to the Heugh. The gardens and parks did not show much at all except for a few starlings. It was probably too windy.

Back to the car and time for lunch after which we stayed on the promenade but walked in the opposite direction. The incoming tide had reduced the area of uncovered rocks, bunching the birds together and bringing them much closer to us. We had good views of Purple Sandpiper, Turnstone, loads of (mathematical term) Redshanks and Oystercatchers. A Grey Heron flew off and a couple of Curlew were browsing on the rocks.

The Red-throated Diver was now much closer in and we could see it easily with binoculars. As we watched the sea, in the distance we spotted a large flock of swans flying across. Photos were taken and zooming in showed there were 18 Whooper Swans.

All in all, quite a good bird count and lots of fresh air.

**Hazel and Mark Stokeld**

## Report from Elwick

### Shaggy inkcap fungus on Elwick village green.

This shows the young fresh fruiting body of the fungus, and within about 3 or 4 days the only remains after the spores had been released.



### Sad Tale!

This poor bird had flown into our greenhouse glass.

I was amazed by the beautiful fine curved beak, presumably the tool for extracting tiny insects from cracks in the tree bark. Also the amazing fine, but long claws for running up trees.

Some years ago another one stunned itself on our back window, but that one recovered after a few minutes, then perched vertically on our the garage wall, illustrating clearly how the longish tail made a prop, before flying straight to a tall pine and running straight up it. I am told there are quite a lot of them in the Elwick area. My sister in Wales reports that they have had one or two entering the house when the door was left open We wondered if they have poor eyesight!



Norma and Joan



The Year moves on.

Autumn leaves this year were bright, glowing in Autumn's special light,  
But now the leaves are on the ground, where can beauty still be found?

With shorter days and longer nights, I wake in time to see dawn's light.

Open curtains, look on high, see changing colours in the sky,

Watch for sunrise, see it set: beauty's all around us yet.

After a night of heavy dew, wonders of nature are there to view.

Note the spider's gossamer threads showing in the flower beds.

A frosty night makes another sight, crystals of ice coat all things white.



With trees and bushes all now bare it's easy to see the robin there,  
Blue tits, coal tits, great tits too, finches and sparrows right on cue.



Watch the squirrel leaping, chasing, flip his tail and set off racing.

There's wonder all around to see, on the ground or on the tree,

Signs of hope and signs of life, help us forget the Covid strife,

Snowdrop leaves are pushing through, symbols of hope for me and you,

Enjoying nature can shrug off care, so look around and see what's there.

**Maureen Gendle** (Thanks to Eric who provided all the pictures except the spider's web one which was one of my own attempts.)

## A Narky Article

This article is probably inappropriate content for a Natural History publication as it is about a word and is not written by a grammarian. However, I hope the following is of interest and does not nark you too much. ‘Nark’ was used in the last newsletter in a context that made complete sense to me. It is a word that is used regularly by the current President of the United States in the context of questions from reporters (‘...that is a narky question, the worst any President in history has ever been asked...’). A word being used by a person of such dignity, impeccable taste, self-respect, tact and grace must be worthy of further study. It is word I have been familiar with all my life and indeed have frequently used. However, I wonder if I understand the meaning of the verb completely?

It is a word that can be used as a noun. ‘He is a coppers nark’, which means in a derogatory sense ‘That gentleman is an informer for the constabulary’. This is not consistent with the context in the Newsletter where it is used to describe irritable anger, if I understand the meaning correctly. Perhaps a conjugation will reveal more about the relationship between the noun and the verb?

<b>Present</b>	<b>Infinitive -To nark-</b> ‘To irritate/anger’
<i>I nark</i> -I nark her- ‘I irritate/anger her’	<b>Past narked</b> -He narked her-‘He irritated/angered her’
<i>You nark</i> -You nark me-‘You irritate/anger her	<b>Present Participle-narking</b> -He is narking her-‘He is irritating/angering her’
<i>He, She, It narks</i> -He narks me- ‘He irritates/angers her	<b>Past Participle-narked</b> -She was narked by him-‘She was irritated/angered by him’
<i>We nark</i> -We nark her-‘We irritate/anger her’	
<i>You nark</i> -You nark her-‘You irritate/anger her’	
<i>They nark</i> -They nark her-‘They irritate/anger her’	

No clear answer there. Perhaps the verb describes the feelings raised in the subject of the informer’s attention. If so, presumably the user of the verb would be familiar with such feelings and uses the verb to convey these feelings? Perhaps our author could reveal the details of her past engagements with the constabulary to help our understanding of this grammatical conundrum?

What does ‘narky’ mean? Is this an adjective? If so, can something possess the property of ‘narkiness’? Perhaps this brings us back to the author of the article you are now reading who may have promoted ‘nark’in yourself? I beg sympathy from you. Current conditions may be sending me not so quietly bonkers. To ‘bonker’, ‘I bonker’, ‘we bonker’ .....

### Malcolm Birtle

Malcolm also sent a document :- A Key to Native and Naturalised Broad-leaved Evergreen Trees & Shrubs occurring in the countryside of North-Eastern England

I’ve attached it separately as it was too big to include in the newsletter.

## Some photographs from Mark Stokeld



*Fungi*



*Puffball*



*Rhubarb and custard*



*Shaggy Pholiota*



*Twite - Seaton Common*



*Whooper - Saltholme*



*Whooper Swans - Hartlepool*

I believe that my lifelong fascination with the Natural World was inspired, to a great degree, by ardently collecting the “Wildlife” series of picture cards that were distributed within packets of tea! I was totally committed to completing the sets and then fill the associated albums much to the chagrin of my younger brother! On the reverse of the cards, you may remember, often had information relevant to the particular species depicted on the front. I remember I used to imagine the everyday struggle of each species in turn and often wondered what interesting stories each individual organism could tell.

Many years later I can be found on my hands and knees grubbing around in the earth and leaf litter in my local Woodland to see what I can uncover in this vibrant ecosystem. Nematode worms, Springtails, Woodlice, Spiders etc all try to reproduce and survive in a life and death struggle. I could go on at length about this mesofauna but an idea of just what one tray of leaf litter can reveal is pictured. Here are 2 larval Staphylinidae (Beetles) attacking an *Orchesella villosa* (Springtail) and, going about their business, are an Adult Staphy and species of Dictomina, Lepidocyrtus and Phthiracaridae.



P.S. If I still had them I wonder just what the card collection would be worth now!

**Daphne Aplin**

# She Sells Sea-shells .....

If you get chance to have a walk on the beach, here are some sea-shells to look out for.



Carpet Shell



Common Whelk



Dog Whelk



Icelandic cyprina



Otter Shell



Rayed artimis



Rayed trough shell



Thick trough shell



Topshell



Tellin



Venus shell



Razor shells

Jo Scott



## Fungi - Peter Waterton

1. *Helvela crispa*, White Saddle, Pale End
2. *Hydnum repandum*, Wood Hedgehog, Mulgrave Woods.
3. *Hygrocybe cerosea*, Butter Waxcap,, Hob Hole
4. *Helvela lacunosa*, Elfin Saddle, Mill Bank Wood.
5. *Hygrocybe conica*, Blackening Waxcap, Kildale Moor
6. *Lactarius torminosus*, Woolly Milkcap, Mulgrave Woods
7. *Sarcoscypha austriaca*, Scarlet Elf Cups,Mulgrave Woods
8. *Pleurotus ostratus*, Oyster Mushroom, Newton Woods
9. *Mitrula paludosa*, Bog Beacons, Battersby Plantation
10. *Clavulinopsis helvola*, Yellow Club, Kildale Moor

Andy Ferguson sent in some photographs from a holiday in northern Scotland in 2010 including these interesting mosses.



Stag Moss



Club Moss

Pictures of a wasp identified by Daphne as *Pimpla rufipes* or the Black Slipper Wasp, one of the Ichneumon parasitic flies. I was attracted by the bright red legs and its habit of constantly trying to crawl vertically up the window pane

**Eric Gendle**



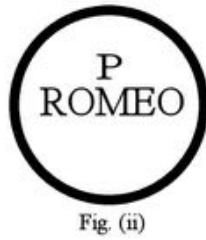
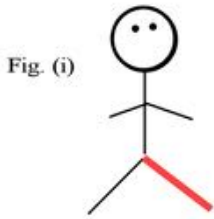
Moth trap on Saturday morning. Unfortunately nearly all the epirrita ag mixture . November moth, Pale November Moth, Autumnal Moth, Small Autumnal Moth. 4 species needing genitalia examination to separate, but worth a picture?

**Eric Gendle**



# CNFC CHRISTMAS QUIZ 2020

This quiz is in 2 parts. The first ten clues lead you to the names of birds. One of them is plural.



- (1) Return of the auks? (4)
- (2) See Fig. (i) (8)
- (3) String of Union Jack, Stars and Stripes, etc., etc. (7)
- (4) See Fig. (ii) (6, 6)
- (5) A nurse. (11)
- (6) Is this bird singing from a tree? (6, 7)
- (7) See Fig. (iii). (10)
- (8) Meadow food. (9)
- (9) Tower warder, without force. (3, 5)
- (10) RID GE. (9)

## ANYTHING GROWS

The answers to the second half of this quiz are all things that grow in the ground. They include the English names of flowers, shrubs, grasses.

- (11) Hurry to the drinking source. (9)
- (12) Is this the place where the tender of the flock keeps his money? (9, 5)
- (13) The best policy? (7)
- (14) Your own cure? (8)
- (15) Second class walks? (8)
- (16) Warm the lady. (7)
- (17) GRANIT\_ (9)
- (18) Star river. (9)
- (19) A man by name. (7)
- (20) Animal went back and forth to find this grass. (6)

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**From Joan and Norma** – Must keep up the tradition! I'll e-mail the answers next week.