



Yorkshire Naturalists' Union
Natural Sciences Committee
Charity 224018

The twentieth meeting of the Natural Sciences Committee was held at the Best Western Ripon Spa Hotel, Park Street, Ripon HG4 2BU at 10.30am on Saturday 19th November.

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Norris (Chairman), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes)

Phyl Abbott, Michael Archer, Margaret Atherden, Alasdair Booth, John Bowers, Mick Carroll, Graeme Coles, Terry Crawford, Mike Denton, Hannah Droop, Geoffrey Fryer, Andy Godfrey, Albert Henderson, Roger Key, John Newbould, Mark Seaward, Craig Thomas, Jill Warwick, Sarah West, Geoffrey Wilmore, John Wint.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Richard Comley, Bill Curtis, Charlie Fletcher, Ian Instone, Jean Kendrew, Janetta Lambert, David Lindley, Dr J.R. Mather, Andy Millard, Paul Simmons, Joyce Simmons, Terry Whitaker, Christopher Young

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th September 2011

Minutes of the previous meeting are available to download from:

http://www.ynu.org.uk/Natural_Sciences_Committee and were accepted as a true record with the following corrections:

The dates of the natural history event in York Museum Gardens will be the 1st and 2nd June 2012, not the 25th and 26th May as reported.

The VC62 excursion on 21st July 2012 will be to The Howls, The Ings and The Carrs

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Election of officers to the Natural Sciences Committee

Jim Pewtress has stepped down as representative of the Bird Section on the Natural Sciences Committee. John Wint was elected as his replacement. Albert Henderson was elected as representative of the Historical Section.

Action: Note these changes in the 2012 Programme Card (Hannah Droop)

Natural Sciences Committee meetings are open to everyone, but only elected officers have voting rights. The Committee doesn't control any funds but can request funds and recommend how funds are spent. The Executive will be reviewing the YNU's constitution this year and will consider the remit of the Natural Sciences Committee as part of this exercise.

5. YNU archives and library

YNU archives are stored and fully documented by West Yorkshire Archive Service in Sheepscar, Leeds <http://www.archives.wyjs.org.uk/>.

The Sheepscar reading room is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.30am to 5pm. However, YNU records are stored off-site so WYAS must be contacted to arrange to view them at Sheepscar. Any member of the public can access the YNU archives, with the exception of official minutes. YNU members can remove items for exhibition or research, but only with prior notification and with written permission from the YNU Executive. The archives remain the property of the YNU and are stored free of charge by West Yorkshire Archive Service. Adrian Norris acts as the YNU agent with regard to the archives.

For information on the contents of the archive see:

Norris, A., & Seaward, M.R.D., 1992, Archives of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. *Naturalist* 117:31-40

Mark Seaward has a considerable collection of documents and photographs pertaining to the YNU which are currently stored at Bradford University. These cannot be stored at the University indefinitely and MS would prefer to have them stored within the YNU library where they will be more easily accessible to members than at the Leeds archive. MS's collection fills one filing cabinet, and other members also have collections of material which needs to be archived. Some library books could be sold to make space for archive material, and fireproof filing cabinets could be purchased if necessary. It would be beneficial if a YNU member could act as an archivist to help others access the material when they need it. The YNU library is currently stored at NEYEDC's offices at St Williams College and is available for consultation by appointment. It should be possible to continue this arrangement, as the Diocese have offered NEYEDC a three year contract for the whole third floor of St William's College. Sarah West mentioned that York Museums Trust are keen to forge closer links with the YNU and they have space available in their archives. They have also offered to host YNU executive meetings free of charge.

It was stressed that the archives are for storing correspondence, photographs, books and official documents, but not biological records. Biological records should be sent to Hannah Droop at records.officer@ynu.org.uk. The YNU Library does hold old record cards and the YNU computer can be used to store back-up data of any records held electronically by members.

Action: Librarian to coordinate a census of material for archiving currently held by YNU members and to convene a meeting to explore options (Christopher Young)

6. Biodiversity recording in the Dales National Park

Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum has launched the second Local Biodiversity Action Plan for the Yorkshire Dales National Park entitled *Nature in the Dales: 2020 Vision*. A summary document and the Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans can be downloaded here:

<http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/biodiversityactionplan.htm>

To monitor and report progress towards BAP targets, YDBF have compiled a Species Survey Plan. Adrian Norris has advised them of the omission of a BAP priority mollusc species from this plan. John Newbould is planning to organise a survey in July to focus on recording BAP priority species in the Dales. Records of any species, particularly the BAP priority species, from the Dales National Park can be sent to YHEDN as usual, because they have a contract with the National Park Authority and will ensure that the records are made available to them.

7. Conference 2012 – format and speakers

The YNU Conference will be held at the National Science Learning Centre at York University on the 24th March 2012 with the theme “Brownfield sites and their importance for biodiversity”. The keynote speakers giving a general introduction to the theme of brownfield sites will be Professor Phil Wheeler, Head of the School of Science and the Environment at Manchester Metropolitan University and Sarah Henshall, Brownfield Conservation Officer, Buglife.

There will then be two sessions which will begin with speakers giving short talks on aspects of brownfield site biodiversity, after which delegates will divide into smaller groups to discuss the topics raised and then provide feedback on their discussion to the whole group. A skilled chairman is needed to ensure that these sessions run to time. Good rapporteurs and scribes are also needed to ensure that the important points are captured and fed back.

The final session will be a symposium on the subject of ‘challenging perceptions of brownfield sites’, with talks by Andy Millard from Leeds Metropolitan University and Ruth Potter from the Land Trust, followed by questions from the floor.

Lunch will be a hot buffet in the restaurant on site. There is space in the programme for one or two more 10 minute talks. The main aim of the conference is for YNU members to come together to discuss their own interests, records and research on the theme of brownfield sites.

Action: Comments on the proposed format, suggestions for speakers and offers to take on the role of chairman, rapporteur or scribe should be sent to Sarah West: sarah.west@york.ac.uk (All)

Action: If you have not yet booked to attend the Conference, please complete the booking form that was posted with the Annual Report and send it to Hannah Droop with your payment. (All)

8. Any other business

8.1 The YNU has received a request from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to carry out a field meeting in 2012 on private farmland at Appleton le Moors near Pickering. The farm contains around 90ha of arable and grassland with another 45ha of SSSI woodland along with a good stretch of the River Seven. The aim of the field meeting would be to gather information on species and habitats present to help the landowner to manage the farm to as high a conservation standard as possible. This is for a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme application, which means that Natural England will reimburse survey costs, enabling YNU to claim travel expenses. Mick Carroll will organise field meetings and put the dates in the YNU Programme Card. Members wishing to survey the site on other dates should contact MC to coordinate access with the landowner.

Action: Dates should be sent to Hannah Droop for inclusion in the Programme Card before the 10th of December. (Mick Carroll)

8.2 The YNU has received a request from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to provide expert support for a public event on Sunday 1st July 2012, the last day of National Insect Week. The focus of the event would be the specialist insects that process the strandline. The location is YWT’s new Living Seas visitor centre at South Landing Flamborough. Entomologists are required to lead guided strandline walks for families at around 10am and 11.30am. There will be displays and activities inside the visitor centre all day, so assistance from YNU entomologists with collecting and identifying specimens at the centre would be very welcome.

Action: Anyone interested in participating in public activities or simply recording and identifying insects should contact Paula Lightfoot p.lightfoot@btinternet.com or Sarah West sarah.west@york.ac.uk

8.3 The YNU has received an invitation from RSPB Dovestone reserve in Greenfield, Saddleworth to take part in a Bioblitz in 2012. The date is likely to be the 8th-9th July but this is still subject to confirmation. The reserve covers around 4,000ha of peat bog moorland with a reservoir, and conifer and mixed deciduous woodland habitat. There are opportunities for YNU to lead specialist surveys (e.g. mammal trapping), to provide ID support at the Bioblitz base, carry out their own recording and to have a display stand selling publications, membership and promoting the YNU. They will cover travel expenses for up to 25 miles.

Action: Those interested should contact Jamie Dunning jamiedunning8@gmail.com or Rachel Downham Rachel.Downham@RSPB.org.uk

8.4 Peter Skidmore, an internationally renowned entomologist, conservationist and a very active member of the YNU, died in 2009. For over half his life he campaigned tirelessly for the conservation of Thorne and Hatfield Moors as well as surveying, collecting and drawing together information on the flora and fauna of the moors.

Mrs Heather Skidmore, has launched a campaign to raise money to purchase 30 acres of SSSI woodland at Lindholme Hall in memory of her husband, so that the land can be managed for conservation.

For further information or to make a donation, visit:

<http://www.gomde.org.uk/peat-skid-moor-the-peat-appeal-n-8.html>

8.5 A concern was raised about mistakes in a recent article which appeared in the *Naturalist*, and the question was posed as to whether articles are peer reviewed. Members of the Editorial Board responded that all articles are refereed but only some are peer reviewed (the difference being that peer review is anonymous to eliminate bias). It was stressed that mistakes in articles could damage the YNU's reputation, but also accepted that mistakes can occur even in articles that have been peer reviewed.

Action: Editorial Board to review the situation.

9. Date of next meeting

28th April 2012 at St Chad's parish hall.

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union website – discussion led by Craig Thomas

Craig Thomas revealed first draft designs for the new YNU website and invited comments and questions. Feedback received included:

- It is important to keep the site looking fresh. The welcome images will be on a loop and will also change with the seasons.
- Affiliated societies need a higher profile on the website and need to be able to promote their events.
- It is important to be able track hits on the site, which pages were looked at and how visitors came to the site (e.g. via search engine or via a link from another site)

The YNU went out to tender for this work and appointed a local Yorkshire company, Biskit Ltd, who gave the most competitive quote and who were also recommended by Emma Lusby of Natural England. Biskit's quote covers training for members who wish to update content on the site, as well as technical support for two years.

The cost of developing the new website will be covered by legacies, with the Bird Section funding 50% of the costs. It is hoped that the new website will increase membership and publication sales. The YNU's website working group, consisting of Craig Thomas, Jill Warwick, John Wint, Paul Simmonds, Hannah Droop and Paula Lightfoot, wrote the design specification and will provide feedback to the designers throughout the creation process.