

YOREDALE BULLETIN

2024



Yoredale Natural History Society



Greater Snowdrops, Ulshaw Bridge (Derek Whiteley)



Anne Readshaw at High Batts 24 August 2023 photo Ken Readshaw

YOREDALE BULLETIN

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Recording the Activities during 2023 of The Yoredale Natural History Society

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Contents

Committee and Recorders 2023/24	4
Field Meetings in 2023	5
Indoor Meetings in 2023	21
Flower Recorder's Report 2023	<i>Sue Peckitt</i> 26
Butterfly Report 2023	<i>Jennie White</i> 28
Hoverfly Recorder's Report for 2023	<i>Derek Whiteley</i> 29
Other Interesting Diptera Records for 2023	<i>Derek Whiteley</i> 30
Spider Recorder's Report 2023	<i>Andy Baxter</i> 31
Reptile and Amphibian Report 2023	<i>Rose Connor</i> 32
Mammal Report for 2023	<i>John Drewett</i> 33
Birding Year, 2023	<i>Mary Atkins and Janet Hutchinson</i> 35
Winter Aconites in Wensleydale	<i>Derek Whiteley</i> 37
Fairy Foxglove <i>Erinus alpinus</i>	<i>Deborah Millward</i> 38
A Way Ahead for Wensleydale	<i>Deborah Millward</i> 39
Provisional Accounts for 2023	<i>Paul Hardill</i> 40
Annual General Meeting 2023	40

www.yoredalenaturalhistory.com

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”*.

Cover: Wensleydale's Special Hoverfly – the Bumblefly (*Pocota personata*) on the Bolton Estate, 17 May 2023. A perfect bumblebee mimic in appearance and behaviour. The larvae develop in rot holes in veteran broadleaved trees, with a local preference for Sycamore and Ash in parkland rather than woodland.

Committee 2023/24

Chairman	Anne Readshaw
Vice Chairman	Derek Whiteley
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 to July 1st	Leonard Shepherd
Webmaster from July 1st	Jane Graham
Committee members	Jennie White, Gaby Baxter, Andy Baxter

Recorders 2023/24

Birds	Mary Atkins and Janet Hutchinson
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 2024 annual subscription is £10 (£5 students, 50p children under 16), 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.

New members and visitors are very welcome: visitors fee usually £2

CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS: If you've changed your email or address please keep the Membership Secretary informed.

Field Meetings in 2023

Harmby 19 April 2023

A group of 16, led by John and Elaine Nuttall, set off from Harmby Village Hall to walk down the rejuvenated Middleham Lane and around to Spennithorne covering a variety of settings. The lane which is now a joy to walk soon got the members spotting a varied set of spring flowers:- Cowslip, Dandelions, Shining Cranesbill, Ivy-leaved Speedwell, Goosegrass, Sweet Violet, Goldilocks, Bluebell and Red Campion. The star of the show was a beautiful Common Morel (mushroom). The willow trees were already in flower and attracting a variety of insects. Derek's careful handling of a hoverfly enabling the group to observe it was masterful. Bees were out in force (Tree Bumblebee, Early Bumblebee) Peacock and Red Admirals were seen. It was quiet re bird activity but a couple of Buzzards were seen along with Grey Heron, Song Thrushes, Pied Wagtails, Carrion Crows, Shelduck and the usual smaller hedgerow birds. In all it was a relaxing walk with sensational views over to Middleham Castle and East Witton Fell.

John and Elaine Nuttall.

Blackthorn in full bloom attracted a good variety of spring insects. The bumblebee mimic dronefly *Eristalis intricarius* was the highlight. Males holding territory over the blossom were quite difficult to catch. Swollen River Mussel (*Unio tumidus*) shells were found on the banks of the Ure. This is the very northern tip of its British distribution and it will be interesting to determine if it goes further up the Ure. It is a species of lowland calcareous rivers and canals. (DW)

Preston-under-Scar 29 April 2023

A dull, overcast day didn't deter 30 members of the Society from enjoying a walk from Preston to Scarth Nick. Most of the area is now managed by the Woodland Trust. New plantings have taken place, but some of the area is designated as an ancient semi-natural woodland, consisting of coppiced hazel, trees of 150-200 years old, mostly sycamore and ash. The members were shown how difficult it can be to sustain and manage an old woodland in addition to planting new trees. Village volunteers helped to plant the area in 2011, but many of the trees (mainly Ash) have died (ash die-back) and have had to be felled. Deer and rabbit damage have contributed to the loss of some trees.

However, members enjoyed the sight of large swathes of Primroses, Bugle and Ground Ivy. More than 20 species of wildflower were out, including Early Purple Orchids. A special Yorkshire Dales Craven Door Snail (*Clausilia dubia*) was found together with many species of millipede and woodlouse.

Birds singing included Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. There were sightings of Bullfinch, Oystercatcher and Buzzard. St. George's Mushrooms and a Pleated Inkcap were also found. At the end of the walk members enjoyed a welcome cup of tea in the village.

Pauline Hardill

Some ten species of millipede were found in the wood and garden. These include the Crimson-spotted Snake Millipede *Blaniulus guttulatus* (below), the Orange-spotted Snake Millipede *Archiboreoiulus pallidus* and the tiny white flat-back millipede *Ophiodesmus albonanus* all rarely recorded in Wensleydale. The latter was last recorded in Richmond over 100 years ago, and this record appears to be new to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. (DW)



Crimson-spotted Snake Millipede. photo Ken Readshaw

St Marys Church, Redmire 10 May 2023

Group Leaders: Denise and Chris Houghton. On one of the few good weather days in early May, a group of around 20 members met in Redmire for an exploration of St Mary's Church Yard, and surrounding area. The Vicar called in too! St Marys Church has been on site since Norman times, showing all the signs of being an ancient building, in an equally ancient church yard. Many of the graves in the original part date back to the 1800s, belonging to local families several generations ago.

The church yard is undergoing a slow transformation being developed into a more sustainable environment supporting wild life, flora and fauna. Two years

ago the site was severely neglected and abandoned in many ways. Families have moved away from the area, leaving behind an ageing population unable to take on such a challenging environment.



The site was home to a rabbit population which had made inroads into the land, and damaged in the process, gravestones and disturbed remains. The site was also covered in unwanted shrubs and bushes, and it had become a dumping ground for various objects, some belonging to local agriculture.

The work was also informed by a La Roche Environmental Survey, which highlighted the mammoth task ahead for improving the external environment. A small group of local people have over the two years made great progress in clearing unwanted material, (including rabbits), and achieved working with nature, something which is emerging as a quiet peaceful and bio-diverse environment. They have added bird nesting boxes, information maps, wild flower seeds and plugs.

The visit by YNHS was initiated by Denise and Chris Houghton who wanted to share the experience but also benefit from the expert knowledge of fellow members in the Society. True to form the members set about identifying the diverse bird and plant life evident in the churchyard on the day in question.

Derek Whiteley wrote, on behalf of members present: “The highlights were Lapidary Snails in the limestone walls, with plenty of Limestone Woodlice (*Porcellio spinicornis*) which are always special. Under stones in the church yard was a good colony of Orange-spotted Blind Millipede (*Boreoiulus tenuis*)

previously only recorded in 1996 in Leyburn-so a nice find for Wensleydale. Also Pill Millipede, St Mark's Fly, nomad bees which are parasitic on mining bees. Lots of Honey Bees since there are two hives situated in the lower part of the graveyard, with a resident population in the east wall of the church. Plenty of common hoverflies species. Butterflies included Orange Tips, Speckled Woods, Peacock and Green Veined Whites. On the river banks the Pink-striped Millipede (*Ommatoiulus sabulosus*) typical of sandy soil was a nice find. Nest mounds of Yellow Meadow Ants (*Lasius flavus*) typical of undisturbed grassland."

Liz Barron documented on behalf of the group: 40 different flower species, ten birds, three butterflies, three fungi including St George's in the circle. A new plant was identified for several members of the group as the Green Alkanet, and the healing properties of the Greater Celandine. Following an in depth exploration of the church the group walked down to the River Ure identifying many more birds and flowers along the way. Just before leaving Redmire Falls the group saw a Kingfisher swiftly passing by on route to feeding her family! What a wonderful afternoon this was!

Denise & Chris Houghton

Marsett 20 May 2023



Twenty of us set off on a glorious warm and sunny, cloudless afternoon. Plenty of Sweet Cicely and Cow Parsley by the bridge with a profusion of Meadow Buttercup. Passing the Chapel we walked upstream along the narrow stony path and were rewarded with a wonderful selection of flowers, notably

Early Purple Orchid, Bird's-eye Primrose and Common Butterwort. Close examination of Marsh Valerian revealed those with more tightly clustered heads to be the female, having stigma, those with the more open flower head the male with their anthers. As we proceeded, taking care not to disturb a nesting Willow Warbler in the grassy bank, swathes of Marsh Marigold ran down the hillside. Globe Flower appeared initially in small numbers, but, as we clambered up the steep hillside, we found many more (photo).

At the top we took in the wonderful views to Semerwater and Addlebrough. St Mark's Fly, a long, shiny, black fly was found in large numbers. So-called because it emerges around St Mark's Day, April 25th, it is an important pollinator for fruit trees and other plants. Orange Tip and the striking Green Hairstreak Butterflies were seen as were Curlew, Oystercatcher, froglet and a Hedgehog Slug.

Caroline Stott and Ann Luxmoore

Ring Ouzels in Apedale 26 May and 30 June 2023



Illustration by Pauline Hardill

Following a talk given last winter by Richard Wells, two accompanied visits were made to Apedale to view Ring Ouzels. The first, on 26th May, provided spectacular sights on a beautiful clear, sunny evening. We enjoyed great views of Stonechats and of Ring Ouzels. We also saw Curlew, Lapwing, Golden

Plover and Snipe. We arranged to meet with our guide, Richard at 3:30pm in Castle Bolton and then headed up onto the moor where the Moor Keeper joined us. Both provided much information of interest, eleven members enjoyed a marvellous evening.

At a second visit on June 30th the weather was less favourable being damp and windy. Nevertheless, three Ring Ouzels were seen plus an array of other birds including Red Kite, Kestrel and Red Grouse. Many thanks to Richard Wells for providing a number of members with a thrilling visit.

Caroline Stott

Swaledale Festival Walks led by YNHS members. May – June 2023

YNHS members have traditionally led two walks for the Swaledale Festival which allows up to 25 paying members to attend, accompanied by plenty of volunteers to help everyone with floral identification in some of our most interesting local habitats.

On Tuesday, 30th May 2023 we met at Yorke Square in Richmond to explore the ancient semi-natural woodland of Billy Banks Wood. Floral finds included Red Valerian, Sweet Cicely, Sanicle, Bluebells, Cow Parsley, Ramsons and Wood Avens. We were pleased to spot the hybrid between Wood Avens and Water Avens. Fallen wood had been left to rot on the woodland floor, creating a wonderful habitat for fungi and invertebrates. As we strolled along the River Swale we noted flowers that were thriving at the river edge and in the riverine pasture: Red Campion and Bulbous, Creeping and Meadow Buttercup. We had lunch by the river before moving on past Gorse bushes. Bird's foot Trefoil, Ox-eye Daisy and Dame's Violet were other finds before we headed back through Billy Banks Wood to Green Bridge.

We then explored the fields owned by Richmond Landscape Trust, where we found lovely patches of Wood Cranesbill, Bistort, Mouse-ear, Ragged Robin and Meadow Saxifrage. Some of the group left us at the Station for a cup of tea, whilst the rest of us continued along the Batts to the waterfall. We paused for an ice-cream and had time to appreciate the beauty of Richmond Falls before a short walk back along the Swale to Yorke Square.

On Thursday, 8th June 2023 we set out from Round Howe Car Park, crossing over to walk up Green Lane with its abundance of wild flowers. We passed High Leases and made our way through the ancient semi-natural woodland that is known as Whitcliffe Wood. From here we explored the pastures on the way to Low Applegarth. Yellow Pimpernel, Water Figwort,

Black Medick, Wild Marjoram, Field Madder, Dove's foot Cranesbill, Mouse-ear Hawkweed and Rock Rose were a few of the flowers spotted on this section of the walk. These pastures have been managed with the flora in mind so they were much more floriferous than the later riverside pastures that had obviously had more treatment with fertilizers and were dominated by strong grasses, to the detriment of the wild flowers.

We were however, very pleased to see a wonderful stand of Yellow Flag Irises in a small pool on our route. We returned through Whitcliffe Wood on a lower path and emerged on a concrete track which led us back to our cars promptly at 3 p.m. Many thanks to all the YNHS members who helped to make these walks such a success. Special thanks to Jennie White, Jenny Walker, Gaby and Andy Baxter, Paul and Pauline Hardill, Ann Luxmoore and Caroline Stott. You all worked so hard to make these events a success. Thank you for attending the recce too.

Chris Meek

Saltburn Field Trip 19 June 2023

This field trip came about as Joyce Scott gave us a fascinating talk "Natural Miscellany" in our 2022/2023 winter programme. 21 of us took advantage of her incredible knowledge and enthusiasm. We spent a couple of hours investigating the rock pools and finding all sorts of weird and wonderful creatures including brittle star, sea hare, sea slug, sea squirt, butterfish and bootlace worm. All in all 55 specimens were identified. As the tide turned Joyce then talked us through the various seaweeds. According to the species list she forwarded us I counted 14 different types. The coral weed is a good indicator of how clean the sea is and there was a lot about. Photo below by Ken Readshaw.



After lunch we dispersed into smaller groups. Some had a walk and paddled along the beach. Due to the devastation over the last couple of years where thousands of crustaceans had died we were making a note of how many crabs we saw both dead and alive. Joyce then reports these findings to the various organisations. These are very complicated circumstances and the locals affected on this part of the north east coast are trying to raise funds to have their own private investigation into the cause of the unprecedented deaths of this particular sea life. So far the fishermen and locals are not satisfied with what the various organisations have said in their investigations. There are signs of a slow recovery but it is obvious it will take time to return to previous stock levels. In the meantime it is affecting many livelihoods.

Those who walked along the cliff tops took note of some the flora which included Toad Flax, Wild Carrot, Pyramidal Orchid and Meadow Vetchling. They also discovered an unusual white form of *Allium* which they thought had not been recorded in this area before. Deborah Millard did a bit of investigation only to discover it was an onion! The birders among us recorded 16 species including Cormorant, Kittiwake, Razorbill, Carrion Crow, Skylark, Meadow Pipit and Starling. In the morning we were all entertained by the seabirds and their antics.

A grand day out was had by all and I'm sure we all saw something we hadn't seen before. Both Joyce and Deborah had to do further investigations in to specimens they thought they hadn't seen before which goes to show we are constantly learning from each other and increasing our knowledge base. Which I say every time I write for the YNHS and I am never too old to learn something new. Keep up the good work everyone. The good weather made it a most enjoyable day and one member even went for a swim.

Liz Barron

Adam Bottom Farm 26 June 2023

15 members met at Adam Bottom Farm for a walk with owner and farmer Juliet Maddan. The warm sunshine had brought out Meadow Brown and Red Admiral butterflies as we made our way to the river. The shingle bed at the confluence of Bishopdale Beck and the River Ure was well colonised by Creeping Yellowcress in full flower. Other colonisers included Canary Grass, *Mimulus*, Figwort and Purple Osier. We were shown the deep pool (Frodle Dub) where migratory Salmon waited for water levels to rise before spawning and watched shoals of tiny Minnows in the shallows. The moist woodland edge had newly opened Giant Bellflower in both purple and white forms, the latter with deep purple bases hidden inside its white bell. This habitat also

supported abundant Water Forget-me-not and a single Marsh Hawksbeard. As the group crossed the riverside fields, their farm management was discussed and the absence of chemical fertiliser or pesticide was noted. Colourful clumps of Meadow Vetchling and Tufted Vetch lined the riverbank and the first Harebells of the year had just opened. Throughout the visit we were chastised by birds with young, firstly by a Common Sandpiper then Curlew and most persistently by Oystercatchers.



The meeting finished with much appreciated tea and cakes in the walled garden. As an exciting finale, an Osprey flew across the valley noisily mobbed by half a dozen Oystercatchers.

Deborah Millward

Interesting insects included the Common Stiletto Fly, *Thereva nobilitata*, a rare species in VC65. It breeds in sandy riverine deposits. Malachite Beetle and Slender Robberfly *Leptogaster cylindrica* were other “goodies” – the latter prefers well-structured dry grassland with a friable substrate. It is on the edge of its national range with only one local record before 2022. There was a good range of hoverflies and craneflies. (DW)

Grasses. Flout Moor Lane and Seata Quarry 1 July 2023

At members request Deborah Millward led a walk from Aysgarth specifically looking at grasses. Firstly the difference between grasses, sedges and rushes was demonstrated. There are at least 35 very common grasses which are not easy to separate but progress was made on a few. Members learnt to look for awns and ligules when necessary and got to grips with the oat grasses. Quaking Grass was everyone's favourite but Cock's-foot, Timothy and

Meadow Foxtail soon became easily identified, along with Perennial Rye-grass and Crested Dog's-tail.



For those only just starting on grasses, that was probably enough, so the group moved on to Seata Quarry, a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve, to enjoy the Harebells and two species of Scabious, Small and Field. A Six-spot Burnet moth, with its striking red spots on a black background, was also enjoying a scabious. In the past the quarry had once been “beautified” with garden alpine plants such as Fairy Foxglove and a species of St. John’s Wort, both from the Pyrenees. A hitchhiker must have joined them as one of the quarry ledges now hosts the grass Spiky Fescue, also from the Pyrenees, and suffering badly from the drought. Fortunately the drought had not affected the Fragrant Orchids which were pristine. Members requested an April visit to the quarry to see the Blue Moor-grass when it was really blue.

Deborah Millward

Common Field Grasshopper *Chorthippus brunneus*, Common Green Grasshopper *Omocestus viridula*, Chimney Sweeper moth, Tree Door Snail *Balea heydeni* and Limestone Woodlouse *Porcellio spinicornis* in Seata Quarry (DW)

Foxglove Covert Nature Reserve 12 August 2023

After a welcome cup of tea and a tour of the field centre 15 members of the YNHS set out for a walk around the reserve. We spotted several moths on the field centre, including July Highflyer, Flame Carpet, Dingy Footman and Buff Footman.

Heading off to the Scrapes we wandered through the Common Reeds

(*Phragmites australis*) spotting Purple Loosestrife, Ragged Robin, Crowfoot and Marsh Woundwort. The tiny “Fritillary Meadow” was still full of the yellow spikes of Agrimony, emerging above the Common Knapweed and Tufted Vetch. Back on the boardwalk we noted Water Plantain, Water Forget-me-not, Greater Spearwort, Common Angelica and the yellow daisy-like flowers of Common Fleabane. A short detour took us to the Pepper Saxifrage meadow to view this unusual umbellifer. We discovered Alder Tongue on the cones of an alder tree. This fungus causes chemically induced galls on female alder catkins and cones. The green ‘tongues’ soon turn red with time and can persist for some time.



Alder Tongue at Foxglove Covert, photo Ken Readshaw

After crossing Hague Bridge we headed off to the stone circle and moorland, where the tiny flowers of Eyebright and Common Storksbill decorated the path sides. We discussed the two areas being managed for waxcaps: a particularly colourful group of fungi that rely on unimproved grassland. Passing Spigot Mere we searched for the beautiful white flower, Grass of Parnassus and also found Devil’s-bit Scabious on a small area of raised fen. Further along the path Anne showed us Articulated Rush, Fen Bedstraw and Creeping Cinquefoil and we passed stands of Greater Burnet and Betony.

We flushed a Grey Partridge from the vegetation as we approached Plovers

Pool. This water body, which is a good area for dragonflies and damselflies had become almost totally covered with vegetation and was an interesting contrast to the nearby recently dug bare pond that was still to be colonised by the native vegetation. At last the sun arrived and on the wetland area we were lucky enough to spot lots of Emerald Damselflies with both male and female Common Darters. We admired the bulrushes, also known as reedmace. We ended our walk on a high, with the appearance of Brimstone butterfly and two Silver-washed Fritillaries in the orchard and Common Lizards and a Great Crested Newt nearby.

We had our picnic lunches back in the Field Centre with mugs of tea, biscuits and Anne's lovely homemade flapjack. Members explored the exhibits around the reserve, noted a Jay in the garden and bought cards, honey, and books as well as also kindly leaving donations to the reserve. Thanks to all the members who made this outing a pleasurable experience and those who helped with washing the dishes afterwards.

Chris Meek

High Batts 15 July 2023

About 20 members assembled for a visit to High Batts Nature Reserve, by kind permission of the Reserve Manager, Colin Slator. High Batts is a private Nature Reserve and SSSI next to the River Ure, near North Stainley, Ripon. This is an area of interesting geology. Magnesian Limestone (otherwise known as Dolomite, or calcium magnesium carbonate) was laid down as bedrock when the area was covered with a shallow, warm sea, around 290 million years ago. Later in geological time, large amounts of sand and gravel were deposited, as the river changed its course. This explains why there are several big gravel quarries in this area, with the Nature Reserve nestled in between.

It was a day of thunderous downpours and tropical sunny interludes. No sooner had we entered the Reserve, than the Heavens opened. Some of the group took refuge in a nearby bird hide, from where Marsh Tits and Yellowhammers were spotted. Others put on waterproofs and tramped onwards, stoically. The cloudburst quickly passed, and everyone was soon making their way along the grassy ride that had been cut through the tall vegetation. All enjoyed seeing plants such as Musk Mallow, Black Horehound and Greater Burnet Saxifrage, that we don't normally see on our upland walks. The Giant Bellflower was particularly impressive, and there were Pyramidal Orchids, Common Centaury, Viper's Bugloss and Red Bartsia in the short grass at the sides. A bright hoverfly known as a Marmalade Fly was seen.

There is a special, other-worldly feel to this part of the Reserve, where the vegetation reaches head height and the river is omnipresent, yet invisible. We did not hurry, and had only travelled about a hundred yards when it was decided it was lunchtime. We picnicked near some ponds, full of interesting plants, and spotted some frogs. We keyed out Fen Bedstraw, growing in a damp area – this seems to be a first for this Reserve.

With ominous black clouds once again gathering, we set off (at a slightly faster pace) to the northern-most end of the Reserve, where we were delighted to find a Brimstone butterfly sheltering from the rain drops, on a Viper's Bugloss flower. Seconds later, a White-letter Hairstreak was found – doing exactly the same on a Ragwort. Among Silver Birch trees, a woodland clearing carpeted with Common Rock-rose and Devil's-bit Scabious would normally be expected to be a hive of insect activity – the rain meant that only a Large Yellow Underwing (moth) was flying here today. A Robin's Pincushion (wasp gall) was discovered on a Dog Rose.

The next clearing was covered with Burnet Rose, prompting discussions of how on earth to reduce it and suggestions of goats. Carline Thistle was found and Clustered Bellflower (mini cousin of the Giant seen earlier) was thriving. We returned through the woodland, past some truly gargantuan Lesser Burdock plants, back to the ride and the car park.

Despite the weather, we had seen a lot. Butterfly enthusiasts among us were especially pleased with the against-the-odds species list: Ringlet, Green-Veined White, Small Heath, Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Comma, Gatekeeper, Painted Lady and of course the White-letter Hairstreak – star of the show! The Reserve has just celebrated its 50th Anniversary, and welcomes new members.

Anne Readshaw

Ballowfield 24 August 2023

20 members of the Society met at Ballowfield. The main attraction on the toxic waste from old lead mines was a sea of Devil's bit Scabious, starred with the beautiful Grass of Parnassus. Thrift was still in flower as well as Eyebright, Harebells, Tormentil, Leadwort and Meadowsweet. In all around 38 flowers were recorded including violets. Fungi were out, Scarlet and Goblet Waxcaps, Puffballs and Panther Cap. Amongst the coppiced Hazel was a fine and rare Small-leaved Lime complete with nail galls. On the ridge of the scar was a stand of Large-leaved Lime. As it was cool and overcast, we only recorded a Small Copper but plenty of spiders, grasshoppers and a young toad.

Birdwatchers found Spotted Flycatchers and Nuthatch.

A picnic lunch at Bainbridge Meeting House was shared as well as information. The burial ground meadow project limps on, not a lot of progress after six years of work. However the steep bank bordering the River Bain is wilding up nicely. A most enjoyable and informative outing with thanks to all for sharing their expertise.

Jennie White

The insect highlight of the day was a colony of Kite-tailed Robberflies *Machimus atricapilla* on the reserve. A good list of hoverflies included *Paragus haemorrhois*, *Sericomyia silentis*, *Dasysyrphus tricinctus* and *Chrysotoxum bicinctum*: all noteworthy for Wensleydale. The Sphecid Wasp *Ectemnius continuus* was a nice find which may be new to VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales despite being a common species in lowland Yorkshire. The Red-thighed Epeolus (*Epeolus cruciger*) a parasitic bee on *Colletes* bees was another good discovery. Again it appears to be a new record for VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales. The nearest record is from Brimham Rocks near Pateley Bridge in 2001. It is a very colourful and pretty solitary bee, and a nice addition to our local fauna. (DW)

Fungus Foray 28th October 2023

A Fungus Foray took place on Saturday 28th October 2023, with particular focus on grassland fungi. Members of the North East Fungus Study Group and the BSBI joined us, and we were very grateful for their expertise. We started in Horsehouse Village Hall with a quick cuppa and slice of cake, followed by a short introductory talk from Anne. Around 30 people had turned up, including interested locals, so we split into two groups and set off, guided by a trail of colourful flags that had been put out earlier to mark interesting specimens.

One group started with the Village Green, which, though small and on quite a slope, is a nice piece of species-rich old grassland. It has never been ploughed, fertilised or otherwise disturbed, but has always been grazed or mown – at times very short, but latterly according to ‘no-mow-May’ principles. At least 25 different species of flowering plants can be found here in the summer and it is also good habitat for grassland fungi species. Over 10 different sorts were seen today, including black Earth Tongues and seven different kinds of Waxcap.

In the paddock behind the Hall, we passed a spectacular display of Pixie-cup Lichen (*Cladonia chlorophaea*), growing on the back of a limestone wall. Moving on, to the pastures up the West side of Horsehouse Gill, we were

introduced to Common Bonnet (*Mycena galericulata*), growing on a decaying tree stump. Many further discoveries followed and a list of 43 fungi species was compiled, including some spectacular Fly Agarics – the reward for toiling to the top of the hill. 14 different Waxcaps were recorded, meaning that the site is likely to be of at least regional importance for grassland fungi. Jo also recorded a list of 26 species of lichen.

This was a very enjoyable and inspiring event, during which we learnt lots about fungi and lichens, thanks largely to the patience of the NEFSG members. Several new people were encouraged to join YNHS. None of us will ever be able to walk over a piece of old grassland again, without looking out for the colourful, strange and intriguing fungi that may be growing there!

Anne Readshaw

Horsehouse Lichens 29 October 2023		
Species	Substrate	Habitat
Arthonia radiata	Hawthorn	Unimproved grassland
Baeomyces rufus	Rocks	Unimproved grassland
Caloplaca flavescens	Wall	Unimproved grassland
Candelariella vitillina	Wall	Unimproved grassland
Cladonia chlorophae	wall	Mossy wall on farmland
Evernia prunastri	Sycamore	Unimproved grassland
Hypogymnia physodes	Sycamore	Unimproved grassland
Lecanora campestris	wall	Unimproved grassland
Lecanora chlaroterea	Dead twigs of Ash	Unimproved grassland
Lecanora expallens	Sycamore	Unimproved grassland
Lecanora muralis	Concrete structure	Village Hall
Lecanora soralifera	Wall	Unimproved grassland
Lecidella elaeochroma	Dead twigs of Ash	Unimproved grassland
Melanelia subaurifera	Hawthorn	Unimproved grassland
Parmelia saxatilis	wall	Unimproved grassland
Parmelia sulcata	Sycamore	Unimproved grassland
Pertusaria pertusa	Ash	Unimproved grassland
Physcia adscendens	Fencepost	Unimproved grassland
Physcia tenella	Hawthorn	Unimproved grassland
Platismatia glauca	Fencepost	Unimproved grassland
Ramalina farinacea	Sycamore	Unimproved grassland
Ramalina fastigiata	Hawthorn	Unimproved grassland
Tephromela atra	Wall	Unimproved grassland
Usnea subfloridana	Hawthorn	Unimproved grassland
Verrucaria nigrescens	Wall	Unimproved grassland
Xanthoria parietina	Dead twigs of Ash	Unimproved grassland

Horsehouse Fungus Foray		28th October 2023	Chris Meek Alan Simkins	
A foray in unimproved pasture		Grid reference SE 049 814		
Scientific name	English name	Habitat and substrate	Alternative or new name	
Agaricus species	Mushroom			
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	Fly Agaric	Nr Woodland edge in grassland		
<i>Armillaria mellea</i>	Honey Fungus			
<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	Jelly Ear	Fallen twig		
<i>Clavulinopsis corniculata</i>	Meadow Coral	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Clavulinopsis fusiformis</i>	Golden Spindles	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Clavulinopsis helvola</i>	Yellow Club	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Clavulinopsis luteoalba</i>	Apricot club	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Cylindrobasidium laeve</i>	Nio English Name	Small fallen branch		
<i>Cystoderma amianthinum</i>	Earthy powdercap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Dacrymyces stillatus</i>	Common Jelly Spot	Small fallen branch		
<i>Entoloma conferendum</i>	Star Pinkgill	Unimproved grassland	Only addition from Alan	
<i>Entoloma porphyrophaeum</i>	Lilac Pinkgill	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Exidia thuretiana</i>	White Brain	Fallen branch		
<i>Hygrocybe calyptiformis</i>	Pink Waxcap	Unimproved grassland	Porpolomopsis calyptiformis (New)	
<i>Hygrocybe cantherellus</i>	Goblet Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe cercea</i>	Butter Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe chlorophana</i>	Golden Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe coccinea</i>	Scarlet Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe conica</i>	Blackening Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe irrigata</i>	Slimy Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe laeta</i>	Heath Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe persistens</i>	Persistent Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe pratensis</i>	Meadow Waxcap	Unimproved grassland	<i>Cuphophyllum pratensis</i> (New)	
<i>Hygrocybe psittacina</i>	Parrot Waxcap	Unimproved grassland	<i>Gliophorus psittacina</i> (New)	
<i>Hygrocybe quieta</i>	Oily waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Hygrocybe reidii</i>	Honey Waxcap	Unimproved grassland	Added by Anne Readshaw	
<i>Hygrocybe virginaea</i>	Snowy Waxcap	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Illiosporopsis christiansenii</i>	No English Name	On lichen		
<i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>	Stump Puffball	Base of tree		
<i>Marchandiomyces aurantiaca</i>	No English name	On lichen		
<i>Mycena flavoalba</i>	Ivory Bonnet	Unimproved grassland	<i>Atheniella flavoalba</i> (New)	
<i>Mycena galericulata</i>	Common Bonnet	Tree Stump		
<i>Mycena leptocephala</i>	Nitrous Bonnet	Unimproved grassland		
<i>Parasola plicatilis</i>	Pleated Inkcap	Unimproved grassland	<i>Coprinus plicatilis</i> (Alt)	
<i>Peniophora cinerea</i>	No English name	Fallen Branch		
<i>Pholiota squarrosa</i>	Shaggy Scalycap	Base of deciduous tree		
<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore	On Birch tree	Razorstrop Fungus (Alt)	
<i>Ramariopsis kunzei</i>	Ivory Coral	Unimproved Grassland		
<i>Stropharia semiglobata</i>	Dung Roundhead	On dung		
<i>Trametes versicolor</i>	Turkeytail	On broken branch		
<i>Tremella mesenterica</i>	Yellow Brain	On broken branch		
<i>Trichoglossum hirsutum</i>	Hairy Earth tongue	Unimproved Grassland		
<i>Xylaria hypoxylon</i>	Candlesnuff Fungus	On dead wood		

Indoor Meetings in 2023

Ring Ouzels of Apedale , Richard Wells. 27 January 2023

Former BBC presenter Richard Wells gave the Society a most interesting talk about his studies of Ring Ouzels in Apedale, a valley between Wensleydale and Swaledale. He began studying Ring Ouzels in 2015, discovering about six pairs in his study area. They favour a harsh environment , no higher than 300 metres , noted for rocky screes, heather moorland and short, stubby grass. Areas of former lead mines such as Arkengarthdale and Gunnerside suit them with their spoil heaps. Ring Ouzels are migratory, arriving in March and leaving in October. Birds pair up and often return to the same area for up to eleven years. Nesting on the ground, they usually lay 4 to 5 eggs in a clump of grass and there are usually two clutches in a season.

Members of the thrush family, the Ring Ouzel is similar in size to a Blackbird. The male has a distinctive white bib and a yellow beak, but no yellow ring around the eye (unlike the Blackbird). It has pale silvery edges round the feathers, particularly the long wing feathers, giving it a slightly lacy-patterned look. It flies with deep wing beats upwards to the sky. The female is brown with a faint tracery of grey outlining the feathers and a duller whitish buff bib. Juveniles are lightly mottled. There are about 7000 pairs in the UK, but there has been a big decline in the last 20 years. This decline is replicated in other areas such as the Cairngorms and the Peak District. Bad droughts in their wintering areas in the Atlas mountains of North Africa could be responsible for the decline, as there has been a serious lack of suitable food: berries, insects and other invertebrates. In 2022 Richard noted only 3 pairs in his area. As with other species, climate change is affecting Ring Ouzels.

However, they do seem to be adaptable. On the continent they nest in trees and they seem to be able to exist alongside human activity. In the Cairngorms they appeared oblivious to the disruptive building of the funicular railway, which has led Richard to believe that they chose to nest in our area long before lead mining. Let us hope they will return and we shall still see Ring Ouzels in years to come.

Pauline Hardill

Conservation on the Bolton Estate, Tom Orde-Powlett

24 February 2023

In February we welcomed Tom Orde-Powlett who lives and works on the Bolton Castle estate. From a young age he enjoyed outdoor life and country activities and is now involved with a number of conservation projects including The Curlew Recovery Partnership, a steering group comprising nine

organisations representing a wide range of interest in Curlew protection. Peatland restoration, the importance of re-profiling and of ongoing monitoring was illustrated with some glorious photographs. Tree planting in the valley bottoms, carried out by his father in conjunction with the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, could also be seen and Tom feels there is potential to plant more in the steep-sided gullies without negatively impacting Curlew.

Controlled heather burning, when the moisture content of the heather is such to allow a “cool burn” and fire passes over quickly, is carried out on the moorland. This causes no damage to underlying peat but allows for growth of Sphagnum Moss. Legal, targeted, predator control, particularly of Foxes and Crows, is essential and significant to protect the brood of Curlew enabling two chicks per three years to be raised. Over-wintering birds number 200-700 and are found in the valley bottoms between September and February; many have been colour marked. Nearby, at a demonstration farm managed jointly by a local farmer and estate keepers, 12-14 ponds and scrapes have been created. The Estate is a donor site for eggs which are incubated here, hatch and fledge elsewhere and have then subsequently been seen e.g. at RSPB Arne in Dorset. Groups are taken on visits to share knowledge and demonstrate land management, to raise awareness of the importance of keeping dogs on leads so as to protect the ground nesting bird population. Keeper-led Curlew safaris are offered during the breeding season.

We heard of The Hen Harrier Recovery Plan and how the Estate provided the first receptor site for a successful Brood Management Trial. This involves taking chicks from the wild, rearing them in captivity, and, once fledged, releasing them back into the same upland habitat. Over the last couple of years Tom has been thrilled by the arrival of Osprey, with two chicks successfully raised in 2022. Tom illustrated a long history of his family’s interest in wildlife, reading extracts from the war diaries of Lieutenant William Percy Orde-Powlett. Midst vivid accounts of shelling, shrapnel damage, gas and horrors of war, there were references to the arrival of the first Swallows, the calling of the Cuckoo, Bees, Garlic Mustard and the flowering Ragged Robin - this his final entry before being killed at Ypres shortly after his 21st birthday. Following Percy’s death the poem *Call of the Moors* was published by his younger brother, with reference to the many waders which arrive each year. Post-war forestry, treating the land with respect, improving the soil and preventing its deterioration were all important to Lord Bolton and remain so.

Conservation and trees especially are a multi-generational love and interest. Sustainability depends on social, environmental and economic factors. Much

of the Estate is tenanted so teamwork and collaboration with local farmers are key.

Caroline Stott

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Reserves, Graham Standring

31 March 2023

Our final lecture of the winter was given by Graham Standring, Living Landscape Officer for the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust; Graham still has a passion and enthusiasm for conservation after 30 years in the field and even feels a glimmer of optimism for the future. YWT aims to preserve, develop and improve its sites, bigger, better, more connected.

Sites include Ashes Pasture, with its thousands of globe flowers and rare orchids that has been managed traditionally for decades. Seata Quarry and Globeflower Wood, prove that even small sites can have great ecological value. However in places such as Grass Wood, ash dieback is proving a disastrous and expensive problem. 2,000 trees have needed to be felled in the last 4 years and it is estimated up to 99% could be lost. This can open up opportunities for butterflies, insects and birds.

Wild Ingleborough is an ambitious restorative project working with many agencies including local farmers to improve over 12,000 hectares for wild life. Throughout it was stressed how crucial is the work of volunteers. Tree planting, hedge laying, stone walling, species monitoring etc save the Trust large amounts of money and add to people's skill base. Without them the impact of the Trust would be much diminished.

Jennie White

Merlins. Phil Warren 29 September 2023

Phil Warren, a research scientist with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, gave an in depth report on the Government funded research that the Trust had recently carried out on Merlin. This bird is the UK's smallest raptor and unlike other raptors in the country had not fully recovered from the ravages of DDT poisoning last century. The area covered during the project was the North Pennines, North Yorks Moors and the Yorkshire Dales. Whereas there were good records for the first two areas much less was known about Merlin in the Dales. Mr Warren used pointer dogs to find these ground nesting birds. Interestingly in other countries Merlins nest in trees but here on our treeless moors they nest in the cover of heather. Merlin return from the coastal areas, where they over winter, in Spring, they nest in May, hatch in June and by the end of July return to the coast. The research found no shortage

of suitable habitat, though changes in moorland management now that smaller areas are burnt at a time, and consequently smaller areas of longer heather left, may have affected productivity. Merlin prey on small songbirds like meadow pipits, skylarks and stonechats, but they do take grouse chicks and have even been known to feed on a budgerigar. Fixed cameras at the nest site proved of little help in identifying prey items. Fortunately Merlin, like Peregrine, pluck their prey so identifying prey feathers is helpful. Lack of prey did not seem to be a problem. Only 23% of young survive the winter in the lowlands. Research needs to continue to discover the reason for such a low survival rate, it is not as though they succumb to a mammoth migration.

Deborah Millward

Working Together to Ensure Our Rivers Thrive. Catherine Mason.

27 October 2023

Catherine is also one of our members and gave this presentation on behalf of the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust (YDRT). She is the Educational and Engagement Officer and has worked with the Trust since 2017. Due to a technical fault with some of our equipment the videos included had no sound but were fairly self-explanatory. Also she was trying out the possibility of us using a microphone to try to improve facilities for our audiences, As expected we had some teething problems. So “well done” Catherine for helping us out with the trial.

YDRT is a registered charity established in 2004. It is involved with the rivers Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe and Ouse covering a total of 6690km (4157 miles) and 4854 square Km (1874 square miles). It works to protect and enhance the river environments to benefit everyone: wildlife and communities. Sometimes working alongside other organisations in supporting farmers and landowners and with the appropriate funding which hasn't been as easy to get since Covid, it is involved with projects such as reducing pollution, practical river improvements, habitat creation, biological surveys and natural flood management to name a few.

We all know none of our rivers are in good overall health or in good chemical health. Catherine showed us some figures regarding Leyburn Sewerage Works from the National Rivers Trust website (<https://therivertrust.org/sewage-map>) They were alarming but I don't think we were surprised. It showed that on average, in one in every three days there was a sewage spillage. One of her videos included a model she uses in the ***Rivers 2 U*** educational bus/classroom. We can all help reduce the amount of rainfall that can go straight back into the sewage network by trying to use sustainable drainage systems. Over the last

few years Catherine has attended 60 schools and helped to educate 4300 children. They particularly relate to the 3P's only put paper, poo and pee down the toilet. Not related to YDRT, Catherine is pleased to see how the introductions of Beavers have been successful in certain areas of the country. The nearest ones to us are within the North York Moors. They have been able to show improved biodiversity and reduced flood risk. Beaver is a keystone species and often referred to as an eco-system engineer.

As expected, the Q & A session was dominated by the sewage in our rivers. I have never attended such a big audience (of over 60) and some of the audience made enquiries about volunteering, for which there are many roles. YDRT can be contacted via its website. I have been a practical volunteer since 2016 and have helped with such projects as leaky dams, electrofishing, eDNA river sampling, planting lots of trees and even been on Countryfile. This year we were trialling using sheep's wool instead of plastic tree guards. I have also helped out with clearing rubbish from water courses. It is amazing what people throw away in the wrong places. It is sad to see and it has many impacts. Not just on the local community but the bigger environment, restricting the flow of water hence causing problems with flooding, pollution and wildlife.

After Catherine's presentation we had the opportunity to examine a local water sample to see what invertebrates live there. There is a lot more information on the YDRT website about their latest projects.

Liz Barron

Fungi. Gill Cunningham 24 November 2023

Gill Cunningham is a local expert on fungi (mushrooms and toadstools), based in Darlington. We started by learning that there is no real difference between mushrooms and toadstools; it depends on where you live or your beliefs. Fungi tend to be 'iceberg' in form, i.e. most of it is below the surface. The visible part is the equivalent of a flower or fruit. The main part is below ground, the mycelium, which can grow to enormous proportions. Fungi and plant roots cooperate to help and feed each other. There are three types of fungi, *saprophytic*, which feed on decaying matter. *mycorrhizal*, which cooperates with trees and plants, delivering water to the roots in exchange for sugar, on which it feeds. Finally; *parasitic* which eventually kills its host.

WARNING, many fungi can be poisonous! However, some are very good to eat so one should take extreme caution when deciding what's for tea. Taste, smell, the arrangement of the gills or underside parts and colour all help to identify which mushroom you have found. If photographing for later

reference, take a shot showing different aspects and habitat, all on one shot. Bizarrely, the most popular children's toadstool Fly Agaric, (red with white spots) is also one of the most poisonous so take care when exploring the subject further. Everyone agreed it was a great talk.

To see more of Gill's work and amazing photographs visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/197869877212778/>

Mike Swan

Christmas Meeting 15 December 2023

The 2023 programme ended with our traditional festive get-together, which was very well attended. Deborah Millward and Jennie White provided an entertaining and interesting slide show of their botanical trip to Albania. Ken Readshaw provided a review of the year and a selection of his excellent photographs. Members shared an excellent smorgasbord of festive food and drink. A sale of second hand books raised £65 towards Society funds and members went home with some good bargains.

Flower Recorder's Report 2023

Sue Peckitt

Preston-under-Scar, 29 April 2023

Herb Robert, Shining Cranesbill, Dog Violet, Ground Ivy, Cowslip, Primrose, Bugle, Barren and Wild Strawberry, Wood Sorrel, Wood Rush, Dandelion, Daisy, White Dead-nettle, Crosswort, Celandine, Forgetmenot, Dogs Mercury, variety of speedwell, Garlic Mustard, Lady's Mantle, Woodruff.

Marsett, 20 May 2023

Wood Anemone, Water Avens, Bugle, Meadow Buttercup, Creeping Buttercup, Red Campion, Lesser Celandine, Shining Cranesbill, Crosswort, Cuckoo Flower, Daisy, Globe Flower, Horsetail, Lady's Mantle, Lousewort, Marsh Marigold, Marsh Valerian, Common Mouse-ear, Sticky Mouse-ear, Garlic Mustard, Early Purple Orchid, Pignut, Yellow Rattle, Ribwort Plantain, Primrose, Birds Eye Primrose, Self-heal, Common Sorrel, Wood Sorrel, Germander Speedwell, Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Barren Strawberry, Sweet Cicely, Ivy Leaved Toadflax, Tormentil, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Marsh Valerian, Common Vetch, Dog Violet.

Redmire, 10 May 2023

Ivy-leaved Speedwell, Blue and White Bells, Cowslip, Dandelion, White Dead-nettle, Cleavers, Moschatel, Crosswort, Germander Speedwell, Pignut, Cuckoo Pint, Bugle, Lesser Celandine, Greater Stitchwort, Slender Speedwell, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, Water Avens, Herb Robert, Shining Cranesbill, Green Alkanet, Jack-by-the-Hedge, Greater Celandine, Bird Cherry, Dovesfoot Cranesbill, Red Campion, Primrose, Wood Anemone, Sweet Cicely, Marsh Marigold, Dogs Mercury, Lady's Mantle, Hawthorn, Cow Parsley, Bush Vetch.

Adam Bottoms, 26 June 2023

Goatsbeard, Red Clover, Dog Daisy, buttercups, Red Campion, Nipplewort, Meadow Cranesbill, Forgetmenot, Creeping Yellow Cress, White Nettle, Plantain, Dock, Giant Bellflower, Monkey Flower, Water Forgetmenot, Marsh Hawksbeard, Hogweed, Parsley, Woundwort, Figwort, Burdock, Rough Hawkbit, Marsh Hawkbit, Cleavers, Yarrow, White Clover, Lady's Bedstraw, Meadow Vetchling, Tufted Vetch, Sorrel, Harebell, Dovesfoot Cranesbill.

Flout Moor Lane and Seata Quarry, 1 July 2023

Mainly grasses - Cocksfoot, Rye Grass, Bearded Couch Grass, False Oat Grass, Sterile Broom, Creeping Bent, Meadow Foxtail, Timothy, Cats Ear, Rough Stalk Meadow Grass, Creeping Soft Grass, Yorkshire Fog, Crested Dogs Tail, Yellow Oat Grass, Quaking Grass, Blue Moor Grass, Sweet Vernal Grass, Tufted Hair Grass. Spikey Fescue (**only known site in UK** as known to grow in the Pyrenees, could have been brought in when quarry abandoned and being tidied up).



Round-leaved St. John's-wort at Seata Quarry 1 July 2023

High Batts, 15 July 2023

Agrimony, Pyramidal Orchid, Scarlet Pimpernel, Lesser Burdock, Black Horehound, White Bryony, Clustered Bellflower, Giant Bellflower, Welted Thistle, Common Knapweed, Common Centaury, Enchanters Nightshade, Hemlock, Common Spotted Orchid, Vipers Bugloss, Common Eyebright, Meadowsweet, Fen Bedstraw, Lady's Bedstraw, Meadow Cranesbill (plus a white variant), Common Rock Rose, Hairy St John's Wort, Creeping Jenny, Yellow Loosestrife, Musk Mallow, Red Bartsia, Wild Marjoram, Greater Burnet Saxifrage, Purple Willow, Giant Fescue, Water Figwort, Bladder Campion, Marsh Woundwort, Devils Bit Scabious, Wood Sage, Tufted Vetch, Hairy Violet.

Foxglove Covert, 12 August 2023

Common Reed, Purple Loosestrife, Ragged Robin, Water Crowfoot, Marsh Woundwort, Agrimony, Common Knapweed, Tufted Vetch, Water Plantain, Water Forgetmenot, Greater Spearwort, Common Angelica, Common Fleabane, Pepper Saxifrage, Eyebright, Common Storksbill, Grass of Parnassus, Devils Bit Scabious, Articulated Rush, Fen Bedstraw, Creeping Cinquefoil, Greater Burnet, Betony.

Ballowfields, 24 August 2023

Purple Moor Grass, Mouse Ear, Devil's-bit Scabious, Thyme, Self-heal, Marjoram, Betony, Dog Violet, Enchanters Nightshade, Herb Robert, Grass of Parnassus, Rosebay Willowherb, Leadwort, Harebell, Eyebright, Thrift, Meadow Sweet, Tormentil, Knapweed, Burnet Saxifrage, Ragwort, Germander Speedwell, Heath Speedwell, Rockrose. Also Small-leaved Lime and Large-leaved Lime on Haw Bank.

Butterfly Report 2023

Jennie White

Last year's drought wasn't as bad as expected for our butterflies. The wetter summer this year helped adults and caterpillars as nectar sources and food plants were abundant. Red Admirals, a regular migrant now overwintering, are on the increase as are Orange Tips, Brimstone and Holly Blue. All are also expanding their range as the climate warms. However, species loss is happening. Green veined White have declined by 61%, Ringlet by 40% and Small Tortoiseshell by 30% (Butterfly Conservation)

Locally my first record was a Holly Blue in Wensley in early April. By early May I had Holly Blue, Speckled Wood, Peacock and Orange Tips in Wensley. Deborah Millward was delighted to see a Brimstone in Thornton Rust, having waited 30 years since first planting its food plant, Purging Buckthorn. In June, Liz Barron reported four Small Whites, six Meadow Browns, four Ringlets and a Speckled Wood in Leyburn. Derek Whiteley saw Purple Hairstreaks in Wanlass Park; an excellent sighting as they stay high in the canopy of oak trees and commonly fly in the evening. Late September had records of lots of Ringlets in Northumberland and Thornton Rust. October ended the season well with 16 Red Admirals and a Comma on Sedum at Thornton Rust, over 54 Red Admirals and a Comma on flowering ivy at Wensley and an astonishing 100 or so Red Admirals feeding on rotten fruit at Welbury, reported by Rachel White.

As I record both the Glebe Field and local gardens, I am struck by the fact that once the hay is cut, in late August, there are no butterflies in the Glebe and few on the transect by the river Ure. However our gardens still provide many sightings, well into October and even November. So, the message is keep the flowering ivy, leave the windfalls and sow as many flowers various as you can. Our butterflies need all the help you can give them.

Hoverfly Recorder's Report for 2023

Derek Whiteley

After a very slow cold start in March and April, things picked up rapidly in May and it turned out to be a great season for hoverflies and other Diptera. Over 1000 records were added to the database for 2023.

Highlight of the year has got to be the discovery of the **Bumblefly (*Pocota personata*)** in a Sycamore rot hole at Wensley Park on the Bolton Estate on 16 May 2023. (see front cover). This is only the second known location in the whole of Yorkshire for this great rarity. It was first discovered at Duncombe Park by Peter Skidmore in 1983, and seen there again in 1988. These remained the only Yorkshire records until this year. I then started searching suitable trees in Wensleydale and found another seven records at trees in Wanlass Park, Swinithwaite and the end of Well Lane near Redmire. The last one was seen on 5 June. These records make Wensleydale the key area for this species in the North of England. It is more likely that these are relict populations that have been overlooked rather than range expansion from the south. In the south of England it is mainly associated with classic historical veteran tree sites such as Windsor, New Forest, Epping Forest etc. One of our nearest colonies is Haddon Park, Derbyshire about 130 km to the south. A full account will be submitted to *The Naturalist*.

Some other significant hoverflies

Brachypalpoides lentinus is a stunning large hoverfly with a crimson body, resembling a large sawfly. Larvae feed in soft wet rotten tree roots. One seen on a veteran Sycamore near Bolton Hall. Only the second record for VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales. Last recorded in 1993 in Swaledale.

Brachyopa scutellaris is an inconspicuous brownish hoverfly that looks like a dung fly and breeds in sap runs on broadleaved trees. Lovers Walk Wood on the Bolton Estate basking in the spring sunshine. Appears to be a third record for VC65 and new to Wensleydale.

Criorhina floccosa is a very good mimic of buff-coloured bumblebees and breeds in wet decaying subterranean wood. One was exploring Ash tree roots at the bottom of Well Lane near Redmire; others around the base of a large Sycamore by the Ure and at Sepperdin Wood; investigating a decrepit old Sycamore at Swinithwaite and around a veteran Ash at Oxque Park Swaledale. There are only two previous records for VC65, so this batch of records is quite significant.

Criorhina ranunculi is a good mimic of bumblebees flying in March and April. It breeds in dead wood at the bases of birches and oaks and visits blossoms of spring flowering trees. One was seen on *Salix* flowers near the orchard at Foxglove Covert on 18 April. It appears to be new to VC65.

Xylota florum is a southern dead-wood breeding hoverfly. Oxque Park near Marske on a very old dying Ash. New to VC65 and the Yorkshire Dales.

Cheilosia vicina is a small black hoverfly thought to breed in *Alchemilla* species but also associated with Primroses. Frequent in damp woodland valley by Risedale Beck at Foxglove Covert, Marsett, Smardale Gill all in May. Previous record for VC65 at High Batts in 1989. More recent records from various sites in Upper Wharfedale.

Dasysyrphus tricinctus is a waspy-looking aphidivorous hoverfly found at Ballowfields. New to Wensleydale

Anasimyia contracta is one of the wetland hoverflies that breed in rotting plant material submerged in water. Found in the Cascade Ponds at Foxglove Covert (new to VC65) and then at Semerwater YWT reserve (new to the Yorkshire Dales)

Riponnensia splendens is another wetland hoverfly. The larvae live amongst emergent plants at the edges of ponds and ditches. Found at Marsett Meadows part of the Semerwater YWT reserve. Only the third record for the Yorkshire Dales

Other Interesting Diptera Records for 2023 Derek Whiteley

Seeking Cheetham's Cranefly

Also known as the Mottled Peg, ***Tipula cheethami*** is a specialist of calcareous waterfalls covered in wet moss where it breeds. It has a very localised northern distribution in the UK and was named after the famous Yorkshire naturalist and dipterist Chris Cheetham (1875-1954).



Wet mossy calcareous waterfall at Cray. An important breeding habitat for Cheetham's Cranefly and other rarities

He found this cranefly at a number of sites in the Yorkshire Dales in the 1920s and 1930s. It has not been recorded locally since 1997. In 2023 I made a special search around moss-covered waterfalls and found male specimens by waterfalls at Deepdale Gill, Cray Gill (photo) and Thackthwaite Beck at Ox Close. The latter is a first for Wensleydale. Identification of males is quite straightforward as they have a distinctive “peg” on the underside of the terminal body segments.

Black-haired Tiger Cranefly *Nephrotoma guestfalica* on sandy banks of the River Ure at Lords Bridge and below Wensley June 2023. New to Wensleydale. Previous record for Swaledale in 1987 on the river bank near Marske.

Violet Black-legged Robberfly *Dioctria atricapilla* is a southern species, here on the northern edge of its range. Found on the sandy banks of the Ure near Middleham Bridge. Appears to be new to VC65.

Four-barred Soldierfly *Oxycera rara* is a very handsome soldierfly that breeds in wet moss and mud. Found this year in the spring-fed calcareous flushes of Middle Moor at Foxglove Covert reserve. It is quite scarce this far north. New to VC65.

Side-striped Buff Snailkiller *Tetanocera punctifrons* is a fly associated with wet habitats with some mud. Larvae feed on wetland snails. Found in a wet flush in Bardale on 8 August 2022. Only the second record for VC65.

Spider Report 2023

Andy Baxter

2023 was both a steep learning curve and enjoyable exploration into not only local spider forays but also learning more about these fascinating creatures that so many fear but if only they were understood more, many would come to love. An interesting paper on “Do spiders dream” was thought provoking as was other papers on the study of web building and spider silk and its role in males finding a mate. As Spock would say “Fascinating”.

The Swaledale Festival walks provided a *Pardosa* (Wolf Spider F) with egg sac and a *Pisaurus mirabilis* (Nursery web spider F) carrying her egg sac in her jaws (see photo) a fantastic find and a first for the Society records. Other finds on personal walks included *Araneus quadratus* Four Spotted Orb web Spider (a first again) easily confused if not careful with the more common *Araneus diadematus* (Garden spider). Semerwater produced two firsts : a *Metellina* sp. and *Linyphia* sp. Other finds during walks included *Salticus scenicus* (Zebra Spider) *Dentrix denticulata* (Colourful Funnel web spider) *Tetragnatha* sp. (Long jawed Orb web spider) amongst the more common finds.

The Outreach engineer nearly ran all the way to the top of our drive on finding a large mature female *Eritigena duellica* (House Spider) inside the telecom box guarding her egg sac on our outside wall. Despite my best efforts to reassure him, he wouldn't come back until I'd safely removed and relocated the fine specimen and her eggs. But the best find was on opening my egg carton for breakfast (from a local farm) to find a Mouse spider *Scotophaeus blackwalli* staring right at me in his velvet monochrome colour (safely rehoused on our homestead) -another first. Overall, an interesting year both for knowledge and in finds. I shall join the BAS in 2024 and see if any field trips and courses are on offer to expand my knowledge.



Pisaurus mirabilis f (Nursery Web Spider) with egg sac

Reptile and Amphibian Report 2023

Rose Connor

Common Frogs

17 February 2023. - The first sighting was a large adult here in Leyburn, of all places on the pavement outside the opticians.

16 March 2023. 12 clumps of spawn Stang Forest NZ0208

24 March 2023. Spawn and active frogs at Foxglove Covert valley bottom pond SE161969

30 March 2023. Adults mating and masses of spawn in pond north side of River Ure SE087894

1 April 2023. Frogs back in my garden pond Leyburn

4 April 2023. Masses of spawn and tadpoles Apedale moorland ponds SE000954 at 550m elevation, and also at SE014945

20 May 2023. Immature frog in wet grass Marsett Valley SD899861

2 June 2023. Tadpoles in moorland pond Cray waterfalls SD947796
17 June 2023. First sighting of a frog in a trench at Hornby Castle.
9 July 2023. Yearling in wet grass at Foxglove Covert hay meadow SE157970
24 July 2023. Many yearling froglets on Redmire Moor SE0692 and SE0693
18 August 2023. Froglet and small toad reported at a newly dug garden pond in Leyburn
September/October. Frogs disturbed under foliage whilst gardening. Leyburn
16 November 2023. Squashed frog on Argyll Lane Harmby

Common Toads

1 February 2023. Adult near Sawley
7 March 2023. Adult under log on Bolton Castle Estate. SE053899
March saw numerous reports of squashed toads on Quarry Lane, Harmby
20 March 2023. Live toad on river bank path Wensley to Lords Bridge SE0889
28 March 2023. Dead on road at Cogden Bridge SE048968
30 March 2023. I spent some time during the evening watching 14 paired toads making their way up Quarry Lane but did not manage to find their spawning ground. I intend to spend more time tracking them in 2024.
4 April 2023. Toads in moorland pond Apedale SE014945
Since the archaeology season at Hornby Castle started up again, toads of varying sizes were recorded each week when lifting off the trench covers.
4 June 2023. Dead on road Oxque Park, Swaledale SE1099
15 July 2023 Mass dispersal of toadlets all over Hornby Castle site.
8 October 2023. Final sighting of a toad at Hornby Castle.

Newts

25 March 2023. Four Smooth Newts disturbed in garden pond in Leyburn whilst clearing blanket weed.
18 November 2023. Newt spotted on patio at Leyburn.

Snakes – No reports

Viviparous Lizards

5 May 2023 On roadside verge Common Lane Capplebank SE075874
18 May 2023. Juvenile on log near the field centre Foxglove Covert SE160970
5 June 2023. On roadside verge Common Lane Capplebank SE072874

Mammal Report for 2023

John Drewett

Firstly, I would like to thank all those members who have sent in records over the past year. Everything received has been added to the database irrespective of the location of the observed animal(s), though only those records from Vice County 65 and to the west of the A1 have been included in this analysis. This generally includes all of Wensleydale, Swaledale and their side dales, but excludes records from Nidderdale and Colsterdale.

Overall, few records relate to rodents, with the smaller species being very rarely noted. Grey Squirrel was recorded 20 times, mainly from the lowland areas in the east of our district, though records also came from Aysgarth, Redmire, Wensley and Freeholders Wood. Red Squirrel was only represented by two records in July, from Gayle Beck and near Appersett.

The number of Rabbit records was generally low, which might reflect the reported general decline in this species. Derek Whiteley reported a very pale sandy coloured Rabbit from Apedale in April and Rabbits on moorland in June. By contrast, there was a large number of Brown Hare records. In most cases reports were of small numbers of animals, but my local population near Hackforth appears to be going from strength to strength. The animals use a series of fields to the east of the A1 and a block of private woodland. My best count was on 24th February when I had the pleasure of watching 34 hares for much of the morning as they fed, boxed, chased and relaxed.

Very few records of Insectivores are received, with the exception of Hedgehogs and Moles. Only 11 Hedgehogs were reported during the year, all but three of which were seen dead on the roads. As usual, the distinctive earth mounds created by Moles ensure a good number of records; these can be present even on quite high ground. Sightings of live Moles are rare, but dead animals were noted in March and June and Derek Whiteley found a skeleton at Apedale in April. Sheila Simms reported regularly about molehills on the narrow strip of grass between the pavement and road near the doctors' surgery in Brentwood, Leyburn.

I continued to record bats in flight and roosting at many locations throughout the area over the year, often discovered during my work as an ecological consultant. We especially concentrated on bridges during 2023, but also with the usual range of other buildings undergoing repairs or conversion. Small roosts of Common Pipistrelle were found at Askrigg and Gayles (Richmond); at the latter site we were also treated to continuous foraging by a Noctule lasting more than an hour. Plenty of bats of various species were recorded in flight.

2023 was a personal landmark year as I retired from full-time work. Whilst this will reduce access to many buildings to search for bats it will give me more time to study bats in the Dales. The day after my retirement I was out walking at Crakehall when I spotted a Daubenton's Bat caught in fishing line in the Leeming Beck. With the help of the landowner and the Skeldale House Veterinary Practice the bat was rescued, checked for injuries and successfully released the same evening. Just goes to show that I can't keep away from bats for long!

Among the carnivores, several records of Badgers were received, including signs of Badger activity such as tracks, latrines and freshly dug soil at sett entrances. A few reports of Fox were also received, often based on field signs such as scats, feeding remains or their distinctive odour. Four Stoats and two Weasels were reported, often spotted during a quick dash across the road, though Derek watched a large Stoat hunting for some time at the head of Bishopdale and Sheila Simms was luckily enough to see a Weasel in her Leyburn garden in September. A live Polecat was near Patrick Brompton in May and a dead one was on the road at West Witton in October. Towards the end of the year Sarah Whiteley found a dead Otter on the road at Wensley – the only report of this species received during 2023.

Finally, to deer. As readers of previous reports will know, Roe Deer are widespread in the area but are often only seen by chance at night. There has been a small increase in the number of sightings compared with 2022, mostly of ones or twos, though four are regularly present in a wood at Hackforth where breeding has been confirmed. The greatest excitement on the deer front happened on 11th April. I was driving towards Leyburn for a dental appointment at 1pm when I noticed a Fallow Deer in a field just to the west of Constable Burton. If that was not enough, on the journey back an hour later there were two! Checking my emails later that afternoon I found a report from John Nuttall who had made similar observations earlier that day. Over the following couple of weeks I occasionally saw the Fallow Deer again, including a white one, but since May they seem to have vanished. So, where did they come from and where did they go? As far as I know the nearest park herds are Studley Royal and Swinton Castle so they could conceivably have come from either of these. A local gamekeeper said he thought he knew where they came from, but wouldn't give any more information. Any additional information from members would be most welcome.

Birding Year 2023

Mary Atkins and Janet Hutchinson

We would firstly like to thank all the YNHS members and Leyburn U3A Bird Group who contributed to the birding list this year. We have many more records, with well over a hundred species, giving a clearer picture as to what is in our area. We do have a list of all the birds reported so if anyone is particularly interested in seeing this, please just drop us an email.

The highlights of the year were our “Versace” species! A European Bee-eater with its exotically rich plumage was seen at Ballowfields near Carperby. A Hoopoe, another striking bird, was seen just west of Redmire and finally the

punk-like Bohemian Waxwing turned up in a member's garden during a YHNS Committee meeting!

Upland birds have continued to be well recorded by our members across both Wensleydale and Swaledale. Good sightings of Ring Ouzel were seen by members on both Apedale walks led by Richard Wells in May and June along with Golden Plover, Red Kite, Stonechat, Wheatear, Meadow Pipit, Skylark and Red Grouse. Amongst other species, Curlew, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Snipe, Lapwing and Linnet were recorded as part of a BTO Breeding Bird Survey 1 Km square at Castle Bolton. Common Sandpiper was also seen at a few locations nearby and two members reported Black Grouse lekking at Spennithorne and Coverdale.

River and wetland birds were mainly seen along the River Ure and River Swale. There was a good selection of waterfowl species recorded including Great White Egret, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Cormorant, Canada Geese and Greylag Geese, Goosander, Shelduck, Teal, Tufted Duck, Wigeon, Mandarin Duck and Mallard. In addition to the resident Mute Swan, several flocks of Whooper Swans were seen, some in March on their way north and others arriving in October. Moorhen, Coot, Dipper, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail and Reed Bunting were spotted both on the riverbanks and at nearby wetlands. Further afield at Scorton Lakes, Marfield Wetlands and Nosterfield members also recorded Little Ringed Plover, Ringed Plover, Avocet, Green Sandpiper, Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Shoveler and Goldeneye.

Some of the highlights of the garden and woodland birds seen include Tree Sparrow, Treecreeper, Goldcrest, Siskin, Yellowhammer, Lesser Redpoll, Green and Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay and Nuthatch.

Regarding birds of prey, the good news is that the Ospreys did return to the Wensley area to breed. Red Kites continue to expand their territories and there were also regular sightings of Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk. Short Eared Owl were spotted over the moorland in the Widdale area and Tawny and Barn Owls were mostly seen in Wensleydale.

March saw the arrival of the first summer migrants with Chiffchaff and Sand Martin followed by Swallow, Wheatear, Willow Warbler and Cuckoo in April. Following on were Swifts, House Martins, Common Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Ring Ouzel, Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat. Winter migrants Fieldfare and Redwing were seen at both ends of the year whereas Brambling was recorded just in November.

Winter Aconites in Wensleydale

Derek Whiteley

In January and February 2023 I made a special search for Winter Aconites (*Eranthis hyemalis*) in Wensleydale. This is a special plant for me, as it helps to cheer up a seasonal drab period between Christmas and spring. Its cheerful yellow flowers provide a foretaste of a new season and things to come.



First stop was the splendid colony at Redmire churchyard and surrounding areas SE051907. This year the buds were just opening on 24th January, a little later than the previous year. A nice colony was discovered in Wensley Park on the Bolton Castle Estate on the verge of the main driveway SE089896 where the above photograph was taken on 1st February 2023. Deborah Millward directed me to colonies at Aysgarth (visible from the road along a private driveway at SE008882) on 5 February 2023 and Worton on a grassed roadside bank in the village SD954902. The large colony on the village green at East Witton SE142859 looked splendid on 11 February 2023, when additional colonies were located at Middleham Busks LNR SE124883 and the road verge at Middleham Bridge SE119887. On 12 February 2023 masses were in flower in woodland at Jervaulx Park SE174854 with smaller colonies near the entrance SE169858, and in woodland at SE184855. In 2022 I also found a few below a hedgerow at Preston-under-Scar SE070910 and in Swaledale at Marrick Park SE090981.

By the time of the YNHS meeting on 10 May 2023, the Redmire churchyard colony was still visible, some in seed, with leaves withering. By 26 May some plants had the Winter Aconite Smut (probably *Urocystis eranthidis*) forming eruptions of black spores from the stems.

Fairy Foxglove *Erinus alpinus* *Deborah Millward*

Fairy Foxglove is a native of the mountains of south west Europe especially the Pyrenees. It was first introduced in 1759 just as the rage amongst the wealthy for flower gardening took off. Not surprisingly it was very popular with its cheery pink flowers and easy propagation. It was first recorded in the wild in 1867 at West Tanfield here in North Yorkshire, so Wensleydale was probably quite early to get this non-native established.

Unlike other non-native species Fairy Foxglove has a fan club. Its ability to colonise the tiniest of cracks in rocks and walls without displacing our native species is welcomed. The two dimensional growth form against a rock face makes photography simple with no struggling to get both leaves and flowers in focus.



Fairy Foxglove at Seata Quarry by Ken Readshaw

I have not checked whether it still grows in West Tanfield but upstream at Middleham Castle it is prolific. It grows on the war memorial cross in Carperby village and in the Edwardian Rock Garden in Aysgarth and even on the platform at Aysgarth Station. West Burton has it on the wall beside the

path to the waterfall, so there seems to be a core of mid-dale colonies. One of my favourite things to do in May is visit the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve, Seata Quarry, between Aysgarth and Thornton Rust. In spring the floor of the quarry is covered in Cowslips and the walls with Fairy Foxglove, there are even a few white specimens.

A Way Ahead for Wensleydale

Deborah Millward

In November 2023 I attended a 10 year celebration of the Dales to Vale River Network. This is a collaborative partnership set up by the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust [YDRT] with government funding. It coordinates water related environmental projects in the catchment of the River Ouse. This is a huge area and I must admit that when I signed the agreement with the Environment Agency on behalf of YDRT I felt a certain degree of trepidation.

I need not have worried. There are some brilliant people working out there from universities, companies, environmental trusts down to small groups of local people passionate about their patch. Through the Network they can exchange experiences and expertise. It was great to hear about such a variety of projects.

Professor Alistair Fitter spoke about his work in preparing a State of Nature report for the County of Yorkshire and how we might stem the loss of species. He had analysed a vast quantity of species data looking especially at those species already extinct in the county and those just hanging on. He then looked at the habitats of those species and for the majority it was wetlands.

Clearly we need to restore our wetlands and here in Wensleydale that means looking at the flood plains. Between Middleham Bridge and Aperrett Bridge there are a whole string of flood plains which currently provide very little for wildlife and not a lot for agriculture either. Now we have a science based reason to look again at how we manage flood plains. It is not expensive or physically difficult to greatly enhance a flood plain for wildlife, it just requires a bit less agriculture and a bit more space for nature. And there is a huge advantage for people too as wetlands help to remove water pollution and alleviate flooding downstream.

As they say these days “what’s not to like about it?” Let’s just get on with it.

Yoredale Natural History Society			
Provisional Accounts End of 2023, 2022			
INCOME (£s)		2023	2022
Subscriptions		1125.00	960.00
Visitors	2023 pettycash see below	-	4.00
Swaledale Festival		82.00	106.00
Total Income for the year		1207.00	1070.00
EXPENDITURE (£s)		2023	2022
Bank Charges	inc act charges	69.40	66.40
<i>Rent Methodist Hall</i>		200.00	175.00
<i>Speakers Fees</i>		240.00	60.00
Bulletin Printing	.	280.80	248.60
Website fee +new website develop		212.80	313.14
<i>Committee Members' Expenses</i>		60.00	24.48
Yorkshire Nats Union sub		30.00	30.00
British Wildlife subscription		44.00	40.00
Winter Prog. Card Printing		50.00	37.00
Insurance		203.34	203.34
Additional Premium Insurance		69.92	
Refund annual fee	petty cash transfer	20.00	4.00
Total Spent This Year		1480.26	1201.96
Deficit for Year		273.26	131.96
Bank Balance at Year Start		2973.71	3105.67
Minus Year's Deficit		273.26	131.96
Bank Balance at Year End		2700.45	2973.71
Petty Cash at Year Start		11.50	7.50
Petty Cash Spent		37.00	
Added to Petty Cash during year		60.00	4.00
Petty Cash at Year End		34.50	11.50

**Minutes of the 44rd Annual General Meeting of the
Yoredale Natural History Society.
Held in Leyburn Methodist Chapel. Friday 29th April 2023 1930hrs.**

Apologies: Jane Towler, Ann Luxemore, Jo Scorrer, Sue Peckitt, Jane and Paul Graham, David Meek and Linda Turnbull.

Present: 27 members

The Minutes of the last AGM in April 2022 were accepted and no matters arising.

Chairman's Report. Deborah was worried during Covid about the viability of YNHS but we are going from strength to strength. There has been a wonderful full range of lectures and great walks and lots of new members. The Society is looking pretty good thanks to the work from so many volunteers doing various tasks. It also provides companionship. Long may it continue!

Secretary's Report. Liz will try and keep it brief. As usual there is a cross over what Deborah has already mentioned. It has been much appreciated the various members helping with the kitchen duties and caring for the hall. Liz is pleased to report that the Society appears to be one of the many Societies that is thriving following on from the previous two years. We are now seeing increased numbers in attendance in particular the winter programme. With the help of Gaby and Chris, Liz is now able to send out a group email as a reminder of forth coming events within the Society. Lastly a huge, huge thank you to Deborah, Robert and Len for all their hard work and dedication within their many Officers roles. For me personally all their help and support in the few years I have been a member but more so since I became secretary. We all appreciate what they have done in their various roles in promoting the Society and imparting their vast amount of knowledge. Even though they can finally stand down from their respective officers' roles they will remain committed members to Yoredale Natural History Society.

Treasurer's Report; Paul had three main points to highlight. It has taken Paul a while to get used to what this role involves and one was getting the accounts audited which he has finally been able to do. The members voted to approve the accounts which now come in spreadsheet format. Secondly he discussed some points the committee have been discussing throughout the year. There is a slight deficit due to fixed costs increases, additional costs (website development etc.). But there remains an overall healthy balance as we have built up reserves in recent years mainly due to the Covid pandemic as very few out goings. Some previous discussions on how best to proceed to maintain sound finances? Increase membership fees but no definite decisions made yet. Lastly a vote by the Society to approve a move to online banking should circumstances dictate (more banks are closing in the local area) The vote was agreed by the majority present. The bank mandate now only requires one signatory - Paul Hardill Treasurer, Deborah Millward or Liz Barron Secretary. Bank balance end of year 2022 £2973.71.

Membership Secretary's Report. We now have 105 members 10 have joined in 2023 alone. Chris extended their welcome and attending the AGM. The majority now pay by standing order (SO). There are only a few who prefer to pay by other means. We lost contact for one member who continued to pay SO but with some help from another member we were able to get their appropriate contact details. They were pleased to receive this year's Bulletin and praised us on its good quality had continued.

Election of Officers: There were only three Officers to be replaced. The rest are willing to continue.

Deborah Millward proposed Anne Readshaw as Chair, seconded by Chris Meek.
Liz Barron proposed Derek Whiteley as Vice Chair, seconded by Ken Readshaw.
Derek will only be in this position for a year as he has other commitments after that.
Gaby Baxter proposed Jane Graham in her absence for Web Editor seconded by Robert Hall.

Other Officers remaining;

Secretary Liz Barron

Treasurer Paul Hardill

Membership Secretary Chris Meek

Field Secretary Caroline Stott

Winter Programme Deborah Millward/ Gaby Baxter

Editor of Bulletin Derek Whiteley.

Len Shepherd will remain in post until he has a meeting with Jane Graham which has been provisionally booked for 1st July 2023.

Committee members; Robert Hall and Sue Peckitt have resigned tonight. Jennie White and Andy Baxter remain. No other members came forward on the night.

Due to time constraints the list of recorders has been deferred for the next committee meeting. As I am aware there are no changes we just need confirmation before goes into the minutes.

Deborah wished to say a few words of thanks to Robert in his many roles. He was a keen leader of many walks including the Swaledale Festival which enhanced the Society. He tested us with his Christmas quizzes which were most enjoyable. A great innings which is most appreciated.

Robert then spoke for a few minutes to thank Deborah and Len who have been members since 1984 and 2006 respectively. With a hint of humour Robert would like to add he has been a member since 2004 which obviously is a little longer than Len but none the less they have given many years of service to the Society in one role or another. He thanked them for their sterling work, Deborah's knowledge and modesty. We all have learnt so much from her. Len we owe an enormous debt, his background in insurance meant he was very good with what was proper, detailed, vigorous and knowledgeable. He did a lot of work that involved surveys and history of Leyburn Shawl. Another of his hobbies is his photography which is exceptional and useful for editing the Bulletin. He devised our first website and is a great servant to the Society. He is a great friend who has served us well.

Deborah thanked Len personally for all his hard work and contributions to the Society. On several occasions there were some well-deserved rounds of applause.

A.O.B. Sheila Simms suggested could a map of VC 65 be put into the Bulletin so

members are aware of its boundaries when supporting the recorders.

Gaby Baxter was putting forward the possibility those who wish to go to a pub after meetings and talks to continue our chats.

A group email to be sent out when we have further details on the trip to Saltburn on June 19th. Numbers are restricted to 16-20 for health and safety reasons and so the leader Joyce Scott can support us all and we can benefit from her expertise.

Deborah purchased volume one of “Plant Atlas 2020” Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora. It arrived with some pages missing but even so a beautiful book to look through. Members are welcome to look through it and pass it onto other members. One member on the night has already made use of this offer.

The meeting was closed. A photographic presentation followed by Ken Readshaw.

Liz Barron (Secretary)



Yoredale Natural History Society records species in VC65 North-west Yorkshire, with a special focus on Wensleydale (Yoredale), Swaledale and their catchment areas. Members are encouraged to send records to the Society's Recorders.



White-letter Hairstreak on Ragwort at High Batts, photo Ken Readshaw



Relaxing after a busy day at Marsett