

# **YOREDALE BULLETIN**

## **2023**



**Yoredale Natural History Society**



**Cistus Forester Moth, Morpeth Scar, 6 June 2022 Derek Whiteley**



**Foxglove Frenzy, 4 June 2022 Christine Meek**

# YOREDALE BULLETIN

Issue 42

Spring 2023

## Recording the Activities during 2022 of The Yoredale Natural History Society and its Members

**Editor: Derek Whiteley**

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**Cover:** Fly Orchid at Waitby Greenriggs photo by Leonard Shepherd

*Chairman* Deborah Millward

*Hon. Secretary* Liz Barron

**The Yoredale Natural History Society** constitution was first written in 1979 with the aim of *“promoting an interest in, and an appreciation of, natural history with particular reference to Wensleydale”*.

## **Committee**

Chairman	Deborah Millward
Vice Chairman	Robert Hall
Hon. Secretary	Liz Barron
Winter Programme	Deborah Millward
Hon.Treasurer	Paul Hardill
Membership Secretary	Christine Meek
Field Secretary	Caroline Stott
Bulletin Editor	Derek Whiteley
Webmaster	Leonard Shepherd
Committee members	Jennie White, Sue Peckitt, Anne Readshaw, Gaby Baxter, Andy Baxter

## **Recorders during 2022**

**Birds** - Mary Atkins and Janet Huchinson

**Butterflies & some other insects** - Jennie White

**Hoverflies** – Derek Whiteley

**Spiders** - Andy Baxter

**Flowering Plants** - Sue Peckitt

**Fungi** - Christine Whitehead

**Mammals** - John Drewett

**Reptiles & Amphibians** - Rose Connor

The 2023 annual subscription is £10 (£5 students, 50p children under16), due on 1st January, or on joining. During spring and summer we run field trips, and during the winter a program of evening lectures in Leyburn Methodist Church Hall, usually on the last Friday of the month. The annual ***Bulletin*** is published in the first quarter, reporting our activities of the previous year.

*Children under 16 are welcome at all of our meetings, but to help comply with our child protection policy they must be accompanied by a parent or authorised adult.*

***CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESS: If you've changed your email address please keep the Membership Secretary informed.***

**New members and visitors are very welcome: visitors fee usually £2.00**

## Field Meetings in 2022

### East Witton 17 May 2022

Twenty members met at East Witton to enjoy a walk down the fields and then on the banks of the River Cover and its confluence with the Ure. It was a warm, often sunny day with Hawthorn blossom scenting the air. A great variety of flowers, over fifty in total were noted, amongst them many Cowslips, Bluebells, Wood Anemone, forget-me-nots, Butterburs, Hairy Violets, Lady's Smock and Lady's Mantle, Early Purple Orchids and Twayblade. The lemon-green papery seeds of the Wych Elm trees lit up the riverbanks, as if they were blossom. Butterflies included many Green-veined Whites, Orange Tips, Peacock and a lovely yellow Brimstone. A new member used his sweep net and introduced members to insect species such as spring crane-flies, Red-and-black Froghoppers, Giant Stonefly, Malachite Beetle and Cockchafer. Birds seen were Mistle Thrushes, Sand Martins building nests in the banks of the Cover and Swifts above the houses of East Witton. An enjoyable afternoon finished with refreshments at the Coverbridge Inn.

*Pauline Hardill*



**Getting to grips with plant identification by the River Cover on 17 May 2022**

### Waitby Greenriggs 27 May 2022

On the last Friday in May a dozen members ventured to Waitby Greenriggs in Cumbria for what turned into a splendid wildlife visit. The yellow of Cowslips, Globeflower and Hawkweed, the blue of large clumps or Germander Speedwell and the pink of perhaps 200 Birds-eye Primrose were among over 30 species of plants in flower. Others in flower included Dewberry (a species of Blackberry), Water Avens, Crosswort, Tormentil, Wild Strawberry and Burnet Rose.

Our small insect specialist Derek Whiteley found some of the first grasshoppers of the year and Yellow Meadow Ant (a Green Woodpecker favourite) among 49 species he positively identified. We saw Green-veined White butterfly, watched a newly emerged male Orange-tip pumping up its wings and the sun was strong enough for rare Dingy Skippers to open their wings for us.

We did even better for orchids. There were Early Purple and the all-green colour Twayblade – a few nibbled by five ponies grazing the site. Then there was just starting to flower Lesser Butterfly Orchid. As we prepared to leave for home site volunteers showed us the first emerging reserve speciality of Fly Orchid.

*Len Shepherd*

### **YNHS walks for the Swaledale Festival 2022**

It must be over 10 years since we have offered to contribute nature walks to the Swaledale Festival program. It has proved a fruitful and happy liaison, enjoyed by both sides, and latterly rewarded by donations to our YNHS funds. Once Margie and I paid to go on a SF nature walk from Gunnerside, led by a hired naturalist from Lancashire supported by his wife: we thought that the YNHS could offer the same but better, and for free. He didn't know everything, neither do we: but they were only two and we could offer a half-dozen or so, interspersed within the group, so most punters would stay within conversation range. This proved popular, but wouldn't have worked if YNHS members hadn't loyally supported these efforts: and we have gained friends and new members this way.

I have led maybe 20 of these walks, which means a welcoming introduction at the start, then walking in front, as would a middle-Eastern shepherd, but talking through the back of my head (inaudible): so I stop at intervals to address points of interest. Most SF punters don't know the differences between pasture and meadow, or hay and silage; but they are avid to learn. And is important that they know the differences, and those between organic and factory farming, that they understand the primacy of biodiversity. Most haven't heard of mycorrhiza, but they are keen to learn. Most have never even thought to use a hand lens to inspect the detail of flowers. On the whole they are avid students, hungry for knowledge, and excited by gaining some. To my way of thinking this is why we are with them: this is our opportunity: we should be grasping it – so I'm so pleased that YNHS will continue linking with SF, now that it is my time to step down: thank you Jenny, thank you Chris, thank you all who support, without we couldn't manage, we need you to continue, our missionaries.

In 2022 we led as usual two walks, both ones we have done before: based from Aysgarth Church, and from Richmond Green, starting at 11am, with a break for picnic (and chat). As usual we saw many of the flowers that they had hoped to see, and some of the birds. Some were lucky to watch a family group of five Kingfishers from Easby Bridge: only I was looking the other way! Charged with nature many enjoyed the 4pm linked concerts afterwards. Good for both YNHS and SF: long may we continue together!

*Robert Hall*

## **Bellerby Fields SSSI      7 June 2022**

Bellerby Fields SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) extends over four meadows, totalling 2.75 hectares. The fields were notified as a SSSI in 1994, because they are excellent examples of Upland Hay Meadows – now a nationally scarce habitat.

There was a good turnout of over 20 YNHS members to see this site, previously unvisited by our Society. We were there with kind permission from the owners of Bellerby Fields – Steve and Claire Wilkinson, who accompanied us on our walk. They are doing a great job of managing the meadows in the traditional way, to maximise species diversity and look after the special features of the site.



It was a bright, hot and breezy June day – the perfect weather to see these wonderful meadows in all their glory. To avoid trampling the hay crop, the group walked round the edges of the fields in single file, with information about plant species being passed from person to person, potentially leading to some comical mis-communications, in the manner of ‘send three-and-four-pence....’ Insect specimens were captured in sample tubes and also passed down the line to our resident insect specialist (Derek), who was following at the back, having been detained by a particularly entomologically interesting manure heap. Later insect finds went unidentified, because Derek had, alas, vanished (to take his daughter to the train station).

There was something for everyone. Flowers and grasses galore in the meadows themselves and along the field margins, hedgerows full of native trees, archaeologically interesting ridges and furrows, insects aplenty, a spider or two (for Andy) and even a Fox.

We were joined by Linda Robinson from the BSBI, who (with Deborah) compiled a comprehensive plant list, totalling about 75 species. Stand-out favourites included a bank covered in Rest Harrow and Field Scabious, an unlikely finding of Wild Radish and a splendid patch of Meadow Saxifrage. Chimney Sweeper moths were in

abundance and a Silver Ground Carpet (moth) was spotted. Derek was delighted to find several Slender-footed Robberflies (*Leptarthrus brevirostris*) and many Orchid Beetles (*Dascillus cervinus*), both seldom recorded in VC65. An excellent day and a great privilege to be allowed access to this lovely site.

**Anne Readshaw**

### **Redmire Scar 16 June 2022**

Members of the Society started their walk auspiciously, with two Buzzards circling overhead as we assembled to walk along Redmire Scar. Beautiful weather meant we could appreciate stunning views over Pen Hill and Wensleydale. The contrast between the busy, noisy, dusty, working quarry and the profusion of flowering plants was interesting.

Over 37 flowering plants were noted, including Mountain Pansy, Stork's-bill and Hairy Lady's-mantle. Some of us managed to learn the difference between Heath and Limestone Bedstraws. We noted how quickly plants were colonising the unpromising quarry waste with Weld, Figwort and Wood Sage amongst others. Following the path onto moorland we saw striking patches of Leadwort (Spring Sandwort) outlining the track of the old ruined smelt mill chimney. The highlight of the day was finding a small colony of the rare Northern Brown Argus butterfly on its food plant, Rock-rose which was flowering in profusion. Small Heath and Large Skipper, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood and various white butterflies were also seen. Notes were shared over excellent refreshments at the Three Horse Shoes at Wensley.

**Jennie White**

Other interesting invertebrates included the flower beetle *Ischnomera sanguinicollis* known from only two sites in the whole of Yorkshire. A very handsome black and orange beetle previously recorded at Preston Scar. It breeds in dead wood and the adults feed on pollen. Also the uncommon hoverfly *Paragus haemorrhous* typical of sparsely vegetated short cropped vegetation. (DW)

### **Thornton Rust 2 July 2022**

Surprisingly twenty members of the Society met in Thornton Rust to learn about dandelion-look-alike flowers with Deborah Millward. Having discussed the 250 plus species of dandelion the first look-alike examined was Goatsbeard, otherwise known as Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon. It being well past noon all flowers were firmly shut, but the salient features were still evident. Wandering up the lane the two species most closely resembling the dandelion, Catsear and Rough Hawkbit, conveniently grew virtually side by side. Members soon learnt how to separate them, with or without a hand lens. The next species was everyone's favourite. The red backed, lemon coloured petals of Mousear Hawkweed with their very hairy leaves was unmistakable. A break was taken to enjoy the flowers in the quarry and a strikingly beautiful green spider. The return to the village was paused to allow a Song Thrush to deal with its snail, before members set off again to look at two more yellow compound flowers. Altogether nine species of this difficult group were examined and the consensus was that the English names, involving cats, mice, goats and many hawks, were no help in trying to identify them. After two hours of fairly intense learning most departed, but four members

continued in a third direction to look for a Northern Hawksbeard and discovered, yet again, what a difficult group they are. *Deborah Millward*

### **Horsehouse, Coverdale 9 July 2022**

There was a surprisingly good turnout for this walk, considering that the weather was so hot that there was a real risk of getting heat stroke. The meadows and pastures of Horsehouse were wilting a bit. None-the-less, about 20 stalwart Society members took part in a short botanical survey of ‘Miss Paton’s’ field and environs. Floral diversity had suffered slightly, because of changes in the grazing regime allowing coarser grasses to increase. An incursion of Rabbits had not helped. Most of the usual species were found, however, although it seemed like we had to look harder than in previous years.

Some members wisely retreated to the cool of the Thwaite Arms at this point. Others walked on to Arkleside bridge, where there were good examples of Nipplewort and Wall Lettuce, growing side-by-side. Those of us who’d been on Deborah’s Yellow Compositae Training Day were very pleased that we could remember the difference! Further up the side of the Dale, towards Brackenrigg, a sloping field edge hosted a nice display of Melancholy Thistles. A reward for climbing the hill in the heat was supposed to be a large colony of Common Spotted Orchids, noted on the recce visit the afternoon before. However, in a cruel twist of fate, the heads of every single one of these had in the meantime been munched off, by a pair of errant sheep. Even crueller – the Thwaite had closed by the time we made it back to Horsehouse.

### **Anne Readshaw**

There was a good range of common invertebrates including the Iridescent Centurion *Sargus iridatus* a pretty metallic bluish-green soldierfly that breeds in rotting grass and compost. Striped Slender Robberfly *Leptogaster cylindrica*, (a species associated with good grassland that appears to be quite uncommon in the Yorkshire Dales) Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Small Skipper, Chimney Sweeper moth, Straw Dot moth, Common Green Grasshopper *Omocestus viridulus*, Green Dock Beetle *Gastrophysa viridula* and a small pretty picture-wing fly *Herina frondescentiae* which appears to be a second record for VC65 and is associated with upland wet rushy habitats, so probably under-recorded in our area. (DW)

### **Waitby Greenriggs 20 July 2022**

A second visit this year was made to this very special reserve and what a difference two months makes in the wild flower world. Following the UK’s all time hottest temperature, the day was overcast and a more manageable 20 degrees C. We had come, hoping to see Marsh Helleborine. They did not disappoint but we did feel numbers were reduced on previous years. Star of the show to my mind was Saw-wort. Many still tightly budded, “like the London Gherkin” one visitor observed, others opening and emerging into truly beautiful specimens. Over 50 different species were seen in flower. The Shetland Ponies we had seen earlier in the year continue to graze here. Buzzards mewed overhead and we enjoyed good views of a Treecreeper. Brown Hare and Stoat were also seen. *Caroline Stott and Ann Luxmoore*

## **Harmby Railway Bridge up Quarry Lane 26 July 2022**

21 of us set off on a lovely sunny afternoon. It was a bit of a slow start as some members who haven't been able to attend for a while were able to join us so lots of chattering and catching up to do. Good to have such a big turnout. I do this walk regularly for exercise so don't always take my time but needed some help (as always but I am getting better) in identifying flora and fauna in particular the trees. I often see Brown Hares, Curlew, Oystercatcher, Skylark, Wren, Goldfinch, thrushes and occasionally a Grey Heron. Odd times I have seen shrews, mice and a hog-let that sadly didn't make it.

We were able to identify 19 trees, 48 flowering plants and 15 others including birds, bees, butterflies and two ladybirds close together one had seven spots the other too many spots to count. As we appreciate we don't have time to identify everything as we wouldn't get past the first few metres. There were many grasses, flying bugs and insects not documented. The sunshine brought out Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Small and Green-veined Whites, one Red Admiral and a clear view of a Small Skipper. Not many birds with it being a hot afternoon. A Moorhen was making its presence be known in the quarry which was totally covered in some sort of algae, one Swallow some Jackdaws, pigeons and the odd Blackbird.

As usual some of our plants can cause long discussions with the aid of magnifying glasses and books we were able to identify the pretty pale blue Peach-leaved Bellflower. As expected some plants had suffered with the dry and intense heat of late. The majority of the trees were within the first half of the walk. Plenty of Sycamore, Elder, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel and Bird Cherry The odd Holly, Ash, Oriental Beech and Yew. We didn't get as far as seeing the Larch and Rowan which is close to the Cow Close caravan park. We finished off discussing a cypress, the consensus of opinion was it was difficult to identify specific species and it was where it was due to either bird or animal dispersal. For a short walk it was a productive and enjoyable few hours. *Liz Barron*

**River Ure, Askrigg 20 August 2022** See Flower Recorder's Report on page 22.

## **Autumn Walk, Swinithwaite 1 November 2022**

This was our last 2022 field trip. A couple of dozen members enjoyed a marvellous morning weather window to explore the pastures and river bank below Swinithwaite, though all got wet feet from the stream overflow into the lane. This humpy ex-glacial dump with marvellous drumlins must be useless for mechanised industrial agriculture, so is only grazed, and that lightly: no ploughing, no chemicals: only native growth. A cornucopia of mycelia must have lived here for generations – we were entranced by the abundance and diversity of fungal growth. Damp kneeling was needed for detail, masterly explained and identified by Chris Meek. A vigorously flowering clump of Musk Thistle relieved the dearth of flowers. Down by the swollen river autumnal leaf colours made a glorious display in bright sunlight as we ascended the flood plain,



**A Fairy Ring of Mycologists at Swinithwaite 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022**



**Mycologist's Cornucopia at Swinithwaite. Photo by Leonard Shepherd**

covered in old anthills. Green Woodpecker and Mistle Thrush called as we gathered Horse and Field Mushrooms. A Grey Squirrel must have been enjoying the abundant Beech mast. Then along the terrace in the wood, with its view of the pools below to Redmire Force, to admire the Ure back to normal flow, before up the fields to share splendid grub at Berry's. Bliss. **Robert Hall**

Nice to find a new location for the Lapidary Snail in a wall, and also the Craven Door Snail *Clausilia dubia* and Tree Door Snail *Balea sarsii*, all rather special. (DW)

### Fungi identified on the Swinithwaite meeting 1 November 2022 by Chris Meek

English Name	Scientific Name	Notes
Blackening Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe conica</i>	Starts red or yellow. Turns black with age
Candlesnuff Fungus	<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Common tiny black and white fungus
Cedarwood Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe russocariacea</i>	Whitish waxcap smelling of pencil shavings
Crested Coral	<i>Clavulina coralloides</i>	White coral with spikes on end
Dung Demon	<i>Deconica coprophila</i>	Tiny brown fungus grows on dung
Dung Roundhead	<i>Stropharia semiglobata</i>	Also grows on dung: creamy colour
Dusky Puffball	<i>Lycoperdon nigrescens</i>	A dark brown small Puffball
Field Blewit	<i>Lepista saeva</i>	Large fungi that had brown cap and purple stem
Deceptive Earthtongue	Deceptive Earthtongue	Tiny black tongue-like fungus in unimproved grassland
Golden Spindles	<i>Clavulinopsis fusiformis</i>	Tiny yellow, flattened spindles.
Golden Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe chlorophana</i>	Yellow waxcap-unimproved grassland.
Honey Fungus	<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	A parasitic fungus as well as feeding on dead wood( saprobic)
Horse Mushroom	<i>Agaricus arvensis</i>	Huge fungus with black gills, eaten by Gaby
Field Mushroom	<i>Agaricus campestris</i>	Collected by Robert for the pot
Jelly Ear	<i>Auricularia auriculae-judae</i>	On a twig. Ear shaped and pinkish brown
Sordid Blewit	<i>Lepista sordida</i>	A violet blewit, much more delicate than Field Blewit

Lilac Pinkgill	Enteloma porphyrophaem	Grassland species with noticeable bump (umbo) in centre
Magic Mushroom	Psilocybe semilanceata	Tiny mushroom with nipple-like top. Hallucinogenic and possibly illegal to use
Meadow Coral	Clavulinopsis corniculata	A tiny yellow coral found in unimproved grassland
Meadow Puffball	Vascellum pratense	Looks similar to Common Puffball, but different internal structure
Meadow Waxcap	Hygrocybe pratensis	An orange - pale apricot waxcap
Mosaic Puffball	Handkea utriformis	The large brown puffballs near the ant hills
Moss Bell	Galerina hypnorum	Tiny yellow-orangy brown fungus in moss in meadow
Orange Mosscap	Rickenella fubula	Another tiny moss lover with a darker orange centre
Parasol	Macrolepiota procera	Large with scales on and a noticeable ring
Parrot Waxcap	Hygrocybe psitticina	Small waxcap with green showing at the top of the yellowish stem
Petticoat Mottlegill	Paneolus papilionaceus	A brown-capped dung lover with a lacy petticoat on young specimens
Scarlet Waxcap	Hygrocybe coccinea	Common red waxcap with red gills edged in yellow
Shaggy Bracket	Inonotus hispidus	Part of black bracket that had fallen from an ash tree
Snowy Waxcap	Cuphophyllus virgneus	Common white waxcap of unimproved grassland
Turf Mottlegill	Paneolus fimicola	Dark brown fungus with dark speckled gills
White Fibrecap	Inocybe geophylla	Poisonous white fibrous fungus with brown spore print
Yellow Brain	Tremella mesenterica	Brain-like fungus on a fallen branch.
Yellow Club	Clavulinopsis helvola	Tiny yellow clubs poking out of the unimproved grassland
Beech Barkspot	Diatrype disciformis	Black spots on a fallen Beech branch
Common Jellyspot	Dacrymyces stillatus	Yellow jelly-like spots on a fallen branch found by Derek
Wrinkled Club	Clavulina rugosa	White at left side of steps as we climbed up from waterfall

## **Indoor Meetings in 2022**

### **28 January 2022    Bats by John Drewett**

John is a member of the YNHS and has been studying bats for over 30 years. He explained that bats use echolocation to move about and to locate their prey. This was only discovered by Donald Griffith, an American zoologist, in 1938-1944, through a series of experiments. Humans cannot hear the ultrasonic sounds that bats emit when they are hunting at night for insects and so we need to use hand-held bat detectors to identify them. The bat detector makes the sounds audible to our ears.

Different species of bats emit a different pattern of sound, so an expert is able to distinguish between bat species. John showed us photos of many of the different species found in Britain. Some roost in barns or the lofts of houses, in small cracks in brickwork, stonework or behind fascia boards. Others roost in caves. They are sometimes found in tree holes or behind bark.

Examples of bat species in Britain: Common Pipistrelles, Soprano Pipistrelles, Long-eared, Brandt's, Alcatheo's, Natterer's, Noctules, Daubenton's, horseshoes and Barbastelles. Bats feed on insects such as midges, but a few of the larger bats prey on moths too. The bats themselves are predated on by cats and also by owls, particularly Tawny Owls.

Bats and their roosts were first protected in Britain by the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, when it was realised that bats were declining, often due to loss of suitable habitats and human interference. The use of pesticides caused a massive drop in insects that the bats depended on for sustenance. Exterior lighting on houses could cause bats to desert their traditional roost sites.

Voluntary bat groups were set up to provide general education to the public and also to help with monitoring and research. This has helped to build up a picture of where different species can thrive and ways in which habitats can be managed to slow and hopefully stop the decline of these mammals. Bats can also sometimes be recognised by sight in the hand, but a special licence is necessary in order to handle them.

There are still many challenges to safeguard the bats of Britain. Climate change may enable a greater diversity of bats to come to Britain, but rising temperatures could also disrupt the hibernation of the bats. Loss and fragmentation of habitats such as removal of hedges, remains a challenge to those who wish to protect our bats. Many thanks to John for this most informative presentation.

*Chris Meek*

### **25 February 2022    “Recording Flowers of the Northern Dales” by Linda Robinson**

The members of the Society were treated to a wonderful PowerPoint presentation by Linda Robinson, the botanical recorder for North West Yorkshire. She took us on a

delightful floral journey from the tops of the Pennine Fells, through the hay meadows and river banks of the Tees, Swale and Ure. She described how plants and trees had recolonized the barren area after the last Ice Age and then brought us up to the present day with the discovery of new species and introductions from other countries. These include Alpine Cotula; an Australian plant found colonising an area near a cattle grid and Danish Scurvy Grass, which forms a white carpet on heavily salted roads. Her photographs then showed us remnants of the wild woodland, now sadly depleted and under threat from disease like the Junipers of Teesdale. Man's influence has also had its effect on the flora of this region. Old Hazel and Alder trees gnarled and knotted from coppicing for charcoal, to mined areas, where minerals in the ground have produced distinctive flora such as Spring Sandwort, Moonwort and Thrift. She went on to talk about the famous hay meadows of this area, many now lost, and showed us why Yellow Rattle is important. Its parasitic nature inhibits grass growth and allows wild flowers to thrive. Limestone screes, crags, bogs, woods and riverbank flora were also covered in her photos along with rarities such as Teesdale's Spring Gentian and Leyburn Glebe Field's Burnt Tip and Green-winged Orchids. Linda Robinson ended with an invitation to join her on her botanical forays (website BSBI.org).

*Paul Hardhill*

## **25 March 2022 "Flies Undone"- a talk about Hoverflies, Soldierflies and other goodies in the Fly Group**

Who knew flies could be so interesting? YNHS member Derek Whiteley gave such an enthusiastic presentation on Friday 25th March. Armed with his stage props, a sweep net and pooter, he declared hoverflies to be his favourite group. As a student volunteer with Sheffield Museum he was instructed in 1975 to go out and collect flies and by the early 1980s he had initiated a recording scheme feeding into the National Database. This now has more than a million records, documenting over 7000 species of Fly. Of 300 British hoverfly species, 172 have been recorded in the Yorkshire Dales. His choice of recommended guidebook is *British Hoverflies*, by Stuart Ball and Roger Morris.

Wafting a sweep net over various types of vegetation, in woodland, rural and urban settings and then placing the net over one's head, selected specimens can be sucked up with a pooter, examined and identified either by naked eye or with the help of a microscope. A beautiful collection of photographs illustrated Derek's engaging talk. These demonstrated how hoverflies mimic bees and wasps but do not bite or sting. Defined by their wing venation and by having fine hairs rather than bristles, they are often brightly coloured and very common in gardens. The adults drink nectar for energy, so they visit flowers and are superb pollinators. Their larvae have a voracious appetite for aphids. A few specific hoverfly larvae can be a pest to some plants. Other habitats include ancient and rotten trees with holes, pooling water and oozing sap, also animal dung. Nationwide most are in decline, but some are expanding their northward distribution, perhaps a result of climate change. Derek is setting up a Hoverfly recording scheme for the Yorkshire Dales and is keen for us to report finds. He made particular reference to the Giant Bellflower Picture Wing, our local fly, found to date,

only in the Yorkshire and Derbyshire Dales. Mention of different soldierflies was also made, they can be found in a wide variety of habitats.

Some of the superb slides were captioned by musical lyrics from various bands. The audience were encouraged to identify the songs, at which we were somewhat useless, but it all added to such an entertaining evening.

*Deborah Millward*

### **30 September 2022 Swifts by Jonathan Pomroy**

Members were enthralled by the lecture given by Jonathan Pomroy, an artist, author and a Swift fanatic. Fascinated since childhood by Swifts, Jonathan has studied and painted them ever since. His home is shared with multiple Swift and House Martin nest boxes which give ample opportunity for serious research on this strangest of birds. A bird which feeds, sleeps and mates in the air. A bird which only ever touches down onto earth to brood eggs and for six weeks feed nestlings. A bird which flies thousands of miles every year to grace our skies and thrill us with their screaming gangs of juvenile “fly pasts”.

Nest box cameras reveal what, to our minds, is a loving caring little family spending their nights preening one another and communicating in soft twitters. And yet, at just six weeks old, as dusk approaches, the young leave this shelter, spread their long wings for the first time and launch themselves into the night sky. They head straight for Africa, never touching ground again for two years until they are mature enough to breed themselves.

Jonathan’s understandable passion for these birds was contagious. His paintings of Swifts and the skies and landscapes they inhabit were inspirational. Long may Leyburn look after its Market Square colony of these endangered (RED listed) birds which bless our summer shopping.

*Deborah Millward*

### **28 October 2022 “Nature Miscellany” by Joyce Scott**

Joyce Scott gave us a stunning presentation entitled “Nature Miscellany”. With artistic and informative images she talked us through her fascination with the beauty of nature. Fly Agarics and Fluted Bird’s Nest Fungi featured, alongside lichens such as *Xanthoria parietina* and *Platismatia glauca*. Slime moulds also featured in this section of Joyce’s talk.

Cross sections of the stems of the wild flowers of Field Scabious, Red Campion and Yellow Toadflax revealed the intricate microscopic world and beautiful patterns found in flower stems. Oak leaf spangle galls and fungal-induced galls such as Alder Tongue were explained to us, again illustrated with superb macro photos. Tardigrades, also known as Woolly Bears, were collected from her garden pond and photographed. Their translucent bodies allowed us to see the red algae that they had been consuming, inside their stomachs. Some of the images were magnified by hundreds or even a thousand times.

Birds such as Blue Tits and Long-tailed Tits gathered on lichen clad branches and Red and Grey Squirrels were featured too. Joyce then moved on to some landscape shots of the NE coastline and proceeded to give us a fascinating insight into the life of the rock pools in this region. Starfish, sea squirts, sea slugs, sea anemones, sea mats, shells and seaweeds all featured in her amazing photographs.

We were amazed by her tenacity and the patience needed to photograph all these unusual specimens and her extensive knowledge of the natural history of the UK. A table full of shells and pressed seaweeds, brittle stars and minute crabs was inspected before and after the talk and reference books were on display for us to peruse. After a cup of tea and biscuits at the end of the evening, we all travelled home, inspired yet again by the beauty of nature.

*Chris Meek*

## **25 November 2022 by Dr Anne Readshaw**

Covid 19 disruption once again caused changes to the Society's calendar and thankfully a member, Dr Anne Readshaw, stepped in with an excellent talk on biodiversity and roadside verges in particular. After a brief autobiography Anne discussed her voluntary work for Plantlife and Friends of the Dales. It was the latter organisation that had initiated her research into roadside verges.

With the ever increasing intensification of agriculture giving fields of mono-culture, biodiversity in many areas was restricted to roadside verges which acted as wildlife refuges. Anne explained that to maintain a rich and diverse growth of wildflowers in verges is essential to support an equally rich fauna of insects. In turn insects were important food for farmland birds and essential for humans too as pollinators of food crops.

Managing verges is not easy. To protect verges from reverting to rank grass and scrub they need cutting, preferably once a year in September, so that flowering herbs are not crowded out. Ideally the cut material should be removed so flowering plants are not buried in rotting vegetation. However this is fraught with difficulties, not least the labour involved, but also the material itself poses disposal problems as it is often contaminated with bottles, cans and plastic debris which prevent successful composting. A compromise solution is to cut twice a year so that the quantity of cut material is small enough to rot in situ without harming the plants beneath.

Earlier research initiated by the National Park had identified stretches of species rich verges in the Dales and these were the ones to target for special treatment.

*Deborah Millward*

## **16 December 2022 “The Natural History of Christmas”**

Derek Whiteley presented a slide show based on the book “*The Magic of Christmas*” by the late Patrick Harding. It looked at the plants, animals and fungi associated with Christmas. Starting with the animals thought to be present at the birth of Christ, and

the natural history of gold, frankincense and myrrh, then moving on to the evolution of St. Nicholas from a fourth century Christian bishop to the current Santa Claus and the parallel evolution of the British “Father Christmas”. We explored the connection between Professor Clement Moore’s 1822 poem “*A Visit from St. Nicholas*” and northern Eurasian culture involving the hallucinogenic Fly Agaric mushroom, leading to the concept of flying (female) Reindeer and a secret visit down the chimney by an elf-like St. Nicholas. Many plants associated with Christmas were discussed. Holly, Ivy, Mistletoe, Norwegian Spruce, Nordmann Fir, Christmas Rose, Christmas Cactus, Poinsettia, Cranberry (and North American species), Brussel Sprout, Glastonbury Thorn, Fig, Blackthorn (Sloe), oranges, apples, pears, pomegranates and the latest tree ornaments from Europe – gherkins!

Christmas birds, fish and mammals included Mute Swan, Grey Heron, Pheasant, Turkey, Peacock, Wild Boar, Sturgeon and Conger Eel as traditional food; White Storks, goats (as Dark Helpers) and Brown Bear in Eastern Europe; and the unique place held in Britain by the Robin as a harbinger of Christmas greetings, as Father Christmas’s year round watcher of children’s behaviour, as the bird that fanned the embers of the Nativity fire, and its melodic song and close presence in our gardens during the winter.

Sales of the latest revision of Patrick’s book were donated to his legacy fund to provide educational and conservation activities relating to trees and fungi at Longshaw. The talk stimulated much discussion and anecdotes, and was followed by a delicious Christmas buffet provided by members, with optional sloe gin. A merry way to end the YNHS year.



**Unusual Christmas Wreath. Leyburn, December 2022**

## **Minutes of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Yoredale Natural History Society.**

Held in Leyburn Methodist Chapel Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 1930hrs.

Apologies: Jennie White, Tony Hutchinson, Sue Peckitt, Diane Bell and Ann Luxemore. Present; 24 members

The minutes of the last AGM in June 2021 were read. Matters arising from it should have stated the AGM in 2020 was cancelled and not 2021. They were then as a true record and accepted.

**Chairman's Report.** Deborah feels the role of the Chairman isn't an arduous one and the nicest part is being able to thank everyone for their help and support. Especially thank the officers and for Robert's last *Bulletin*. Another big thank you to all those who helped with the winter programme in looking after the hall. The last thank you is for everybody who steps up to support the Society when we need extra support as without this help we would struggle to continue.

**Secretary's Report.** Some of Liz's report is repeating Deborah's thank you. Even though it hasn't been quite a full year since our last AGM hopefully we are back on track holding them in April. Liz would like to think we are over the worst of the covid pandemic. Saying that it did still throw up the odd challenge. To be able to use the Methodist Church Hall we had to devise a "covid protocol", which in itself caused a few hiccoughs. How to manage the refreshments but after a couple of the winter meetings it seemed to run OK. Liz would like to say a huge thank you to the few members who helped with the necessary restrictions in the kitchen and clearing the hall afterwards. It was very much appreciated.

Liz finally felt it appropriate to display the British Wildlife and York Naturalists Union Journals which were well received. Considering there were still some restrictions it was lovely to see so many members on average 30 at the winter meetings. Deborah did a sterling job putting the winter programme together considering the demands on some of the possible speakers.

**Treasurer's Report.** Paul Hardill took over from Rose just before Christmas so feels Rose did most of the work for this year. The transition wasn't without its difficulties as it took the bank a while to recognise the new treasurer. HSBC have introduced £5.00 monthly charges and 40p for every cheque. HSBC deduct fees at different times of the month so Paul is getting used to this to keep aware of our balance. We digressed a little and felt the next committee meeting is the more appropriate place to discuss other factors and possible changes. Our previous auditor is not able to audit our accounts but Paul is looking into a replacement. Balance at year end £ 3105.67

**Membership Secretary's Report.** As of today we have 92 members. We have had some leave and obviously some join. The membership list is stored digitally. Chris updates as necessary and sends out to committee members when there are any changes. At the last committee meeting it was discussed about if new members joining

the subscriptions would be from January -June they pay by bank transfer £10 and set up standing order (SO) for the following first week in January and if joining July-December they pay £5 by bank transfer and set up SO in January. This proposal was put to the members present and it was carried forward unanimously. We are trying to get as many members to pay by SO due to the bank charges but we can support the few who struggle with this.

Deborah thanked the above for their reports.

### **Election of Officers;**

Denise Houghton had resigned from the committee earlier in the year. Rose Connor has resigned tonight.

The following were proposed, seconded and accepted.

Chairman; Deborah Millward (this will be her last year.)

Vice Chairman; Robert Hall

Secretary; Liz Barron

Treasurer; Paul Hardill

Membership Secretary; Chris Meek

Winter programme; Deborah Millward

Field Secretary; Caroline Stott

Web Master; Len Shepherd (this will be his last year.)

Editor of Bulletin; open position

Until a new Editor is appointed Robert is happy to accept reports from winter talks and field trips.

Committee members; Jennie White, Sue Peckitt, Anne Readshaw, Gaby Baxter, Andy Baxter and Derek Whiteley.

Due to time constraints we deferred compiling list of recorders for a committee meeting but was made aware we have some new recorders to add to the present list.

**Any Other Business;** Robert is looking for more support with the Swaledale Festival walks which brings in a donation for the Society. He only has one member as support so far and he is doing two walks, he would like 5 for each event.

We previously had had a quote for setting up a new website, as some of us were not aware it will be distributed again to committee members.

Meeting closed.

*The AGM was followed by an excellent slide show by Leonard Shepherd, which was very well applauded. The photographs of Black Grouse were particularly memorable. (Ed.)*

<b>Yoredale Natural History Society</b>		
<b>Provisional Accounts at 31 December 2022</b>		
<b>INCOME (£s)</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Subscriptions	960.00	870.00
Visitors	4.00	
Swaledale Festival	106.00	86.00
<b>Total Income for the year</b>	<b>1070.00</b>	<b>956.00</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE (£s)</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Bank Charges inc. activity charges	66.40	
Rent Methodist Hall	180.00	80.00
Speakers Fees	60.00	25.00
Bulletin Printing	248.60	234.00
Website fee and new website develop	313.14	70.95
Committee Members' Expenses	24.48	43.65
Yorkshire Nats Union sub	30.00	30.00
British Wildlife subscription	40.00	40.00
Winter Prog. Card Printing	37.00	
Insurance	203.34	203.24
Hire of Wensley Hall AGM		9.00
Transferred to Petty Cash	4.00	
<b>Total Spent This Year</b>	<b>1206.96</b>	<b>735.84</b>
Deficit for Year ( <i>Surplus</i> 2021)	136.96	220.16
Bank Balance at Year Start	3105.67	2885.51
Minus Year's Deficit ( <i>Surplus</i> 2021)	136.96	220.16
<b>Bank Balance at Year End</b>	<b>2968.71</b>	<b>3105.67</b>
Petty Cash at Year Start	7.50	23.50
Petty Cash Spent		16.00
Added to Petty Cash during year	4.00	
Petty Cash at Year End	11.50	7.50

# Flower Recorder's Report 2022

*Sue Peckitt*

## 17th May 2022– East Witton

Sticky Mouse-ear, Ivy-leaved Toadflax, Rue-leaved Saxifrage, Herb Robert, Stonecrop, Shining Crane's-bill, Hedge Bedstraw, Red Campion, Wild Garlic, Wood Avens, Broad Dock, Garlic Mustard, White Nettle, Cow Parsley, Goosegrass, Creeping Buttercup, Hawthorn, Germander Speedwell, Cuckoo Pint, Pignut, Chickweed, Lady's Smock, Bulbous Buttercup, Dovesfoot Cranesbill, Watermint, *Berula erecta*, Plantain, Sorrel, Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Crosswort, Dogs Mercury, Hairy Violet, Ground Ivy, Bluebell, Sweet Cicely, Red Clover, Meadow Saxifrage, Wood Anemone, Butterbur, Cowslip, Wood Forget-me-not, Lady's Mantle, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Bush Vetch, Horsetail, Stitchwort, Yellow Rattle, Bugle, Twayblade, Early Purple Orchid, Daisy.

## 27th May Waitby Greenriggs

The yellow Cowslips, Globeflower and Hawkweed, the blue of large clumps of Germander Speedwell and the pink of perhaps 200 Bird's-eye Primroses were among over 30 species of plant in flower. Others in flower included Dewberry (a species of blackberry), Water Avens, Crosswort, Tormentil, Wild Strawberry and Burnet Rose.

We did even better for orchid. There were Early Purple and the all green colour Twayblade – a few nibbled by five ponies grazing the site. Then there was just starting to flower Lesser Butterfly Orchid. As we prepared to leave for home, site volunteers showed us the first emerging reserve speciality of Fly Orchid.

## 16th June – Preston-under-Scar

White Dead Nettle, Water Avens, Crosswort, Daisy, Elderflower, Smooth Catsear, Parsley-piert, Sandwort, Dove's-foot Crane's-bill, Figwort, Storksbill, Marjoram, Hairy St John's-wort, Limestone Bedstraw, and Heath Bedstraw, False Wood Brome, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Wild Thyme, Rock-rose, Eyebright, Scarlet Pimpernel, Stonecrop, Heath Speedwell, Lesser Trefoil, Weld, Mountain Pansy, Germander Speedwell, Strawberry, Campion, Wood Sage.

Robert Hall did a few walks for the Swaledale Festival on 2nd and 9th June. Rather special were Meadow Saxifrage and Herb Paris.

## 2nd July – Thornton Rust

18-20 of us gathered in Thornton Rust to discover the secrets of compositae from Deborah Millward.

**Dandelion** – flower head composed of tiny florets, bracts, smooth toothed leaves

**Goat's-beard or Jack-go-to-bed-at-Noon.** It was not out as it was after noon! composite head, long bracts, grass like leaves.

**Rough Hawkbit** – the hairiest compositae, leaves hairy and each hair forked at the top which could be seen with a magnifier.

**Common Cat's-ear** – one of the commonest compositae. Forked stem, multiple

heads. Hairy, pimply leaves. Scales on stem.

**Mouse-ear Hawkweed.** Lemon yellow colour with red streaks on back of petals. Hairy, small leaves, white on the back. Increase by long runners.

**Nipplewort** – small yellow flowers, multiple on long forked green stem. Leaves lyre shaped.

**Wall Lettuce** – told from above by dandelion pointed shaped leaves clasping the stem. Stems are red and it grows on walls.

Back at Deborah's, she showed us **Marsh Hawk's-beard.** Leaves up the stem and clasping the stem. 2 layers of bracts under the flower.

**Smooth Cat's-ear** – very common. Dandelion shaped leaves that clasp the stem. Two layers of bracts under the flower. Seed heads distinctive like little helmets. Walking along the lane we also saw, amongst many others, Yellow-rattle, Eyebright, Ox-eye Daisy, Great and Common Knapweed, Hairy Tare, Valerian, Yellow Stonecrop, Meadowsweet, Lady's Bedstraw, narrow-leaved Meadow Cranesbill.

### **9th July – Horsehouse, Coverdale**

Very hot, 20 people. Jenny Walker led through two fields then some returned and others carried on. Germander Speedwell, Mouse-ear, Meadow Buttercup, Meadow Vetchling, White and Red Clover, Sorrel, Harebell, Square-stemmed St John's-wort, Betony, Watermint, Hairy Willowherb, Tormentil, Creeping Thistle, Spear Thistle, Selfheal, Marsh Bedstraw, Foxglove, Hedge Woundwort, Common Spotted Orchid, Figwort, Bush Vetch, Red Campion and Hedge Parsley.

### **20<sup>th</sup> July - Waitby Greenriggs**

Wood Avens, Hedge Bedstraw, Lady's Bedstraw, Betony, Bird's-eye Primrose, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Lesser Burdock, Greater Burnet, Burnet Saxifrage, Meadow Buttercup, Bladder Campion, Cinquefoil, Common Cat's-ear, Common Cleavers, Red Clover, White Clover, Ox-eye Daisy, Dewberry, Eyebright, Fairy Flax, Changing Forget-me-not, Harebell, Rough Hawkbit, Heather, Upright Hedge Parsley, Marsh Helleborine, Herb Robert, Hogweed, Black Knapweed, Meadowsweet, Milkwort, Montbretia, Mouse-ear, Common Spotted Orchid, Fragrant Orchid, Restharrow, Ribwort Plantain, Ragwort, Yellow Rattle, Saw-wort, Field Scabious, Germander Speedwell, Hairy St John's Wort, Self-Heal, Creeping Thistle, Melancholy Thistle, Spear Thistle, Tormentil, Twayblade, Bush Vetch, Rosebay Willowherb

### **26th July – Harmby Bridge**

Toadflax, Fumitory, Yarrow, Cinquefoil, Lady's Bedstraw, Burdock, Creeping Thistle, Meadow Cranesbill, Mugwort, Opium Poppy, Forget-me-not, Bramble, Ivy, Black Knapweed, Oxeye Daisy, Upright Hedge Parsley, Hedge Mustard, Red Currant, Gooseberry, Crow Garlic, White Valerian, Nettle, Harebell, Field Scabious, Restharrow, Burnet Saxifrage, Betony, Ribwort Plantain, Rosebay Willowherb, Spear Thistle, Great Plantain, Long-stalked Orache, Red Clover, Peach-leaved Bellflower, Nipplewort, Rose of Sharon, Tufted Vetch, Pineappleweed, Stonecrop, Prickly Sow Thistle, White Clover, Dandelion, Meadow Vetchling, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Rough Chervil.

## **20th August – River Ure, Askrigg**

17 people turned up, reasonable day, windy, sunny, cloudy. We walked along the River Ure from Askrigg to the large S bend going eastwards. Giant Bellflower, Himalayan Balsam, Yellow Loosestrife, Butterbur, Arum Lily berries, Yarrow, Knapweed, Bush Vetch, Greater Burnet, *Mimulus*, Great Willowherb (Codlins and Cream), Mouse-ear, Nipplewort, White Dead-nettle, Pineappleweed, Burdock, Rosebay Willowherb, Tutsan, Red Campion, Alkanet, Sticky Groundsel, Stonecrop, Welled Thistle, Mallow, Meadow Cranesbill, Watercress, Mint, Hedge Woundwort, Goat's-beard, Cinquefoil, Yellow Toadflax, Oxeye Daisy, White Clover, Meadowsweet. Two Little Egrets also spotted and two Cormorants.

## **Glebe Field Butterfly Transect for Y.W.T. and Butterfly Conservation. 2022**

### ***Jennie White***

We record weekly from 1st April until the end of September. This year was most memorable for the intense heat and consequent drought. This restricted plant growth and nectar supply which impacted feeding for both caterpillars and adult butterflies. In turn this led to a reduced second brood and encouraged early hibernation.

I love the rhythm of the season, in early April we find one or two Small Tortoiseshells, then a few Orange Tips and Peacocks. By early May, whites are appearing and 25 butterflies, various are counted. Meadow Browns and Ringlets appear in mid-June with one or two then by mid-July we are counting over 140 Meadow Browns and 46 Ringlets, brain going dizzy! with a peak count of all species of 187.

By mid-August we are back to one or two Meadow Browns and Ringlet and counts of 25 overall.

Small Skippers had a reasonable year as did Common Blue. Speckled Wood were flying from May through to end of September. Once the hay is cut in late August, virtually no butterflies are recorded in the Glebe Field but the transect by the river provides us with enough to keep us interested. The highlight for me was finding a Wall, the only one recorded. Overall figures were slightly up but still dismal.

## **Report for Butterflies and Moths 2022**

### ***Jennie White***

As ever, thanks to all who have supplied me with records. Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral were seen in Leyburn in early March. Brimstone were spotted at the end of March in Leyburn and Thornton Rust, Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshell up Gunnerside Gill. May saw Orange Tips, Green-veined White, Speckled Wood and Holly Blue in Leyburn, Wensley and Harmby. A Dinky Skipper was spotted on our walk at Waitby Greenriggs.



Early June, and our local paramedic recorded Brimstone moth, a male White Ermine and Common Wave at Bainbridge Ambulance Station. Our Y.N.H.S walk along Redmire Scar in mid-June had a sighting of four Northern Brown Argus and six Small Heath among others. The last sighting of N.B.A in that area was 2004 so a good result.

Humming Bird Hawk moths were sighted in Thornton Rust and Wensley and a tatty Dark Green Fritillary in Bardale. N.B.A was also seen at Ballowfield at the end of August feeding on Devil's-bit Scabious.

**An early Small White 16 February 2022 Jennie White**

An exciting addition to the records was a sighting of four Purple Hairstreaks in Wanless Park. Not an easy species to see as they fly in the canopy. They were seen in classic conditions, high up in an oak tree on a warm, sunny August evening. Small Coppers were out in Wensley and Foxglove Covert in early September and October.

As the weather continued warm and sunny into October up to nine Red Admirals and a Comma were seen feeding on ivy in Wensley. Latest sightings were of Red Admiral in late November in Wensley and Leyburn. And finally, a December Moth at the end of November at Bainbridge Ambulance Station.

## **Spider Recorder's Report 2022**

***Andy Baxter***

There have been a couple of firsts for me as the first recorder in the area this past year 2022. All records have been confirmed by BAS from photos I or others have taken.

*Clubiona*; species indeterminate (due to requiring microscope to identify) common name Sac Spider found just outside our front door sill in May this year. Jennie White called me to say she'd found a spider on her curtains whilst doing her 'daily' hoovering and tidying up, which turned out to be a gorgeous Black Lace Web Spider, part of the *Amaurobius* genus. It now lives happily under our large garden rock seat. I also found a jumping spider identified as a *Salticus scenicus* as we were setting out the table in the barn outside for lunch in the summer and managed to get some photos before the inevitable leap. A *Metellina segmentata* was found by Robert on our walk from Thornton Rust earlier in the year. And my favourite find of all year was an

*Araniella cucurbita* (Cucumber Spider) in summer on our oak tree, its favoured habitat. More common finds (with identifications all confirmed by BAS) of *Amaurobius similis* and *fenestralis* species (laceweb spiders). Also there has been abundant *Araneus diadematus* (Common Garden Spiders) part of the orb web family as well as lots of Common House Spiders (Genus *Eritagena*) and I found a female house spider guarding her egg sac inside our outbuilding in December where she'd cocooned herself and the egg sac in a silk purse ready for spring. We also have numerous egg sacs around the barn under window sills and under the outside tables ready for spring of laceweb and garden spiders.

A walk in Keld early summer and an early morning walk with Chris & Dave earlier in the year near Richmond, yielded *Steatoda nobilis* (Noble False Widow Spider). The Glebe field and our walk around Steve & Claire's land at Bellerby yielded some *Nuctenea umbratica* common name Walnut Orb Web Spiders, whose favoured habitat are the cracks in wooden fence posts as they have flattened abdomens, coming out at night to spin orb webs for prey.



The last fungi walk we found a *Textrix denticulata* (Colourful Funnel web spider) and I've located four others in and around our barn as well this year.

An interesting year where the very hot summer had a positive effect on spider numbers as insect prey was more abundant. And the mild winter forecast if this continues is likely to see more egg sacs survive.

Thank you all for your support in 2022 and your continued enthusiasm.

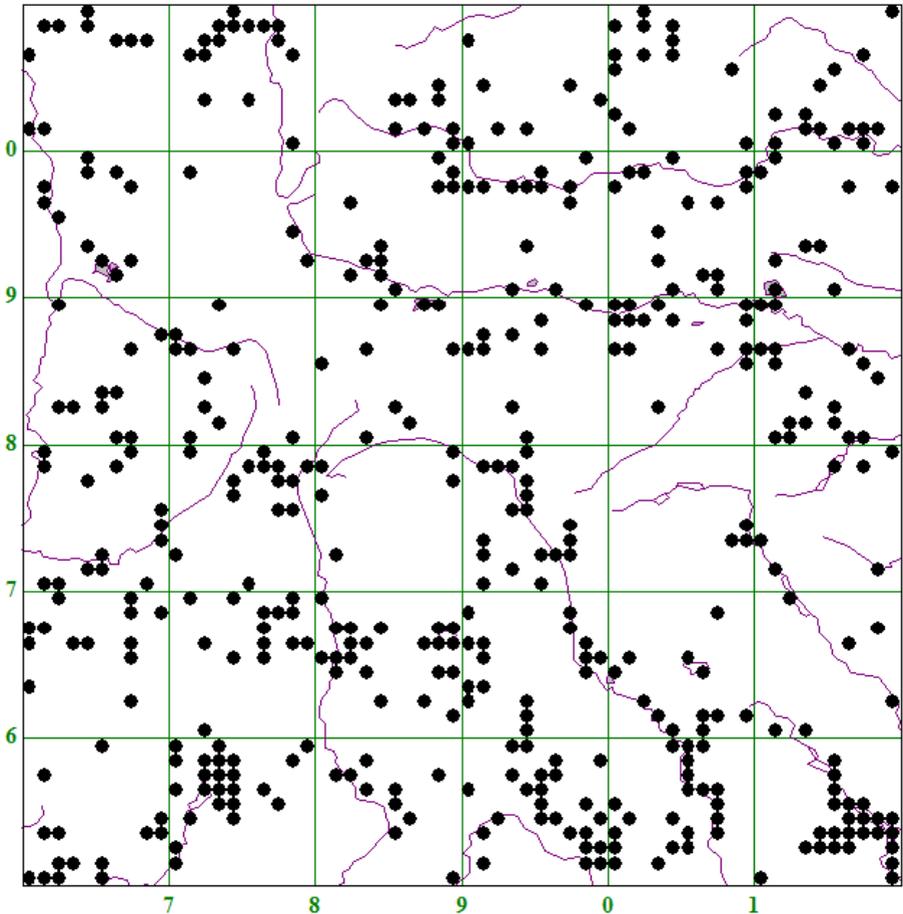
*Araneus diadematus* Common Garden Spider (Orb web family).  
Photo by Andy Baxter

## Hoverfly Recording Scheme for the Yorkshire Dales

*Derek Whiteley*

In March 2022 I initiated a recording scheme for hoverflies (Diptera, Syrphidae) for the Yorkshire Dales National Park and surrounding areas. The recording area is defined by the map below. Stuart Ball and Roger Morris (National Hoverfly Recording Scheme) kindly searched the national database and extracted records for this area to get the local scheme kick-started. The 6086 records are mapped below. Only a fraction of these are attributed to Wensleydale and Swaledale.

## All Hoverfly Records



All hoverfly records March 2022. The straight lines are 10km grid lines and numbers. The wiggly lines are major rivers and a black dot represents at least one hoverfly recorded in a 1km square. [HRS records]. Plotted using DMAP

The map acts as a baseline against which future progress can be measured. It clearly indicates that there is a lot of work to do and many areas have no records at all. It will be interesting to see how this map develops over the coming years. In 2022 we made a good start, adding over 1000 extra records to the database. I have selected some of the more interesting species for this report.

*Xanthogramma citrofasciata* A striking yellow and black wasp mimic associated with ant nests. Waitby Greenriggs (YNHS meeting 27 May 2022). Appears to be new for the Yorkshire Dales National Park, although recorded elsewhere in Westmorland.

*Portevinia maculata* Ramsons Hoverfly. Surprisingly scarce despite an abundance of Ramsons. Wensley Bridge 13 May 2022, Chantry Wood Kagram 14 May 2022, Jervaulx Park (YNU meeting) 21 May 2022.

*Parasyrphus nigratarsis* white hoverfly eggs found amongst batches of yellow beetle eggs laid by the Green Dock Leaf Beetle *Gastrophysa viridula*. Wensley Bridge banks of River Ure 13 May 2022. (photo below). This appears to be a new species for VC65. Also found at Jervaulx Park 21 May 2022 and High Lane 6 June 2022.



*Ferdinandea cuprea* was an exciting find on a sap-run tree trunk in Jervaulx parkland. 21 May 2022. A greenish hoverfly that breeds in sap runs on wounded trees and is often associated with old woodland or parkland. This is only the second record for VC65.

*Didea fasciata* is a large wasp-like hoverfly with distinct body markings. It is uncommon and associated with conifers. Good numbers at Stang Forest in VC65 on 15 June 2022.

*Lejogaster metallina* was swept in Jervaulx Abbey gardens 21 May 2022. It is a metallic green hoverfly that breeds in wetlands.

*Eriozona syrphoides* is a nice bumblebee mimic associated with conifer woods. Found along the rides at Stang Forest in VC65 on 15 June 2022. It was last recorded there in 1989. Larvae feed on conifer aphids.

I hope that more people will take an interest in these handsome flies and make further records in 2023. There are two superb books to help with identification. ***Britain's Hoverflies*** by Stuart Ball and Roger Morris (Wildguides 2013) is a field guide with photographs of the important features. ***British Hoverflies: an illustrated identification guide*** by Alan Stubbs and Steven Falk (BENHS 2002) is the standard essential guide for identifying specimens, with keys to all British species.

## Other Interesting Diptera Records for 2022

*Derek Whiteley*

**Water Snipe-fly** *Atherix ibis* first found on a sandy dry river bank by the Swale at Lownethwaite Bridge on 7 May 2022, then in a similar habitat by the River Cover just



upstream of Coverbridge, and swept from overhanging trees at the Cover confluence with the Ure on the YNHS meeting on 17 May 2022 (photo above). A fourth specimen was swept along the banks of the Ure at Jervaulx Park on 21 May 2022.

**Southern Silver Stiletto Fly** *Clorismia rustica* was swept from the same sandy river bank at Lownethwaite Bridge on 23 June 2022. There is one previous record at Marske in 2007.

**Ivy Wasp Grabber** *Leopoldius signatus* is a scarce late season wasp mimic that has a fondness for Ivy flowers. West Witton 17 September 2022. Appears to be new to VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales.

**Round-spotted Major** *Oxycera dives* a very pretty black and yellow soldierfly. Buckden Out Moor 1 August 2022 swept from tree foliage by waterfall. Rare in the Yorkshire Dales. Previous records from Hubberholme in 1975, East Hope in 1989 and Keld in 2009. A northern species known to breed in calcareous seepages.

**Hill Soldier** *Oxycera pardalina* swept from tree foliage by a waterfall at Thackwaite Beck 14 July 2022. A scarce black and yellow soldierfly usually associated with calcareous waterfalls. There are six records for the Yorkshire Dales but this is the first for Wensleydale.

**Twin-lobed Deer Fly *Chrysops relictus*** One of our horse-flies with multi-coloured eyes attracted to humans for a blood meal. Wanlass Park 10 July 2022. Appears to be new to VC65 and Yorkshire Dales. A very common species in lowland Britain but very rare in the Pennines. Nearest previous record at Pateley Bridge. Associated with wet alluvial meadows and breeds in wet mud or sand by water.

**Slender-footed Robberfly *Leptarthrus brevirostris*** several males were swept from hay meadows at Bellerby Fields SSSI on 7 June 2022 (appears to be only the second record for VC65) and from calcareous grassland at Cowside Beck VC64 on 11 July 2022

**Daffodil Fly *Norellia spinipes*** A very early spring fly that develops in leaf mines in Daffodils. Adults fly in March and April. Haw Bank Wood 27 March 2022 an adult on a clump of woodland Daffodils. Appears to be new for VC65 and possibly new for the Yorkshire Dales.

## **Reptiles and Amphibians Recorder's Report 2022**

### ***Rose Connor***

The first notification received was on 7 March 2022 from Jennie White who found two Smooth Newts whilst tidying her pond in Wensley after the winter. Deborah Millward (DM) reported hearing frogs croaking up on Thornton Rust Moor on 10 March 2022.

### **Common Frogs**

11 March 2022 –first report of squashed frog on the lane by High Side Farm SE123914. Liz Barron (LB)

Throughout March and April reports of road casualties with hot spots at Quarry Lane Harmby with up to 20 squashed corpses counted. It would be useful to investigate where these frogs are moving between.

23 March 2022 – frog on footpath past brickworks pond Spennithorpe (RC)

25 March 2022 – many breeding pairs in amplexus at Wensley Ings SE088893 Derek Whiteley (DW)

14 April 2022 – two frogs back in residence in my garden pond Leyburn (RC)

16 April 2022 – ten clumps of spawn in moorland flush Black Dyke SD993754 (DW)

Spawn in lake at Thorpe Perrow did not look viable (frost damage?) (RC)

17 May 2022 - squashed frog Harmby (LC)

10 June 2022 – large frog under foliage in my garden (RC)

2 July 2022 – very small frog garden pond (RC)

8 July 2022 – large frog in garden (RC)

13 July 2022 – small adult Tarn Moor NY671076 (DW)

15 July 2022 – large frog garden pond (RC)

27 July 2022 – one live, one dead Quarry Lane Harmby

31 July 2022 – large frog in garden (RC)

1 August 2022 – large frog in pond (RC)

12 August 2022 – unusual sighting of a Hedgehog eating a frog at 10pm Thornton

Rust garden (DM)

21 August 2022 – adult under foliage in garden (RC)

7 September 2022 – two dead Argyll Lane and 3 dead Quarry Lane (LB)

21 October 2022 – one dead Quarry Lane (LB)

22 October 2022 – one small froglet Hornby Castle (RC)

31 October 2022 – small frog in garden pond (RC)

16 November 2022 – large adults in pond and under damp leaves in garden (RC)

### **Common Toad**

19 March 2022 – small toad under tarpaulin Hornby Castle (RC)

27 March 2022 – female at Bolton Hall (G.James)

and one dead on Chantry Lane SE055882 (DW)



**18 April 2022 – one adult near West Scrafton Ken and Anne Readshaw (K&AR) photo Ken Readshaw**

15 June 2022 – dead adult Arkengarthdale NY979040

10 July 2022 – dead adult Church Lane West Witton SE060885 (DW)

17 August 2022 – large female dead on road Witton Steeps SE063875 (DW)

26 August 2022 – dead adult on road Gill Edge SD926892 (DW)

Throughout the archaeological digging season at Hornby Castle (April-October) sightings of toads were recorded each Saturday usually spotted when removing the tarpaulins from the trenches. The best day being 16 July 2022 when a total of seven were recorded in various trenches (RC)

### **Viviparous Lizard**

18 April 2022 – found whilst walking near West Scrafton (K&AR) **photo page 40**

7 June 2022 – one in rough grassland Applegarth NZ131018 (DW)  
8 July 2022 - one in grassland Semerwater YWT Reserve SD9186 (DW)  
11 July 2022 – one in grassland Cowside Beck SD9070 (DW)

### **Grass Snake**

24 January 2022 – empty egg case found above Askrigg near the Beacon. Sue Peckitt

## **Birding Year, 2022**

*Mary Atkins and Janet Hutchinson*

Thank you to all the members who have sent birding contributions for our very first report for Yoredale Natural History Society covering VC65, with particular thanks to Derek for his very extensive and detailed list.

It has been a very good year for raptors with the exciting news of the first pair of Ospreys to successfully breed in Yorkshire for hundreds of years, thanks to the efforts of Bolton Estate. Red Kites continue to spread further north with sightings by members in both Wensleydale and Swaledale. In addition to regular sightings of Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk one of our members spotted a Merlin on the 20<sup>th</sup> May near the Redmire Quarry. Three varieties of owls were seen - Barn Owl, Tawny Owl and a Little Owl near West Witton.



**Tawny Owl juvenile at Wensley Ings 27 May 2022**

Quite a nice selection of waders can be reported showing territorial and breeding behaviour such as Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Golden Plover, Snipe, Curlew, Redshank and Common Sandpiper. Jack Snipe was also seen at the edge of our area near Black Dike on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

The highlight for river and wetland birds turned out to be Great White Egret seen in Harmby on 24<sup>th</sup> November and Wensley Bridge on 27<sup>th</sup> December. Further sightings included Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Canada and Greylag Geese, Shelduck, Wigeon, Mallard and Tufted Duck. Kingfisher and Dipper sightings were mostly on the River Ure. Grey Wagtail was also seen throughout the region and a Reed Bunting was spotted in Apedale.

A few game birds were seen and one of our members was lucky enough to see a Grey Hen (a female Black Grouse) land on a roadside wall just by her car near Thornton Rust. Woodcock was seen in flight at Miller Wood and Red-legged Partridge has been spotted in several locations.

Regular woodland and garden birds were seen including Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Siskin, Nuthatch and Tree Sparrow. The latter were seen nesting in one of our member's gardens.

A selection of migrants was seen including Swifts (13<sup>th</sup> May), Swallows (16<sup>th</sup> April), Sand Martins and House Martins. Cuckoos were heard over the area between 30<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> June. Whooper Swans were seen on flood water at The Wisings, Wensleydale on 26<sup>th</sup> March and two were seen flying near Thornton Rust on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April. A flock of approximately sixty Fieldfare were seen at Hargill Lane on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Spotted Flycatcher was seen feeding in the woodland at West Witton and male Redstarts were seen at Ballowfields Local Nature Reserve and Redmire Force. Ring Ouzel and Wheatear were spotted over the moorland and Tree Pipit was seen at Semerwater and Cowside Beck. The easily confused Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff were also frequently heard.

Going forward we would welcome more sightings from members so that we can build up a better picture of the birds in the region. Please feel free to email either or both of us or speak to us at a meeting.

## **Mammal Recorder's Report, 2022**

*John Drewett*

Although I was personally less active recording mammals in 2022 due to other commitments, the overall number of mammal records in the Yoredale area has increased thanks to contributions from some other members, but especially Derek Whiteley. Well done Derek!

Rodent records are relatively few, but Wood Mice featured more widely during the year with records of live animals, dead ones, hazelnuts showing tell-tale signs and skulls found in owl pellets. A small number of Field Vole and Bank Vole records came predominantly from owl pellets. Grey Squirrels were the most frequently recorded rodent with most records fortunately still coming from the eastern end of the recording area away from the Red Squirrels which tend to stick to the upper parts of the dale.

Rabbits and hares were widely reported, though it certainly does seem that Rabbits are not as common as they were a few years ago. Even so, there were counts of 300 at Street House in August where they were grazing a fairly short stretch of verge beside the A6055 and 70 at Nosterfield in September. Brown Hare records came from almost 40 different sites, with the Hackforth area still supporting a good breeding population. There were a scattering of records of Hedgehog records in 2022 mostly from the lowlands and a small number of Common Shrew records. I found a dead Pygmy Shrew in the garden at Arrathorne, probably a victim of the neighbours' cats. As usual, the conspicuous hills that make Moles the easiest mammal to record resulted in this species accounting for the greatest proportion of records.

Thanks to commissioned surveys plenty of bat records were added to the database representing Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared, Noctule, Natterer's and Daubenton's Bats. Mainly these were of small numbers in flight or roosts of individuals, but a maternity roost of around forty Daubenton's bats were tracked down in the bridge over the Ure at Bainbridge over several evenings in the summer using observation, bat detectors and thermal cameras. It was also memorable because the temperature never fell below 20°C during the surveys sessions!

Among the carnivores Otter spraints were found at Jervaulx and Coverhead whilst an inquisitive animal was watched for some time in the River Ure near Kilgram in November. A couple of Badgers were reported dead on the roads during the year and field signs were found at several locations. A sett was confirmed to be still in use in one wood in the lower dale and a new sett became established in a site near the River Ure. No Red Foxes were reported seen, but scent or scats were noted at seven locations. There were four sightings of Stoat (one of two animals) and a dead Polecat was found at the roadside near Bainbridge.

Roe Deer reports seem to be fewer these days, away from the usual two pairs that occupy a small private wood near Hackforth that I have permission to visit. However, I did have close views of a female watching me from a field near Brompton-on-Swale in May. Roe Deer are rather inquisitive animals so by standing still, partly hidden by the hedge, I was able to get within 20 metres as she gingerly approached to investigate what I was. Five other sightings were reported during the year.

## **Invertebrate Reports** *Derek Whiteley*

### **An Ichneumon Wasp “New to Yorkshire”**

Following the YNHS visit to Redmire Scar, I made a return visit the next day 17 June 2022, and took some samples of ichneumon wasps for Bill Ely, the YNU Recorder. One of them turned out to be a first record for Yorkshire. *Eclytus multicolor* is a colourful ichneumon, thought to be a northern species. It has been reared from sawflies in the genus *Arge*.

### **Other Scarce Ichneumons of note.**

*Eridolius elegans*. is a second Yorkshire record and a first for VC65. Little is known about this genus. Also from Redmire Scar 17 June 2022

*Chorebus senilis* on 8 June 2022 at Semerwater YWT reserve I took a female: the second record for VC65 and the second for YDNP.

*Gambrus punctatus* is quite a stunning little ichneumon having red, black and white markings. Stang Forest 13 June 2022 new to VC65. One of its known hosts is the Drinker moth.

There are many things out there awaiting discovery! My thanks go to Bill Ely for naming the specimens and his diligent management of the Yorkshire database allowing instant assessment of records.

### **Discovering the Pygmy “Tufa Fly” in the Yorkshire Dales**

*Oxycera pygmaea* is a tiny but colourful soldierfly (Stratiomyiidae) also known as the Pygmy Soldier with a wing length of 4mm. Following a week mapping this species on coastal tufa beds on the Isle of Lismore in Scotland in June 2022, I decided to apply the experience to the Yorkshire Dales. This led to a search for tufa and other calcareous seepages and I wish to thank Robert Hall and Deborah Millward for pointing me in the right direction in Wensleydale. The search was on.

However, the first record came from a stunning tufa stream bed at Cowside Beck just west of Litton in VC64 on 11 July 2022, then from almost dry calcareous seepages at Low Gill on the Thornton Rust Moors on 12 July 2022. A trip to the Westmorland Dales on 13 July 2022 with Andrew Dixon from Cumbria turned out to be a red-letter day. Dozens were swept from calcareous mud and tufa banks along Potts Beck, and on Tarn Moor where calcareous tufa flushes flow into acidic moorland mire. The juxtaposition of these two habitats and their respective flora at Tarn Moor and Low Gill is fascinating.

Nationally, a widespread but scarce species that is strongly associated with calcareous seepages, especially where tufa deposits and mosses are present. It will use such seepages in a variety of broad habitat types including grazed limestone hillsides, soft-rock cliffs, seepage-fed fen and limestone quarries. The larvae develop in wet mosses and wet tufa deposits and are amphibious, sometimes crawling over wet rocks. They

can be keyed out using Stubbs & Drake (2001). ***British Soldierflies and their Allies***. Adults peak in June and July and are best found by sweeping the low herbage around calcareous seepages.

These are not the first records for the Yorkshire Dales National Park, but they are new locations for the species, known to be a widespread but scarce species in the UK.

**Derek Whiteley**

### **The Purple Woodlouse in Wensleydale**

On 3 June 2022 I discovered a good colony of Purple Woodlice *Porcellionides pruinosus* in a pile of manure near Swinithwaite. These are brown woodlice with a blue or purple pruinescence or bloom in certain light. They also have very pale almost white legs giving them a unique and rather attractive appearance. They are usually found in large colonies. Dung heaps are favoured but compost heaps and piles of grass cuttings are secondary habitats. In my experience of this species the dung needs to be quite moist but not wet, often with a dry crust.



**Purple Woodlouse, photo by Paul Richards**

In Britain they are not particularly rare, but very localised in northern England. This record appears to be new for VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales. **Derek Whiteley**

### **New Plantbugs for VC65**

**Jim Flanagan** reported "I heard from Stuart Foster (YNU Hemiptera Recorder) that two of my bug records from our trip to Preston Scar on 17 June 2022 were new for VC65 - the little plantbug *Tinicephalus hortulanus* (that feeds on Common Rock-rose) and the Cicadellid hopper *Eupteryx origani* that I swept from stands of *Origanum vulgare*. What a great little site it was (as was the other part across the road where we were parked).

# Botanical Musings

*Deborah Millward*

In November a neighbour showed me the fresh new leaves of Meadow Saxifrage. This is one of my favourite plants and I know that in a normal year the new leaves do not come through until February or March. After flowering in early summer it dies down completely just like Bulbous Buttercup, though the latter does reappear in late summer. This has not been a normal year; temperatures have soared and remained above average into October and November, so it is not surprising plants are reacting differently.

For quite a few years now the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland has been holding a New Year Plant Hunt which monitors some of these changes caused by our changing climate. Originally set up to give bored botanists with withdrawal symptoms something to do mid-winter, it soon became clear that the data collected were of real interest. I have taken part in a few plant hunts. The object is to seek out flowering species and it is fascinating, not least to see the reaction of passers-by. We have discovered that built up areas are actually more rewarding than the open countryside and there are more passers-by there too. It is probably the increased warmth of brick and stone walls that makes the difference and the base of walls is a particularly productive search area.

Also garden escapes, like Red Valerian, are more likely to be found. The very thin soil between cobbles and on wall tops can have species like Rue-leaved Saxifrage or Spring Whitlowgrass. Nationally and locally the four stalwarts for winter flowering are Daisy, Dandelion, Groundsel and Annual Meadow-grass. A mild autumn and we have had a lot of those, helps the later flowering plants hang on in there. We have found Knapweed, Ox-eye Daisy and Yarrow in the past. A mild autumn also encourages spring flowers to open prematurely, especially if we have had an early mild frost, so Primroses, violets and Hazel are not uncommon. Nationally last year 53% were autumn flowers, 25% spring flowers and 22% the year-rounders, the stalwarts.

But there is another group of plants which never seem to get a mention, the short day long night plants. The plants exhibit photoperiodism, they only form flowers when nights are longer than days. Christmas Cactus and Poinsettia are typical of these but I have no idea whether any of our wild flowers exhibit this phenomena. The only truly native species I can think of are Ivy, which flowers in October / November, and Elm, which flowers in February / March. There is a non-native herb which has naturalised into many areas, Winter Heliotrope, whose peak flowering period is January. Heliotrope means sun follower which seems a rather inapt name. Obviously ambient temperature will also affect these obligate winter flowerers and may well be the overriding factor. This is borne out by the data from the national New Year Plant Hunt where groups searching the southern counties find far more than we northerners. The national average is 16 flowers in a three hour search – not many. We peaked at 14 in

2021, a good year for everyone. It is all good fun, especially with a long, warm cafe break between sessions. It has to be said the flowers are not exactly looking their best. After all the whole point of flowers is to attract pollinators and they are pretty scarce at New Year. The exception to this shabbiness is Gorse, it always looks pristine and reminds one of the joys to come in May.



**Winter Aconites, Redmire churchyard, 11 February 2022**

### **Editorial Postscript**     *Derek Whiteley*

This edition of the *Bulletin* is rather special to me, because it provides a record of my first year in Wensleydale. We moved to West Witton in late October 2021 and I joined the YNHS the following month. So throughout 2022 I have enjoyed exploring the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding areas, enhanced by the good company, expertise and local knowledge of YNHS members. Everywhere and everything has been new to me in this exciting first year. My special thanks go to Robert Hall, Deborah Millward and Leonard Shepherd for sharing their encyclopaedic knowledge of local natural history, but also many other members, and speakers at indoor meetings. My own specialisms are with less popular faunal groups so I hope that I can give something back to Yoredale by promoting and recording these groups within the Society.

The *Bulletin* is an excellent format for recording and disseminating information about YNHS events and records of all fauna and flora, not only for immediate reading but also for posterity. It is also a useful source of information for residents and visitors. When Robert Hall announced his retirement, I felt that the *Bulletin* might fold, or be mothballed, so I was pleased to step up as Editor in October 2022. Again, my thanks go to Robert for advice and a smooth transition of the editorial role. Finally thanks to all contributors. We all have busy lives and we appreciate authors taking time out to write articles and reports to an editorial deadline. Not always easy I know!



**Robert Hall enjoying the Fly Orchid at Waitby Greenriggs 27 May 2022**



**Bird's-eye Primrose Waitby Greenriggs 27 May 2022**



**Ballowfields 2 June 2022 – a sea of Thrift**



**Common Lizard 17 April 2022 Coverdale, Ken Readshaw**