



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union Natural Sciences Forum

Charity 224018

The twenty sixth meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum was held at the Palm Court Hotel, Scarborough, from 11.30am to 12.45pm on Saturday, 16th November 2013.

MINUTES

1. Present:

This attendance list was copied from the sign-in sheet, which was incomplete.

Peter Flint (chair), Paula Lightfoot (minutes secretary), Jill Warwick, Sharon Flint, Vicky Kindemba, Terry Whitaker, Bill Ely, Mick Carroll, Chris Young, John Bowers, Jane Pottas, Claire Neill, Sarah West, Colin Howes, Geoff Oxford, Mark Seaward, Michael Archer, Adrian Norris, Albert Henderson, Terry Crawford, William Curtis, Ian Glaves, Andy Millard, Geoff Oxford, Joyce Payne, Alan Ritson, D. P. Savage, Nan Sykes, Heather Walker, Angela Wheatcroft, Jim Pewtress, Angela Gowland, Shirley Pashby, Richard Comley.

2. Apologies for absence

Alan Braddock, Janetta Lambert, Andy Godfrey, Margaret Atherden, Simon Warwick.

3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes and actions of the meeting held at St Chad's on the 12th October have been distributed via e-mail and can also be downloaded from the [YNU website](#).

4. Matters arising

At the meeting on 12th October, Peter Flint was instructed to write to Les Magee regarding his role as Secretary of the Freshwater Ecology Section. However, Peter has been notified that Les Magee has since passed away at the age of 95. Sharon and Peter Flint attended the funeral as representatives of the YNU and Colin Howes attended as a personal friend. Les Magee's daughter has asked if the YNU will take care of her father's biological records as he would not have wished these to be lost. Peter Flint has agreed and will take responsibility for these as the new Secretary of the Freshwater Section.

The Key to Yorkshire *Hieracia* was discussed at the Executive meeting on 26th October. The YNU has decided to proceed with reviewing the material with a view to assisting with the publication. No firm decision regarding publication will be made until the next Executive meeting in February 2014.

Geoff Oxford was nominated as President for 2015 at the Executive meeting and this was accepted and will be announced at the AGM this afternoon.

The YNU Executive approved the suggestion to pay for improvements to the online recording pages on the YNU website as detailed in the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. YNU Conference

The theme of the 2014 conference will be: **Museums and Nature: the Modern Perspective**. Kerry Netherway from Natural England will organise the logistics and Jane Pottas will arrange speakers. The Education Committee are overseeing the organisation.

The conference will be held at the Yorkshire Museum, who have a new Natural Sciences Curator. This is a good opportunity to cement the relationship between the YNU and the museum. We are awaiting confirmation of available dates. The theme will cover topics such as:

- Modern acquisition policy, what materials do they want?
- Curation
- DNA, some of the modern uses of museum materials
- Education - both outreach and display materials.

Concerns were raised about the potential impact of the closure of Lendal Bridge on access to the conference, but this would not have any impact as the bridge is only closed to traffic between 10.30am and 5.00pm.

http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200174/planning_and_building_control/686/reinvigorate_york/2

Concerns were also raised about the cost of parking in York city centre. The venue is easily accessible by public transport including train, bus and Park & Ride. Only those bringing materials for display or sale will need to park nearby. If you are bringing in equipment you can drive cars onto site before 9.30am.

Post-meeting note from Minutes Secretary – non-profit organisations wishing to put on a display that is relevant to the theme of the conference should discuss their requirements with Kerry Netherway, as the YNU could reimburse their parking expenses by prior agreement.

The first point of contact for the conference is Sarah West, chair of the Education Committee, whose details are on the membership card.

Action - If you have any suggestions for speakers or topics, please contact Sarah.

6. Leeds University Field Skills Training Day

This is being run by Roger Key as he is already involved in teaching the Masters students at Leeds University. All the administration and organisation is being done by the University this year rather than by the YNU. All the YNU has to do is let Leeds University know which tutors we have available and what their area of expertise is. The University will allocate students to tutors.

The date is Tuesday the 6th May.

The possibility of doing this for the University of York has been considered, but there have been timetabling considerations e.g. clashing with field trips and work placements.

These timetable considerations are the reason why the Leeds training day takes place earlier in the season than naturalists would want to carry out field skills training. It is often not good weather conditions for Hymenoptera, Lepidoptera etc.

We need to make students aware of the other courses that we run at more suitable times, e.g. the moth and dragonfly workshops run by John Bowers later in the year.

For those who haven't taken part in these in the past, these events are very successful and have occasionally led to students undertaking further research on the groups they studied during the field skills training day, it has also helped in their consideration of future careers.

Action - If anyone is interested in tutoring a small group of students about a particular group of species they should speak to Roger Key, whose details are in the membership card.

7. Flat Hedgehog Survey

Report from Colin Howes: For a number of years there have been a sequence of national surveys on hedgehog road casualties which showed that hedgehog populations are in serious decline.

In 1990-91, the YNU undertook a flat hedgehog survey using an effort-based methodology developed by the Mammal Society. The key points of the methodology are:

- You record the start and end point of a journey taken by car and record the number of road killed hedgehogs seen along the route.
- You have to record your total mileage.
- The journeys have to be over 20 miles.
- You can't log the same route more than once per month.
- The survey is carried out in July-September, the high point of hedgehog activity.

It can occur that two or more surveyors are surveying the same stretch, but the extra records are discarded during analysis.

In the first survey, 145 transects were completed in the Yorkshire region. 324 squashed hedgehogs were recorded.

This year, despite publicity via the *Naturalist* and YNU website, only 15 transects were completed. The results show a lower number of dead hedgehogs per mile in the second survey compared to the first survey, but we don't know if the results are significant due to the lower level of participation in the second survey. We will aim to run the survey again next year.

Suggestion – next year could we provide facilities for users to enter their records online rather than posting them? The recording form needs to be printed out to enable recording en route, but the records could then be entered online.

Colin Howes thanked Jill Warwick for making overtures to the media to publicise the survey and Claire Neill for putting information on the website.

8. Correspondence / Announcements

The eighth Malham Tarn Research Seminar will take place from Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th November 2013. It will include presentations, displays, discussion groups and walks. Speakers include Terry Whitaker and Sharon and Peter Flint. For more information or to book, visit the FSC website or e-mail enquiries.mt@field-studies-council.org

A few paper copies were in circulation of the programme for a survey of Swaledale in 2014 organised by John Newbould, and a PDF file will be put on the website shortly.

9. Any other business

9.1 Index to the *Naturalist*

The new version of the *Naturalist* does not have an index. The editorial Board is aware of this. Chris Young is creating a subject index. Mark Seaward employed someone to create an index of earlier *Naturalists*, it took her a whole year to create an index of 25 years, but the job wouldn't take this long now as it would be computerised. The job would need to be done by specialists for each specialist area. This would be a huge task

due to taxonomic synonymy and changes of place names, but would be an extremely useful resource. There are people who have produced indexes for their own subject area, e.g. George Shaw produced a bryological index.

The Editorial Board will ask authors to provide a list of well-chosen key words, and will aim to ensure that titles and abstracts are useful.

9.2 Index of Excursions

At the Natural Sciences meeting on 24th November 2012 Terry Whitaker volunteered to help take forward a project started by Colin Howes and added to by Hannah Droop to create an index of YNU excursions. The following extract from the minutes of the Natural Sciences meeting held on 15th September 2012 explains the background to this:

Colin Howes has created a YNU Excursions Index, listing all YNU excursions from 1877 to 1999 along with the reference for the excursion report in the *Naturalist*. Hannah Droop has completed this index up to 2012 and added grid references to it so that the locations can be mapped. The addition of grid references has been completed for excursions dating back to the 1980s. A volunteer should be sought to add grid references to the index for excursions from 1877 to the 1980s. This index could be used as a basis for an interactive map of VC excursions on the website. NEYEDC could also use this in data searches to direct data users towards excursion reports in the *Naturalist*.

Terry Whitaker hasn't had time to start this yet but is keen to take it forward. Bill Ely has a paper list which he is willing to hand over for digitisation. This task would be best divided between a number of people. Bing and Google Maps are useful resources for finding place names.

It was suggested that a working group should be formed to coordinate better sharing of information by the YNU.

Action - Colin Howes, Richard Comley, Chris Young, Bill Ely, Terry Whitaker to take this forward.

The first step should be to define the required outputs. These could include:

- Index and interactive map of field meeting locations and reports
- Digitisation of species data from lists in excursion reports
- Index of naturalists
- Gazetteer of Yorkshire

10. Date of next meeting –TBC – at St Chad's, Headingley

The draft 2014 Membership Card was in circulation during the Natural Sciences Forum meeting and the AGM. Corrections and additions were notified to Claire Neill.