

What are they called?

AS ALREADY SAID, NORFOLK PEOPLE use a number of names for the Hyter Sprite. I have, so far, gathered twenty-two variants and there are probably more, see figure 1. In general discussion I will use the by far the most popular term Hikey Sprite, but when recording individual testimony will use the name given, in some cases the contact's spelling as well. Most people say they are uncertain of the spelling, but a few were adamant their version was the correct one. Naturally, as the name passed from person to person, changes crept in, it was never written down by Norfolk people. There is no correct version, but Hikey Sprite is probably the most acceptable and has a lively ring. In the Kelling/Salthouse area an abbreviated form was used. Bob was told, "If you don't come home the Sprites will get you". The heaths in that area would have been a magnet for youngsters and a place to linger.

Many informants had beautiful, natural Norfolk voices, pleasing to my ear. Sometimes though it was difficult to record precisely the name they were giving. A middle letter could go missing, giving 'Hy'er' or 'Hy'ey', which I took to be Hyter or Hikey.

The etymology of the Hyter Sprite is rather a mystery. 'Sprite' is easy, the Collins Dictionary gives i: folklore: a nimble elf like creature, a fairy, a goblin or a pixie. ii: a small dainty person. Both aspects, the supernatural and the human apply to the Hyter Sprite. But what about 'Hyter'? Rabuzzi believed the origin probably lay with the Anglo-Saxon word 'hēdan': to keep, to take heed, to care for, to guard, protect, take charge of. Dutch has 'hoeden': to guard, keep, protect, take care of, watch over. Perhaps we are closer with Danish which has 'hytte': to take care of oneself and 'beskytte': to preserve, defend, guard, secure. I also considered German 'heiter': happy, cheerful. Heitergeist, 'cheerful ghost', certainly has considerable appeal. Scottish has 'hyte': crazy. Our Hyters may be lively, but they are not crazy. The etymology is clearly difficult to resolve and beyond my remit, so I will be happy to leave it there.

If the 'take heed' theme is correct, and I think it is, it will illuminate the testimony of my informant, Arnold from Trunch. When Arnold's mum in the 1950s said, "Keep you away from that there pond boy or the Hyte Sprites will get you", she is suggesting I think:

The Hyte Sprites will be there to persuade you to be careful, they are your guardians, your keepers, your protectors, but it all depends on you. They, for sure, will not hurt you, they will 'get you' to be cautious, sensible and safe.

Well reader, that is what I would like to think and believe. Of course you may be frightened a bit or quite a lot, in the process. Nor need guardian angels fear that they are likely to face redundancy, due to the benevolent activities of the Hikey Sprites.

If all this sounds complicated at this stage, it will appear more so in the following pages. Complicated, well maybe, but then so are the Hikey Sprites. However, it will be worthwhile getting to know them, they are after all, part of your heritage and regarded with affection by some Norfolk people, although with fear and dread by a few.



What are They?

Supernatural, natural, human?

Supernatural

ALL MENTION OF THE HYTER SPRITES in the literature from 1872, when they were first recorded by Walter Rye in 'The Eastern Counties Collectanea', describe them as a kind of fairy. Folklore reference books, several published in recent years, continue to describe them so. I was therefore keen to find how my informants thought of the Hikey Sprite, how they would define them at the present time.

When asked what the Hikey Sprites were, about three-quarters of my contacts described them as supernatural beings, folkloric in nature. Many people, while recognising their mysterious, non-human character, could not define them specifically. Of those who had some idea of their identity, many did not give a single name, preferring something like a 'fairy, goblin thing' or 'pixie, fairy thing'. Several completed their description by adding, 'little' as a prefix, or in a few cases 'evil', 'unpleasant' or 'mischievous'.

Of those who had a clear idea of what they were, the most popular designation given, in fact, was 'fairy', including one described as, 'little people about at night time'. 'Fairy' had a tally of eight, followed in reverse order by 'ghost', seven, 'pixie', five, 'elf' and 'goblin', four each, 'hobgoblin' and 'spirit', three each and 'gnome' and 'demon' one each. Two people thought, 'they were something to do with Halloween'.

So 22% of my informants, who had some idea of the Hikey Sprites' identity, thought they were fairies, but if pixies, elves, goblins and hobgoblins (alternative names for fairies, or sub-species of the fairy realm) are included, the figure rises to 67%. Ghosts and spirits were mentioned by 27% of my informants. Fairies? It would seem so – of the bogey-type.

The wide spread of opinion and the uncertainty expressed is to be expected at this late stage of the tradition. The Hikey Sprite cannot now be easily categorised or defined. It remains, very much, its own creature, simply

a Hikey Sprite, no more, no less. So pursuing them is quite a challenge and the water becomes even more muddied when human and natural aspects are included.

Five contacts, who went along with the Hikey concept were avowed sceptics of varying degrees. One said, "A fictional thing" and two, "A made up thing". Dorothy (88), born in Briston, gave me lots of information, but on leaving added, "Not real I think, a made up thing". Leslie, whose childhood was spent in Calthorpe said simply, "A sort of old saying". I will return to the supernatural face of the Hikey Sprite later.

Natural (but not entirely so)

NOW FOR THE NATURAL ASPECTS of the Hikey Sprite. Ian (70) was told when he was a child in Bradfield that the Hikey Sprites were glow worms. An informant, Fred (85) from Hindringham, links them to the Lantern Man and describes them as, "Some sort of creature that would glow in the dark". Joan also recalled the Lantern Man as, "A kind of misty thing", while Norah (84) thought of him as a glow worm. "They glowed in the hedge in the evening", she said.

Three men asked about the Hikey Sprites replied, with confidence, "They're marsh gas". One said, "Natural not supernatural". However, Ken, born in Sheringham, a former deep-sea fisherman, was equally certain that the Hyte Sprite was, "Marsh gas, Jack-o'-Latern methane, really, that sort of thing". When asked if the Hyte Sprite was a natural thing he replied, "No! It was a spirit". When further asked if they had frightened him he replied, with feeling, "No, Old Shuck did that!" A gentleman in North Walsham replied to my query with, "A sort of marsh gas – Acle way", then added, "to keep you out of the way while there is ill-doing". A comment, often made of course, about Old Shuck and smuggling.

The Will-o'-the-Wisp and the two East Anglian names for marsh gas, the Lantern Man and Jack-o'-Lantern, have become conflated, overlapped and confused with the Hikey Sprite tradition. The first three flicker, dance and glow as darkness falls, in some informants' minds so did the Hikey Sprites. All are associated with the onset of night fall, but the Hikey Sprite is essentially concerned with the perils of the night and their avoidance.

Human

IN ITS HUMAN FORM, THE HIKEY SPRITE was nearly always a lively, spirited person with a dash of the restless nature of the Will-o'-the-Wisp. Three people I met in Acle, on the same day, had clear but differing ideas. Phyllis, a former land-army girl in World War II, recalled a Hikey Strikey as someone who, "Frightened you, played tricks, liked to make you jump". Edward was certain they were, "Lively sort of people, man or woman, a lively child would also be described as a Hikey Sprite". A lady selling plants from a church stall had a different idea. "A flighty sort of person," she said, "could be flirty and promiscuous, mother used to say, in a critical sort of way, 'She's a Highty Sprite'."

The lively, mischievous, slightly naughty theme was reported by several people with much variation in the name. In Rockland St. Mary a gentleman recalled the word Sprite meant a school child, we would say, "You naughty little Sprites". For Sally a Highty Sprite was simply, "A lively person". Brian thought a Hightsprite (he insisted one word) was, "A quick, fleeting sort of person". Jimmy (84) from Shipdham describes Hikey Pikes as, "Lively people, adults not children". Two sisters, Maureen and Sheila, who I met in Aylsham with their elderly mother, described a Hikey Sprite as, "Someone mischievous, adult or child". Betty (77), who I encountered cleaning brasses in Hingham Church, spoke of a Hikey Sprikey as a, "Lively sort of person, adult or child, nothing sinister".

A gentleman from Trunch remembered, 'old boys' used to say, "He's a rare old Hiker Sprite", but did not know what it meant, I assume a lively person. For Dennis, born in Suffolk, but who moved to Hargham as a child, a Hikey was, "A lively person". Terry, originally from Aldborough knew a Hikey Sprite was, "A young lad, inclined to mild naughtiness, you would say, 'What's that Hikey Sprite up to?'" John (79) from Southrepps told me about the Highty Sprightly. "A jovial person, nothing supernatural or frightening," he said.

Some aspects of the poltergeist come to mind in all this, most certainly the mischief making (just think of Phyllis), but our Hikey Sprite, easily described as a 'lively ghost' could not be termed as a 'noisy' one.

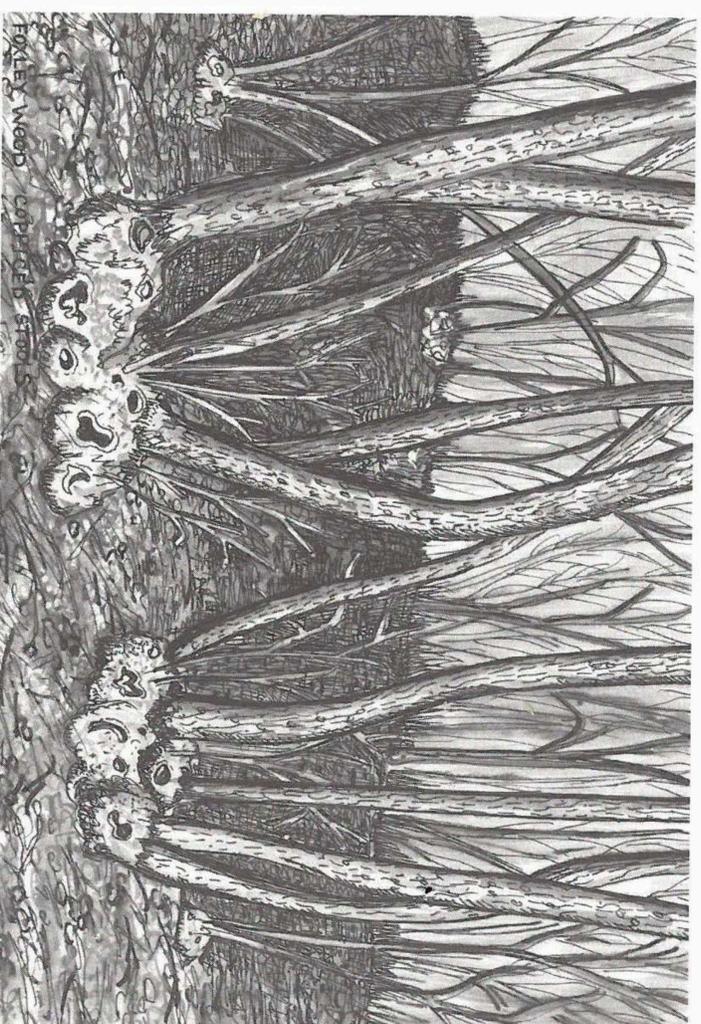
The word Hikey was also used as a male nickname, 'Hikey Loveday' for

instance. I collected this usage from Overstrand, Field Dalling and Martham. One can only assume that the person has a frisky, lively, mischievous temperament. All this shows that Norfolk people accepted the Hikey Sprite as a fairly benign concept, with a relaxed attitude and were happy to confer its name onto their friends and family.

Charlie (88) born in Hindringham described a Hiker Sprite as a roadster, a tramp – two other people hinted at this as well, but were the Hikey's 'stuck up'?

The word Hikey Sprite has clearly become confused with hoity toity (arrogant or haughty), which in Norfolk when spoken, might sound like highty-tighty. Gillian, who spent her childhood halfway between Toftwood and Shipdham, told me about the Hoighty Toights. "Hobgoblins or fairies, at the bottom of the garden, but never saw one," she said. Two contacts described a Hikey Sprite as, "A stuck up person". Ikey was also mentioned twice in this connection, Dick describing such a person as, "Stand offish, they set themselves apart". An assistant in a charity shop in North Walsham placed a finger under her nose, horizontally, as she described a Highty Tightly. Two other names, offered in response to my enquiries about the Hikey Sprites were Ikey Hikey and Highty, both described as meaning 'stuck up'. Various meanings have thus become attached to the flexible Hikey Sprite name, adding to the rich mix of the Hikey's personality.

Now I will explore how the Hikey Sprite has intervened in the affairs of human kind, largely to the latter's benefit.



The Hikey Sprite Intervenes in Human Affairs

THE HIKEY SPRITES INTERVENTION in human affairs occurred, of course, almost entirely between grandparents, parents and their offspring. I only found one case where children told other children about them, that was in the playground of a school in North Walsham in the 1950s. So, where possible, I tried to establish if my informants had indeed passed the tradition on to their children. As mentioned earlier, my own parents had sadly not used the term with my brother and myself. Several people were clear that they also had not. "We didn't want to frighten them", was said several times.

Others though, had told their children and seemed relaxed about the consequences. David from Marsham described how his brother Roger had passed knowledge of the tradition to his two sons, one now eighteen, "So it should go on". Bob, in Barford recalled, "We talked about them in front of the children but don't know if they remembered". Others were quite sure their children would not have remembered. Joy who spent her childhood in Bessingham said, "Yes they heard us talk about them at home, but of course at school they heard different things". Geoff from Fakenham told his son but, "It wouldn't have meant anything to him – different generation". In some cases only one parent knew of the Hikey Sprites, so children were not told. The wife of a Hindolveston man knew nothing of the Hikeys, until he raised the subject with her, after a conversation with me.

There was a cultural turning away from things Norfolk in the fifties and sixties, people were moving more, newcomers were arriving in the county, new ideas were around, the old ways were undervalued. Pat (70) from Little Ellingham did not tell her children, "I didn't want to frighten them and things had changed," she said.

Several of my contacts revealed great hurt about how their Norfolk voices were received at that time and later. At work, at school, on holiday, from people returning to Norfolk after working away, from incomers and employers people encountered raw ridicule because of their Norfolk accent. One lady, who I met in North Elmham, described how when she used the word 'dweile' at her workplace, she was met with near outrage. "I made up my mind never to use that word again", she said and several others I expect as well. The strength of feeling these people revealed saddened me.

A few other people told me they knew the Norfolk words, "But don't use them now, we are better educated". The Hikey was known perhaps, but not talked about, retreating into the subconscious mind, jogged back into the memory in some cases by my questioning. Two or three people, direct or via the press, expressed their warm thanks that this had happened. Two contacts, as already described, believed they were the only ones to know about them.

Were children afraid of the Hikey Sprites? Most certainly, in many families they were, really scared. This is the way they worked in practice, the open ended fear of the unknown. "What are the Hikey Sprites?" one worried girl asked her mum, but was provided with a gobbledegook answer. "She never told me what they were," she said, left doubly confused. "What ever are they?" was often asked, but never answered. No one really knew.

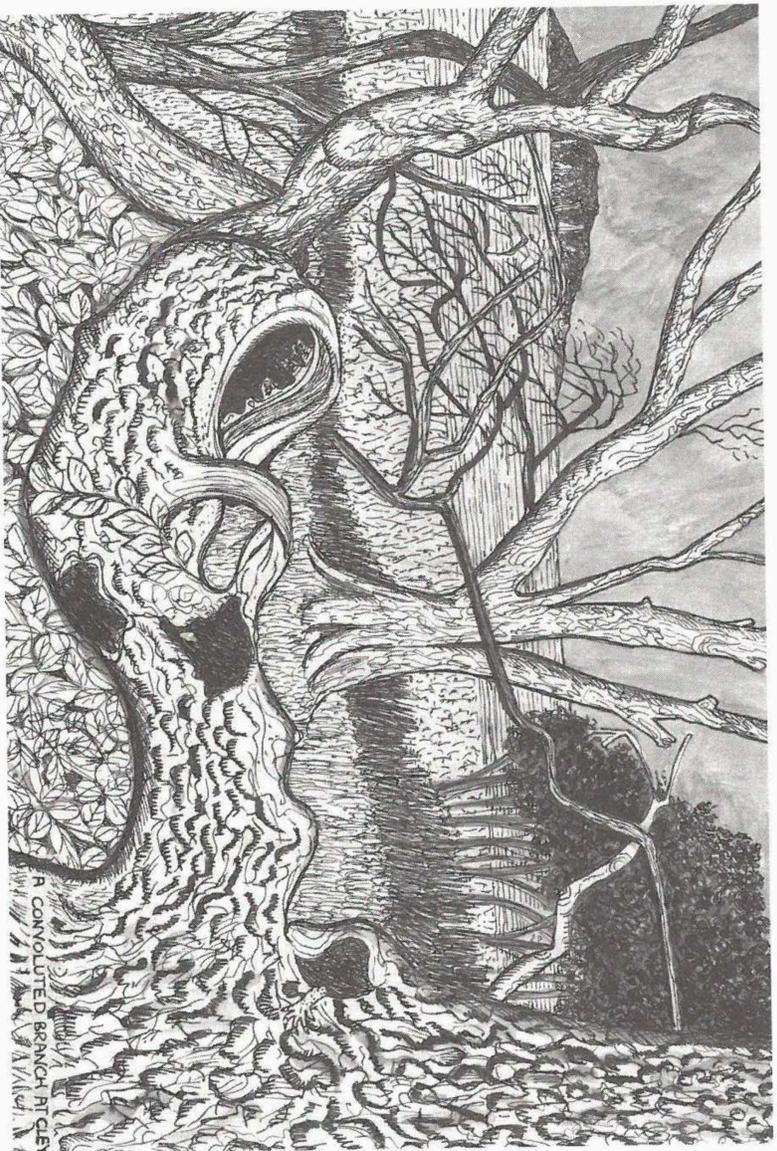
The Hikey's intention was however to guide and protect, not to frighten, mild fear being a means to an end. Hikey?, well yes, at this stage I think I can be rather more informal when describing these enigmatic creatures, without hopefully, causing them offence or placing myself at risk.

David (81) set the tone for a dozen or so people. "We took it lightly," he said. Moya, writing about her family in Gillingham reported, "I only ever heard of the Ikey Sprites in a humorous context, never as malign creatures". Other children found the Hikeys amusing. For Christine, whose childhood was spent in Oxnead, "I wasn't really frightened," she said, "it was just a sort of joke". Real sceptics had nothing to fear, Bob (77) from Barford declared, "No, we didn't believe in them".

But for many, uncertainty remained. For Melanie from Winterton (a definite Hikey 'hot-spot', but where they are always called Hyte Sprites), "We were sort of frightened, but we used to laugh". For Jean, met in the Mattishall village store, when asked if she was frightened replied, "Well half and half". Pauline, also met in Mattishall, replied, "Yes, a bit". Joy, brought up in Bessingham, often heard about the Hikeys from her mother. Asked if she was frightened responded, "It all depended on how your mum said it!"

For others the fear was real and immediate. This was certainly the case for Dick (77) born in Sparham (another Hikey Sprite 'hot-spot') and now living in Toftwood (another possible 'hot-spot'). In a letter he described his mother calling him in, with a Hikey Sprite threat, when it was getting dark. "I didn't need telling twice," he wrote, "I didn't want to mess with those creatures". Dick's brother Eric (81) however although having vivid Hikey memories told me he was, "Not really frightened as such". John, born in Barton Turf, told me about the Hyte Sprites while at the Worstead Festival.

Pleased with the information given I said, "I like it". He retorted immediately with, "You wouldn't if you met one". Margaret, as a little girl in Scottow, did not meet one, but believed it would have been, "A fierce creature" if she had. Christine and especially Elsie, as we shall see, felt raw fear when they braced themselves for that walk, in inky darkness, along the garden path to the outside petty.



A Creature of the Night

SOME PEOPLE WHO HAD HEARD of the Hikey Sprites did not associate them with threats or warnings, but most certainly did. Thirty or so of my contacts linked them with the potential dangers of the night, getting home before dark or getting to bed on time.

Five or six other contacts risked coming face-to-face with a Hikey if they lingered too long by certain woods, streams, commons, heaths or abandoned buildings. To be in a dangerous location with the light failing made for a risky mix, hence the intervention of the Hikeys, via the wisdom of grandparents and parents. Thirty other contacts associated the Hikeys with the problems of wayward behaviour, in the main, pretty mild naughtiness. Only two people linked the disappearance and sometimes the finding of objects with the Hikey. This aspect of the tradition was definitely much stronger in the 1980s.

Let us consider the perils of the night first. In our overlit world of streetlights, security lights, flood lights and more (where most people are denied the majesty of the night sky) we forget the intense darkness of earlier days. The oil lamp on the kitchen table, the flickering candle with wavering shadows which accompanied us up 'wooden hill' to bed barely kept darkness at bay.

When I first raised the subject of the Hikeys three elderly ladies made darkness orientated replies. "I would say something frightening in the night," one said. Shirley, interviewed in Aldborough, said of the Hikey, "Yes, something that comes in the night and haunts you". Pat from Felbrigg remembers, once she had settled into bed, her grandmother calling up the stairs, "Put that candle out if not the Hikey Sprites will get you".

A few people believed the Hikey had nothing to do with approaching darkness, but most did, and supplied me with vivid personal accounts. A night time visit to the outside loo, sometimes a fair old walk away, could be a scary event. Christine from Oxnead recalled her mum saying, "Mind the High Sprites don't get you when you go to the lav". That was such a dark place reflected Christine. Elsie (85) now living in Foulsham, but whose early years were spent in Hindolveston, remembers the Hikeys all too well. "They used to come out of the dark and get you when you went up the garden to

the closet," she said, adding, "I never saw them, I kept my eyes closed, I knew the way because I had been up there so many times". Even with her sister, for company and support, that regular night time experience in the 1920s was a disturbing one and keenly remembered.

For Edna, met at a chapel coffee morning in Fakenham the Hikeys were, "Scary, ghostly things that will get you if you stay out after dark". Melanie's granddad in Winterton was wise when he advised, "Better get indoors before dark". Of course children loved playing out of doors and lost all track of time. Geoff from Fakenham was cautioned to, "Come in before the gas lamps are lit". They, I need not mention the name, lurked in Quaker Lane.

Older children had, sometimes, to go out into the darkness. June's mum, trying to be helpful I am sure advised, "Mind the Hytie (her spelling) Sprites don't get you'. Bob, as he ventured out was encouraged to, "Take a light with you else the Heiter Sprites will get you". Jean and others accepted the scary aspect as, "It made you aware of the dangers to avoid". No doubt, across Norfolk there are hundreds of older people who still link the dying day with the emergence of the rested, re-invigorated Hikey. The simple admonition, "Get you home afore dark else them there Hikey Sprites will get hold on yer", was recalled, again and again, by my contacts.

Evening, that liminal time, between light and dark, day and night, was bound to be a time of magic, mystery and fear. Dawn, that parallel liminal time, was so different with anticipation, hope and all round 'lightness'. So when the sun rose and illuminated each little Hikey hiding place, under rhubarb leaves and hedges, you were safe, as Dick recalls, "In the early morning you didn't think about them". Safe that is, unless you were heading for disobedience in the day ahead.

I collected one intriguing example of an animal's behaviour being possibly influenced by the Hikeys. Moya wrote that her late mother, born in Gillingham in 1916, in her later years referred to them when talking to her cat. I quote her account in full: "If the cat hovered on the doormat, reluctant to go out on a chilly night it was, 'What's up, frightened the Ikey Sprites will get you?' If the cat careered indoors the minute the door was opened for him, fur fluffed up and tail held high, it was, 'Ikey Sprites after you are they?'". Moya's family, as already mentioned, had a jocular attitude to the Ikey Sprites.

A Warning to the Naughty

DARKNESS WAS CERTAINLY THE MAIN DOMAIN of the Hikey Sprite, but the area around wayward children was of almost equal significance. Some contacts were adamant that the Hikeys had nothing to do with curbing unacceptable behaviour, but most clearly remember their mother's warning, "If you're naughty the Hikey Sprites will get you!" This was mentioned again and again. Millie from Toftwood told me, "I took it to mean make you good". "If you don't do as you're told the Hikey Sprites will get you," was often said in that rambling old farmhouse in Themelthorpe, where Gill and her sister Christine lived. An elderly gentleman in Sheringham put it succinctly, "A way of seeing you behave yourself".

In some cases the threat was more extreme, David (81) from Briston remembers his mother saying, "If you don't do as you are told, the Hikey Sprites will get you and take you away". Daphne (70) whose childhood was in Strumpshaw, after hearing the threat thought with a little frisson of fear, "I didn't know what they were but I knew they would come after me". To be 'taken away' was mentioned several times. In Hargham in the 1950s Gerald heard of Sprikeys, they were, "Naughty, rather than nasty," but if "you were naughty they called you a Sprikey". Maybe others, earmarked for the Hikey's likely arrival, acquired themselves the name Hikey. We are back to Hikey Loveday.

Associated with the night, associated with disciplining wayward children and associated with the misplacement of objects, that is the Hikey Sprite. The later, poltergeist like behaviour, was once common, but is now hardly known. I was therefore lucky to collect information from two informants, Pat who I met on a Cromer to Roughon bus and Moya who kindly replied to my letter in the E.D.P. and subsequently supplied further details. Pat talked about the Hyper Sprites known to the fishing community in Bacton. "I heard about the Hyper Sprites lots of times," he told me, "it was an old saying. They made things disappear, we always blamed them when we couldn't find something. You would ask them to return the items too – sometimes they did! We used to laugh about it, it wasn't too serious". Moya, of course, had an equally light-hearted approach to her family's encounters with the Ikey Sprites. "In my experience," she wrote, "if something went

missing, particularly if it 'reappeared' in exactly the place where one had looked for it earlier, without success, the Ikey Sprites could be blamed".

As described, people usually linked the Hikeys with night fall or naughtiness, hardly ever with both, but Brian was an exception. In Scottow in the 1940s, "If you were naughty and went out in the dark the Hikey Sprites would get you," he told me. Roland's experiences, as a child in Docking, recorded later, also link naughtiness with night fall.



The Hikey Sprites as Portrayed in Print

FROM THEIR FIRST MENTION in print, in 1872 by Walter Rye, in 'The Eastern Counties Collectanea' Hyter Sprites were, in the main, portrayed as rather beneficent fairies helpful to mankind. Only occasionally did they exhibit anti-social behaviour. Books, however, published in the last thirty or forty years, which include Hikey Sprite matters, are usually fanciful and repetitive.

To some extent, much of the trouble began with Ruth Tongue. In 1970 a book was published entitled 'Forgotten Folk Tales of the English Counties', collected by Ruth Tongue. It contained one tale called 'Hyter John' collected in 1909 from one of her great aunts. This was a family story unique to the Tongue family and said nothing worthwhile about the Hyters in a wider context, nothing about what ordinary people believed.

In the story we learn three things about the Hyters. Firstly they can shape shift from fairy to bird form, birds similar to sand martins. Secondly, they were sandy-coloured with green eyes. Thirdly in fairy form, they were 'man sized', but usually were 'knee-high'.

Most books published since repeat slavishly the first and second, but oddly omit the third. From the first and second statement much elaboration has taken place. The birds become scavengers, vultures or buzzards to be exact, they gather in flocks and mob people. They were also said to be found in Mexico and Spain – some writers were puzzled by this, I should think so! This is the bookish approach referred to in my introduction. Here we have one writer's literary presentation of the Hikeys, seized upon by later authors, totally ignoring the testimony of ordinary people (the real owners of the tradition) and happy to repeat without question elements of Ruth Tongue's story.

Hardly anyone in Rabuzzi's fieldwork, in the 1980s, and mine in 2008/9 could give any indication of the Hikey's appearance. They were, as one contact described, 'unseen, unheard'. This did not stop people imagining how they looked. The two brothers from Sparham, Dick and Eric, said interesting things. Dick, an imaginative and rather philosophical man, saw them as, "Thin, skinny, with long arms and legs and bony fingers". He drew a picture, showing a spirited, free-moving impish character fleeing across

the paper, see frontispiece. His older brother Eric told me, "I saw them as tall men wearing a black cloak". Sinister visions both, but so different, as is to be expected.

As for sound, Bob from Barford explained his view and I give his account in full. The Heiter Sprites he said, "Are just known to old people now, they come out in the Autumn when the wind is blowing and leaves fall, your feet rustle the fallen leaves, it is then they are just behind you".

So we can all have our own mind picture of the Hikey Sprite, there is scope for infinite variety, but let us avoid turning them sandy coloured, with green eyes, they have had enough of that.



The Hikey Sprites Distribution in Norfolk

I BEGAN BY STATING THE HYTER SPRITE was 'never widespread' and I believe this to be true. Most Norfolk people would have been familiar with the words mawther, loke, tizzick, huh (as in 'on the'), etc., and employed them in their speech. This would not have been true of Hikey Sprite, which I feel, had a much more limited usage; strong in some parts of the county, hardly known in others; strong in some families, absent from others.

Some of my informants believed however, from their own experience, that belief in the Hikeys was widespread when they were young. Norah (84), whose childhood was spent in Sparham, told me, "It was a common occurrence when you were a child". In Sparham I think it would have been, but not "everywhere in Norfolk", as she believed. Melanie was certainly correct though when she assured me that, "Everyone in Winterton knew about them". That was, I think, the case and still is to some extent. Several men, presented with the Hikey question, replied with confidence that it could not be a Norfolk word, because they had never heard of it.

One thing is quite clear, the Hikeys inhabited exclusively rural areas, hamlets, villages and market towns and were absent from King's Lynn, Norwich and Great Yarmouth. It was though found in the satellite villages of Costessey and Spixworth, maybe in others.

In several villages elderly people born in the parish gave me Hikey lore, while their contemporaries also born in the village, knew nothing, not even the name. The tradition was certainly very strong in some families, some of which shared other strong folk beliefs, Shuck, Jack, Father, or Mother Valentine (where the 'mother wore the trousers') etc.. Shuck 'Old' or 'Black' was near ubiquitous, talked about enthusiastically by many people even those who had no knowledge of the Hikeys.

Bob in Barford described Old Goulty. 'When you heard a noise up the chimney, for instance, you said, "It's Old Goulty", or if a door creaked you said, "Old Goulty did it"? Nicky's mum, a Cley girl, was he said, "full of superstitions". Bob from Griston described his mother as, "a seer, read the tea leaves". Steve from Great Walsingham, mentioned a black dog, Shuck I thought, but no. "You've got that black dog on your back", indicating he was misbehaving again, he recalled his mum saying.