



**Yorkshire Naturalists' Union**  
**Natural Sciences Forum**  
Charity 224018

**The thirty-fourth meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum held at St Chad's Parish Centre from 10.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017.**

**AGENDA**

Present: Peter Flint (Chair), Paula Lightfoot (Minutes Secretary), John Bowers, Sharon Flint, Andy Millard, Andy Godfrey, Michael Archer

Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from Terry Crawford, Albert Henderson, Geoff Oxford, Jill Warwick, Barry Warrington and Kate Wright.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at Fountain's Abbey 05/11/2016 are available to download from the YNU website. They were approved as a true record. The following matters arising were discussed:

Three volumes of *The Naturalist* are missing from the Biodiversity Heritage Library website. PL contacted BHL about this – the issues have been scanned and are in an archive area rather than on the main website, but they will be added soon. A recent request from a member for an article published in 1990 was dealt with swiftly thanks to the BHL website, which made it easy to e-mail a PDF of the article to the member.

Sarah White has agreed to organise a residential field meeting at Spurn for the VC61 field meeting in 2018. However, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust were granted planning permission in January to build a visitor centre on Spurn, and SW is looking into whether the planned field meeting is likely to be disrupted by construction work.

There were no further matters arising that are not on the agenda.

2. YNU Education Committee

JB undertook at the last meeting to review prospects for the Education Committee. He has discussed this with Terry Crawford, former acting Chair of the committee, and concluded that the Committee should be wound up. No one has agreed to take on the role of Chair, and several members have stepped down due to health issues, relocation or other commitments. The main role of the Education Committee in recent years was to organise the Leeds University Field Skills training day, and this can be achieved without a committee. They also oversaw the library move, but this has now been completed successfully. Individual members and Sections will continue to deliver activities to support the development of natural history skills in the region, for example our programme of field meetings, and to participate in events run by our affiliated societies and other local natural history organisations.

The topic of equipment for outreach and education activities was discussed. The YNU has several pieces of natural history equipment, some purchased with OPAL funding, which is stored by different YNU officers and made available for use when needed. The details are stored in an inventory list on the YNU laptop.

*[post-meeting note: Terry Crawford has contacted members of the Education Committee to advise them that the Committee has been wound up and to thank them for their help and support. PL has removed references to the Committee from the YNU website and will remove this from the 2018 Membership Card.]*

### 3. YNU/Leeds University Field Skills Training Day

The Field Skills Training Day for students on Leeds University's MSc Biodiversity Conservation course will take place at St Chad's Parish Centre on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September. This is being organised by Terry Crawford, who has provided the information below for those interested in participating:

- The day is very much a taster session; an opportunity to learn something about techniques of sampling, identifying and recording relevant taxa, and most importantly simply to witness the attitudes, experience and enthusiasm of a practising naturalist.
- Leeds University provide equipment, identification guides and cover the travel expenses of tutors. SF asked whether the University could provide a Malaise trap – we will ask them before the event.
- If you are interested in tutoring, please let TC know your taxonomic interests and the breadth you can deal with, e.g. Coleoptera versus general entomology.
- The University allocates students to tutors, noting where possible their expressed taxonomic preferences.
- It is rare for a student to have any significant experience of their chosen taxonomic group.
- YNU members who are unsure whether or not they would like to be involved are welcome to attend as an observer or to support an experienced tutor.
- There are likely to be about 40 students. The optimal group size is four, so we need about 10 tutor groups.
- With very popular taxonomic groups (e.g. Lepidoptera), two tutors might take a larger group (6 to 8 students).
- If there is a maximum group size, possibly because of equipment requirements please let TC know.
- Equally, if any potential tutor would be upset to have a smaller group, and perhaps feel that their time had been wasted, then they should state their minimum acceptable group size.
- IMPORTANT to note that a tutor might offer their services but we might not be able to form a group for them, and we would only discover this just before the actual day.
- The YNU day is right at the beginning of the students' course. They are still getting to know one another, so there is an important social aspect as well.

**Please could anyone who is interested contact Terry Crawford, supplying your telephone number as well as e-mail address for follow up communication.**

The timing of the event was discussed – it is not the ideal time of year for several invertebrate groups, but tutors often bring their own specimens. Furthermore, an important aim of the day is give the students the opportunity to practice field techniques, and this can be achieved even if only a few common species are present.

#### 4. YNU Conference 2017

The YNU Conference will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> April at the University of York, as announced in *The Naturalist*, the YNU website and via e-mail to members and affiliated societies. There are 80 places available, of which over 50 have already been booked, so anyone wishing to attend is encouraged to book soon.

PL expressed thanks to the members and affiliated societies who have provided valuable input and suggestions throughout the conference planning process.

PL visited the University last month and negotiated an extra room free of charge to make more space for displays because more exhibitors have booked than in previous years.

It was stressed that the conference is intended very much as a forum for discussion, an opportunity to see and hear about what other members and societies are doing, rather than an attempt to steer the YNU towards delivering any particular projects, events or activities. JB agreed to give the closing thoughts and thank the speakers and exhibitors.

#### 5. YNU Conference 2018

Two potential themes had previously been proposed, namely mineral extraction in national parks and invasive/non-native species. The impact of Brexit on nature conservation and monitoring was discussed as a possible conference theme, but it was agreed that this would be too speculative a theme for 2018.

There was discussion about several interesting topics within the non-native species theme, for example the arrival of the Asian hornet and its impact on honeybees, the influence of climate change and the risk of mosquito-borne diseases if certain mosquito species expand their range. There are excellent potential speakers in Yorkshire or nearby, e.g. Paul Bradley for the impact of non-native crayfish on white-clawed crayfish populations, Chris Thomas at York University for species response to climate change and the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat at Sand Hutton for national and international policy and legislation.

Other conference themes might be suggested by members – it was therefore proposed to put an announcement on the website outlining the two themes suggested so far, but also inviting further proposals and offers of help with organisation. Agreed that this should be done after the current conference.

It was agreed that the 2018 conference should be in the Leeds/York area at a professional conference venue that is accessible by public transport.

**PL – add information to the website in April**

#### 6. Petition for GCSE in Natural History

There is a petition to UK Government to develop a GCSE in Natural History <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/176749>. At the time of the meeting, the petition had just over 5,000 signatures. If it gets 10,000 signatures the Government will have to respond to the petition and if it gets 100,000 signatures the matter will be

considered for debate in Parliament, which would raise awareness of the cultural and scientific importance of natural history skills. If successful, it could create new opportunities for young people to learn about and enjoy natural history. This information was e-mailed to members and affiliated societies on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, and some affiliated societies then forwarded it to their members.

## 7. Events and call for volunteers:

### 7.1 Malham Tarn FSC Bioblitz

Malham Tarn Field Centre are holding a bioblitz on the 29<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup> April to celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It will run for 24 hours from Saturday evening to Sunday evening. The FSC would like as many YNU naturalists as possible to take part in identifying and recording species and are offering free full-board accommodation to those able to participate. YNU would also be welcome to bring a display. PF and SF will be there on both days, recording for the bioblitz and running pond dipping activities for the public. The bioblitz should be a good social event too. PF has prepared an e-mail, which has been approved by the Head of Centre at Malham Tarn, to let YNU recorders know about the event and ask them to contact FSC directly if they would like to take part.

### 7.2 Leeds Birdfair

YNU will be exhibiting at the [Leeds Birdfair](#) at Rodley Nature Reserve on Saturday 24th June 2017. JB, JW and AM took part in the first Leeds Birdfair last June, it was a very enjoyable day and resulted in new members joining the YNU and the sale of 15 Bird Reports. JB will run two insect walks for the public during the event and JW will be involved with emptying the moth trap, so it would be ideal if other volunteers were available to help man the stall and talk to people about the YNU. The 2013 Bird Report will be available for sale by then. PF and SF volunteered to help. The event opens at 8.30am for exhibitors setting up stalls. SF offered to bring her poster about moth trapping for riverflies. The venue does not provide poster boards, but JB offered to bring an easel and pin-boards, SF offered to bring a projector screen.

There was discussion about buying poster boards for use at events, although these would need to be kept at someone's house and they can be quite heavy and bulky to transport. The following are examples of suppliers of folding display panels to hire or buy:

<http://www.poster-boards.co.uk/folding-kits.html>

<https://www.xldisplays.co.uk/categories/Display-Boards/>

[https://www.go-displays.co.uk/acatalog/Folding\\_Display\\_Boards.html](https://www.go-displays.co.uk/acatalog/Folding_Display_Boards.html)

### 7.3 Stillingfleet Lodge Wildlife Day

We have been invited to have a stand to promote the YNU at Stillingfleet Lodge Wildlife Day on Sunday 18th June. This is an annual event run by Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens just south of York. It is free to have a stand there and they already have 10 wildlife charities signed up to attend, including some of our affiliated societies. More information can be found here -

[www.stillingfleetlodgenurseries.co.uk](http://www.stillingfleetlodgenurseries.co.uk). If you are interested in attending, please contact Paula Lightfoot.

#### 7.4 Howell Wood Bioblitz

Gordon Haycock (Wharfedale Naturalists' Society) and Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership are planning a bioblitz on Saturday 2nd September at Howell Wood near South Kirkby in Doncaster District (SE434097). They would welcome participation by YNU members. Further information will be provided soon.

#### 7.5 Insect Festival

The Royal Entomological Society's Insect Festival is being held at the Hospitium in York Museum Gardens on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017. The YNU Insect Section have run a stand at this event in previous years.

*[post-meeting note: Dave Chesmore has confirmed he has two display tables booked at this event]*

#### 7.5 8<sup>th</sup> South Yorkshire Natural History Day

Sorby Natural History Society are hosting their annual Festival of Amateur Natural History "What's Going On in South Yorkshire" on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February, with speakers including Colin Howes and Margaret Redfern. It was noted that this event coincides with the YNU's Insect Section meeting this year.

### 8. NEYEDC Data Donors Meeting

YNU recorders received an e-mail from Mark Wills at NEYEDC on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, stating that NEYEDC wish to host a 'Data Donor Meeting' to explore the use of ecological data in decision-making as well as discussing the transfer of data to the new NBN Atlas and the opportunities surrounding the move towards open data. NEYEDC would value the contribution of YNU Recorders to this meeting. A date is now being arranged based on feedback received about preferred dates/times. Further information will be circulated shortly, and YNU members are encouraged to attend if possible. MA and AG have already replied.

### 9. Any other business

9.1 JB reported that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have announced that Rotherham Biological Records Centre will continue to operate and will seek to cover running costs by increasing charges for data services. Rotherham BRC previously had much lower charges than other LERCs. If income from other clients is insufficient to cover operational costs, it is unclear whether this shortfall will be met by the Council. This decision is the result of a consultation during which other options were discussed, including the possibility of Sheffield BRC managing data services for Rotherham as they do for Barnsley. JB was interviewed by the local press on this subject, reporting that the YNU had formally objected to the proposed closure and is delighted that Rotherham BRC will continue to operate.

9.2 JB reported that Yorkshire Wildlife Trust have been granted planning permission to build a visitors' centre on Spurn. The original application was rejected last year on grounds of flood risk and visual impact. The YNU had objected to the

planning application on the grounds that it would disturb wading bird roosts; JB had proposed building a road but Natural England said this would impact the geology of the site. As a condition of planning consent, the authorities have asked that a liaison committee be established between YWT and local residents. YNU will seek to have a representative on this committee.

- 9.3 AM reported that he has received an e-mail from the daughter of Ellen Hazelwood, who was the vertebrate recorder for the YNU from 1937-67. Ellen Hazelwood published two books on frogs in the early 1990s and her daughter has sent two copies of each to the YNU. It was agreed that one copy of each should be sent to the library and that an article should appear in the next issue of *The Naturalist*, which will be part book review and part biography. Colin Howes could be approached to write this.
- 9.4 AG has received a request from Bob Croxton at Sorby Natural History Society for permission to reproduce on the Sorby website an article about bats that was originally published in *The Naturalist* in 1987. JB confirmed that this is fine, provided that *The Naturalist* is acknowledged.
- 9.5 AG reported that Martin Hammond's *Water Beetles of Yorkshire* atlas has been published by the Yorkshire and Humber Ecological Data Trust. It was agreed that the YNU should promote it as soon as it is available for sale.

[post-meeting note: this is now on the YNU website here:  
<http://www.ynu.org.uk/node/663>]

- 9.6 AG reported that a decision is expected early this year on the planning application to build a service station at Smithy Wood, an ancient woodland site in Sheffield. Further information can be found on the Woodland Trust's website here: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/our-campaigns/smithy-wood/>

#### 10. Date of next meeting and AGM

The next meeting of the Natural Sciences Forum will be held before the AGM on a Saturday in November. This will be hosted by the Harrogate Naturalists Society as part of their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The date and venue will be confirmed by the Executive.

[post-meeting note: the AGM will be held at the Bramall Learning Centre, RHS Harlow Carr on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November]