



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union

Natural Sciences Forum

Charity 224018

The twenty seventh meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum was held at St Chad's Parish Hall, Leeds, at 10.00 am Saturday 1st February 2014.

MINUTES

1. Present:

Adrian Norris (Chair), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes Secretary), John Hume, Jane Pottas, Michael Archer, Albert Henderson, Bill Ely, Chris Young, John Wint, Andy Godfrey, David Lindley, Phyl Abbott, John Bowers, Alan Braddock

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

Peter Flint, Sharon Flint, Sarah West, Mark Seaward, Jill Warwick, Andrew Grayson, Terry Whitaker, Terry Crawford, Roger Key

3. Minutes and actions of the meeting held at The Palm Court Hotel Scarborough on the 16th November 2013. These can be downloaded from the [YNU website](#). These were accepted as a true record of the meeting, with the following revision suggested by Mark Seaward: the heading to 9.1 should read 'Index to the *Naturalist*' not 'Index of Naturalists'.

The Editorial Board reminded the meeting that each new issue of the *Naturalist* is available as a PDF on the website so they can be searched (one at a time) online for key words. **If anyone wishes to volunteer to take on the task of creating an index, please contact the Editorial Board.**

Chris Young has produced a spreadsheet of article titles and authors and basic subject area.

Action: Chris Young to send John Hume the Excel spreadsheet so that John can make this available to download from the website.

4. Key to Yorkshire *Hieracia* – progress update

Albert Henderson expects to receive a draft version of Vince Jones' *Key to Yorkshire Hieracia* on a CD next week. Albert will review it and pass it to John Bowers as Chairman of the YNU and also to Phyl Abbott, Don Grant and Geoffrey Wilmore so that they can provide the Executive with a botanist's opinion. Vince Jones foresees printing about 100 copies.

5. YNU Conference 2014 – progress update

The conference has been arranged for Saturday 22nd March at the Royal Hotel York, which is next to the railway station. Further information is now available on the YNU website and in the latest issue of the *Naturalist*. The theme is Museums and Nature: the Modern Perspective. The programme is still being finalised, but it includes speakers from the YNU and from Yorkshire museums.

As at the last two conferences, there will be discussion sessions. It was agreed that these should be plenary discussions with roving microphones, rather than smaller breakout groups with rapporteurs. A good chairperson is needed for the event, and particularly for these discussion sessions.

The price is £20 for YNU members and £25 for non-members, the same as last year, and this includes lunch.

Action: ALL – book your place now: <http://www.ynu.org.uk/events/conference>

Action: ALL – please spread the word to all your contacts and encourage them to book.

6. YNU website and new Webmaster

John Hume from Scarborough has kindly agreed to take on the role of Webmaster for the YNU. John has also recently become an individual member of the YNU, although he has been a member of its affiliated society the Scarborough Naturalists for many years. John is a professional videographer and photographer, and produced a film of the YNU’s Festival of Ecology last year free of charge.

Some statistics on use of the YNU website derived from Google Analytics:

Quarterly Breakdown	Total visits	Unique visitors	Page views	Average no. of pages per visit	Average visits per month	Average visits per week	High Point
September to December 2012	2,080	1,396	12,117	6	693	160	3rd week of November 205 visits - AGM
January to March 2013	1,846	1,079	13,535	7	615	142	3rd week of March 173 visits - Conference
April to June 2013	1,992	1,229	12,089	6	664	153	2nd week of June 245 visits - Festival of Ecology
July to Sept 2013	1,548	964	8,301	5	516	119	2nd week of July 152 visits - online recording?
October to December 2013	1,352	773	7,986	6	451	104	2nd week November 154 visits - AGM

Total	Total visits	Unique visitors	Page views	Average no. of pages per visit	Average visits per month	Average visits per week	Average visits per day
September 2012 to January 2014	9,243	5,177	57,470	6	616	142	20

Some key points:

- There have been over 5,000 visitors to the YNU website since the new site was launched. This is 10 x higher than the number we reach through the Naturalist/membership subscriptions. This number will include ‘robots’.
- The highest number of visits was the week of the Festival of Ecology, when there were links to our site from various other sites e.g. RSPB, YWT, Scarborough Spa, Discover Yorkshire Coast and Facebook.
- The number of visits has tailed off over the last 6 months. We need to reverse this trend. We need to keep the site looking fresh with new photos, updates and news stories and this is NOT the sole responsibility of the webmaster - all Sections need to provide content, either by sending it to the webmaster or editing the site themselves.
- The top referring websites are Facebook, iSpot, Barnsley Birds, BirdGuides and Yorkshire Moths. We need to get links to the YNU site on as many websites as possible - is it on the websites of all our affiliated societies? We need to mention it on Facebook and Twitter regularly. We should include a link in our e-mail signatures.
- After 'landing' on the site, the first page most visitors navigate to is Events. Putting as much information on the events page and Google calendar is therefore crucial as this is a key use of the site and will keep people coming back if it is well maintained.

- We had hoped that online recording would increase traffic to the site. Although the online recording pages have captured a lot of records, these are from a small number of users, and in fact traffic to the site has decreased since online recording was launched. We all need to do more to encourage wider use of online recording - especially for those 'one-off' records that would otherwise get missed - as this is a good way of engaging people with the site. There are a lot of people putting photos on the YNU Flickr and Facebook groups, which may generate admiration and interest, but does NOT generate records!

Action: Section Heads (and any other interested members) please review your section of the website and send new content to John at john@fotomagicvideo.com). In particular please send:

- **More details about events - what to expect, directions, who to contact.**
- **News stories – interesting sightings, field meeting reports, obituaries etc. These do not need to be long. 300-500 words is fine for a web article.**

Action: ALL – please promote the website and online recording at every opportunity

Action: John – contact Section admins about specific examples of ‘dead space’ on the website and either add content or ‘unpublish’ these pages.

7. Mammal Society Mammal Atlas

The YNU has been contacted by Derek Crawley of the Mammal Society asking for permission to use YNU records in the forthcoming Mammal Atlas.

The National Mammal Atlas Project (NMAP) aims to collate as many mammal records as possible in order to paint a fuller picture of their presence in the British Isles. The Mammal Society plan to publish a new National Mammal Atlas in 2016, the first in over 20 years. The Atlas is being produced in collaboration with the Biological Records Centre and will incorporate records from 2000 to 2015.

If anyone would like to submit records to this project they can do so by entering them into the YNU website, into iRecord or into the Mammal Society website. Further information can be found here: <http://www.mammal.org.uk/nmap>

We have also offered to put information on the YNU website and in a future issue of the *Naturalist*.

Action: Adrian Norris – check that Colin Howes is sending records to the Mammal Society for inclusion in the Atlas. (Post meeting note – yes he is).

8. Online verification – progress and gaps

Since its launch last summer, 13,280 records have been entered through the YNU’s online recording site. These are made available for verification via iRecord (www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord). Yorkshire records from other Indicia websites and apps are also available via iRecord, e.g. the Mammal Society, the Orthoptera Recording Scheme, the UK Ladybird Survey. So far, only 2,770 of the YNU’s records have been dealt with by an expert verifier, which is 21% of the records that have been entered.

The breakdown of verification progress by taxonomic group is below:

Taxon Group	Pending	Queried	Verified	Rejected	Total	Percentage dealt with by verifier
insect - true fly (Diptera)	3440	0	263	0	3703	7.1%
insect - hymenopteran	1412	0	1184	1	2597	45.6%
insect - true bug (Hemiptera)	942	0	839	0	1781	47.1%
insect - beetle (Coleoptera)	1566	0	75	1	1642	4.6%
flowering plant	1114	0	0	0	1114	0.0%
acarine (Acari)	472	0	0	0	472	0.0%

Taxon Group	Pending	Queried	Verified	Rejected	Total	Percentage dealt with by verifier
insect - moth	420	0	1	0	421	0.2%
mollusc	145	5	183	0	333	56.5%
insect - butterfly	191	0	0	0	191	0.0%
fungus	169	0	0	0	169	0.0%
crustacean	155	0	0	0	155	0.0%
alga	28	2	47	0	77	63.6%
insect - earwig (Dermaptera)	31	0	37	0	68	54.4%
chromist	26	0	32	0	58	55.2%
insect - stonefly (Plecoptera)	7	0	45	0	52	86.5%
spider (Araneae)	43	0	0	0	43	0.0%
insect - lacewing (Neuroptera)	34	0	0	0	34	0.0%
coelenterate (=cnidarian)	30	0	0	0	30	0.0%
annelid	30	0	0	0	30	0.0%
insect - booklouse (Psocoptera)	29	0	0	0	29	0.0%
insect - scorpion fly (Mecoptera)	26	0	0	0	26	0.0%
insect - caddis fly (Trichoptera)	4	0	21	0	25	84.0%
millipede	20	0	0	0	20	0.0%
bird	19	0	0	0	19	0.0%
fern	19	0	0	0	19	0.0%
centipede	18	0	0	0	18	0.0%
insect - orthopteran	12	0	6	0	18	33.3%
harvestman (Opiliones)	16	0	0	0	16	0.0%
echinoderm	16	0	0	0	16	0.0%
insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	5	0	10	1	16	68.8%
insect - mayfly (Ephemeroptera)	4	0	11	0	15	73.3%
bony fish (Actinopterygii)	13	0	0	0	13	0.0%
sponge (Porifera)	10	0	0	0	10	0.0%
bryozoan	10	0	0	0	10	0.0%
terrestrial mammal	5	0	4	0	9	44.4%
tunicate (Urochordata)	5	0	2	0	7	28.6%
insect - thrips (Thysanoptera)	4	0	0	0	4	0.0%
amphibian	4	0	0	0	4	0.0%
flatworm (Turbellaria)	3	0	0	0	3	0.0%
conifer	3	0	0	0	3	0.0%
Insect - alderfly (Megaloptera)	3	0	0	0	3	0.0%
ribbon worm (Nemertinea)	2	0	0	0	2	0.0%
Centipedes & Millipedes	2	0	0	0	2	0.0%
moss	1	0	0	0	1	0.0%
springtail (Collembola)	1	0	0	0	1	0.0%
lichen	1	0	0	0	1	0.0%
	10,510	7	2,760	3	13,280	

The YNU would like to thank the organisations who have contributed to the verification of YNU records, including but not limited to: the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Tachinid and Larger Brachycera Recording Schemes of the Dipterists' Forum, BWARS, the Orthoptera Recording Scheme, the Heteroptera Recording Scheme, the Marine Biological Association and the Mammal Society.

Much of this verification has been done by National Recording Scheme experts based outside Yorkshire. It would be ideal to have more of the verification done by experts based in Yorkshire, i.e. the YNU's own Recorders who are listed in the membership card as having responsibility for a particular taxonomic group.

Bill Ely asked if verifiers can verify their own records – Paula confirmed that they can. Verifiers are appointed by the Biological Records Centre in conjunction with the relevant national recording scheme. This gives them access to verify all records of species in their area of expertise, including their own.

Action: YNU Recorders - if you would be willing to verify records of a group of species please contact Paula Lightfoot on p.lightfoot@btinternet.com Written instructions are available and one-to-one training can be provided.

Action: Paula – set up Andy Godfrey with access to verify Diptera records. Show John Bowers how to access Odonata records to verify.

9. YNU Information Working Group (see minutes of previous meeting)

To be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Correspondence / Announcements

10.1 Land Trust and Buglife – letter of support for WREN bid

The YNU was contacted by Ian Kendall of the Land Trust asking us to write a letter of support for a joint funding bid with Buglife to WREN. If the bid is successful, the project will bring about habitat improvements to a number of coalfield sites in South Yorkshire. John Bowers and Adrian Norris have both written letters of support and Adrian Norris has volunteered to help coordinate surveys and species identification workshops. There may be a bioblitz at one of the sites. Terry Crawford and Adrian Norris have offered to run an ID workshop on Lepidoptera and/or Mollusca.

It was stressed that proposed habitat enhancement works need to be informed by an understanding of the microhabitats and species communities present, but Buglife's involvement should ensure that decisions are well-informed.

Ian Kendall would be interested in meeting with the YNU at some point to discuss recording and habitat enhancement on these brownfield sites.

10.2 YNU Membership Officer change

Claire Neill has resigned as YNU Administrative Officer. John Hume has taken on the Webmaster role and Kerry Netherway the role of Events Coordinator, but we are seeking someone to take on the membership role, which involves maintaining an Access database of membership details, adding new members, ensuring subscriptions are paid on time, ensuring that publications are sent out to all paid-up members and providing data for the annual Gift Aid claim. John Bowers is in discussion with someone interested in taking on the role.

Claire Neill has a few hundred copies of YNU publications at her house including recent issues of the Naturalist, Bird Report and Butterfly & Moth Report.

Action: Paula – send Claire's address to Chris Young to arrange collection before February 20th of any publications the YNU may wish to keep.

10.3 Digitisation of records – support available

Some YNU members have sent records to Adrian Norris and Paula Lightfoot recently in various formats including Word documents, handwritten notes, PDFs and Excel spreadsheets. Jane

Pottas has agreed to enter these records into the YNU website. Jane has extensive experience of digitising biological records from her work for the Natural History Museum.

10.4 AGM venue

Terry Whitaker will finalise the AGM venue when he returns to the UK. The two options are Malham Tarn field centre, which would require minibus transport to be organised from Settle station, or the Royal Oak which is currently closed for re-fitting but is less than a ten minute walk from Settle station.

10.5 Tour de France Grand Départ 5th – 6th July

This issue has been raised by Terry Crawford, who attended a presentation in December by Welcome to Yorkshire. The event will attract huge numbers of spectators, support convoys, heavy traffic and temporary campsites. There was no opportunity for questions so Terry was unable to ask whether any kind of environmental impact assessment had been carried out or if any mitigation measures were in place to avoid damage to the Yorkshire Dales roadside verges and dry stone walls which have significant biodiversity value. Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North Yorkshire Police may be able to advise on where the designated spectator areas will be.

Action: David Lindley to contact Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority with a view to trying to protect particularly sensitive areas

Action: All – if you can identify any sites of particular concern please notify David Lindley.

If you are travelling around or through Yorkshire on the weekend of the 5th-6th July, check the website for road closures and be aware of likely delays around these dates.

<http://letour.yorkshire.com/the-grand-d%C3%A9part-2014>

10.6 Leeds University MSc Field Skills Day 6th May

Roger Key has e-mailed YNU recorders to ask for their participation in this training day, and received the following offers to tutor small groups:

Michael Archer	Bumblebees
Alan Braddock	Fungi
Jon Capel	Plants
Terry Crawford	Lepidoptera
Mike Denton	Birds or Insects
Peter & Sharon Flint	Freshwater invertebrates
Andrew Grayson	Insects
Paula Lightfoot	Biological recording / Accessing biological records
Roger Key	General invertebrates or beetles (morning only)
Adrian Norris	Snails/slugs
Geoff Oxford	Spiders
Julian Small	Insects
Terry Whittaker	Lepidoptera

Bill Ely and Michael Wilcox have also offered to help if needed. Roger is awaiting responses from a further 10 people.

The event will take place at St Chad's and Meanwood Valley. Rupert Quinnell and possibly also Chris Hassle from Leeds University will be there. The University will supply any necessary equipment (within reason!) and will reimburse travel expenses at 40p a mile.

Action – if you would be interested in doing field work with a small group of students as part of this event, please contact Roger Key on key_r_s@yahoo.co.uk

11. Any other business

The YNU Ornithological Section has been contacted by Mrs Lloyd, whose late husband had a cabinet of index cards of Aire Valley bird records going back 100 years. Colin Howes has

expressed an interest in looking at them so John Wint will collect them and pass them on. If Colin is able to check and prioritise these, Jane Pottas may be able to digitise them.

12. Date of next meeting

Saturday the 11th October 2014. Apologies from the Minutes Secretary due to a clash with a Marine and Coastal event.