



## Yorkshire Naturalists' Union

### Natural Sciences Forum

Charity 224018

**The twenty ninth meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum was held at Malham Tarn Field Studies Centre, from 11.30am to 12.45pm on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014.**

Present: Phyl Abbott, Judith Allinson, Jane Baddeley, John Bowers, Doris Cairns, Mike Cannaway Terry Crawford, Bill Ely, Cliff Evans, Gladys Evans, Peter Flint (Chair), Sharon Flint, Anita Glover, Andy Godfrey, Valerie Hall, Colin Howes, Helen Leitch, Paula Lightfoot (minutes), Jill Lucas, Stephen Millard, Andy Millard, Deborah Millward, Geoff Morries, Tony Moverley, Roger Neale, Adrian Norris, Geoff Oxford, Jane Pottas, Amanda Richardson, Mark Seaward, Robert Starling, Nancy Stedman, Peter Tannett, Jill Warwick, Simon Warwick, Sarah West, Terry Whitaker, Chris Young

Jim Wright, the new Head of Centre at Malham Tarn Field Studies Centre welcomed the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union and told us about the Centre's history. Next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Pennine Way, there are plans to hold a commemorative event at the Centre.

### **Minutes**

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mick Carroll, Albert Henderson, Charles Fletcher, Craig Thomas, John Newbould, Joyce Payne and Geoffrey Fryer

2. Minutes

Minutes and actions of the meeting held at St Chad's on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were not yet available but will be added to the YNU website in due course.

3. Matters arising

The Chairman said that as there were no minutes available there were no matters arising that were not covered by items already on the agenda.

4. Key to Yorkshire *Hieracia* by Vincent Jones

The Key to Yorkshire *Hieracia* by Vincent Jones will be published next month. 140 copies will be printed, over 90 of which have been pre-sold, 10 will be given free of charge to the author, the YNU library and copyright libraries, and around 40 are available for sale at the original pre-publication price of £22.50 + £2.50 postage. The full price would be £35. They are available to order online or by contacting Jane Pottas.

Thanks were expressed to Albert Henderson for coordinating this publication.

TW asked if there was a possibility of increasing the print run. JB replied that it had already been increased from 100 to 140 but probably wouldn't sell many more than that. Some copies have been sold by BSBI, but the YNU had already sold 70 copies before the BSBI started promoting it.

5. Membership Card 2015 and website events calendar

The printer's deadline for getting information into the 2015 Membership Card and the calendar in the December issue of the *Naturalist* is the **30<sup>th</sup> November**. Please send details of events or changes of contact details to Ellen Tidy at [membership@ynu.org.uk](mailto:membership@ynu.org.uk)

Information provided after the end of this month can be added to the YNU website, but can't be added to the membership card or the December issue of the *Naturalist*. Please send events for the website to John Hume at [webmaster@ynu.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@ynu.org.uk)

6. Natural Sciences Forum – remit and number of meetings

Traditionally there have been three Natural Sciences meetings per year. They have been scheduled to fit around the field season and before the Executive meetings, but sometimes the timing results in low attendance (as at the last meeting on October 11<sup>th</sup>). The question was raised as to whether they should be held in a different part of Yorkshire, but there was very strong support for continuing to hold them in Leeds.

Attendance at the October meeting was low. It has been discussed before whether there needs to be an Autumn meeting at all, as it is so close to the pre-AGM meeting. The pre-AGM meeting is needed so that decisions can be brought to the AGM. Mark Seaward suggested holding the Autumn meeting as part of one of the VC excursions if a suitable venue can be found. Sarah West proposed having just two meetings per year, one in Spring and one pre-AGM, and to trial this for a couple of years. This was put to the vote and carried with 10 votes in favour and 8 against. Bill Ely reminded the Forum that matters can be raised and discussed via digital fora (eg. Google Groups) so there is not always a need for a face to face meeting.

Terry Whitaker proposed holding the NSF meeting on the same day as the Executive meeting and moving both to the end of March. This was put to a vote and the motion carried by 14 votes in favour and 1 against.

**PL - contact St Chads to book the meeting room for late March subject to availability (avoiding Easter holidays)**

7. YNU membership database – how to use this more effectively

PL advised the Forum that the YNU membership details are held in an Access database which is maintained by the membership officer, Ellen Tidy. It contains contact details and interests for over 400 individual members. This information cannot be made available to other YNU members due to the Data Protection Act. PL suggested that more use could be made of the membership database by:

- Asking members to tick a box to say that their details can be passed on to other members.
- Standardising the way members' interests are recorded. This is currently a free text field. Fields could be set up with codes e.g. FW (freshwater). This would make it possible to query the database to find all members with a particular interest.
- Asking new members how they heard of the YNU and why they joined the YNU and storing this information in standard fields.
- Distributing a list of members and their interests annually (as the Conchological Society do)

There was general support for the idea – it would help with planning field meetings and maximising attendance. Andy Godfrey mentioned that both BENHS and RES publish

membership lists and these are very useful. Adrian Norris said that phone numbers and email addresses must be included in these lists. It was agreed that this would be worth pursuing, but also that it would take some time to be useful as all existing members would need to be contacted.

**JB and PL to ask Ellen Tidy to produce a draft strategy for taking this forward**

Judith Allinson asked if it is possible to join as a 10 year or life member. John Bowers said that this has been discussed before but felt it would not be beneficial to the YNU.

The question was raised as to how the YNU could improve communication and collaboration with their affiliated societies. This includes avoiding clashes of field meetings, organising more joint field meetings, encouraging affiliated societies to write about their history and activities for the *Naturalist* and encouraging affiliated societies to attend Natural Sciences Forum meetings.

Mark Seaward asked whether members of affiliated societies could vote at the AGM. John Bowers confirmed that they could not. Only members of the YNU can vote at the AGM, although non-members are welcome to attend. It was pointed out that many members of the YNU are also members of one or more affiliated societies. Members of affiliated societies can raise issues and vote at the Natural Sciences Forum.

Sarah West suggested asking new members whether they would like to be sent information/have their details passed on to relevant affiliated societies in their area. This was accepted and will be included in the action point above (JB and PL).

**Everyone – if you arrange a field meeting or ID workshop please always contact the relevant affiliated society and ask if they would like to collaborate and promote it to their members.**

8. The *Naturalist*

Sharon Flint asked if the *Naturalist* is intended to be solely a peer reviewed scientific journal or whether it could also contain popular natural history articles to appeal to an amateur naturalist. John Bowers replied that many papers, especially those submitted by working academics, are peer reviewed or refereed, but the whole journal is intended to appeal to amateur naturalists. The editorial board are always actively seeking articles, including informal papers about members' natural history interests, with photos if possible. Bill Ely said that that only one article had been rejected in recent years and that was because it was not relevant to Yorkshire (Devon!).

9. YNU Conference 2016

The Education Committee has recommended to the Executive that the YNU should postpone their next conference until Spring 2016. The Executive has accepted this recommendation. Kerry Netherway will organise logistics as she did for the previous conference and this AGM, but someone needs to organise speakers and we are more likely to find a volunteer to do this if we allow a longer timeframe.

**Everyone – if you would like to join the Education Committee and/or help to organise the conference, please contact Sarah West (details on the YNU website).**

10. Date of next meeting

This will be fixed for late March subject to venue availability. Details will be posted on the website and in the Membership Card and the December issue of the *Naturalist*.