



# The Leeds Naturalist 2023

This year Leeds Nats has maintained the strategy of not having a programme of indoor meetings but focusing on field excursions. The latter have proved successful with good numbers attending some of the meetings and none of them adversely affected by the weather to a significant effect. Reports of the six 2023 field meetings are given below. The overall financial situation remains stable and has benefitted from a further legacy from Gavin Boyd. Also, this year, with the focus on field meetings, we have taken out public liability insurance.

As per last year there will not be a syllabus card issued for 2024 as all relevant information is contained within this newsletter. Please consult the website (<https://leedsnats.com/>), watch out for emails or contact myself (0113 2582482) for updates on the programme.

The production of this newsletter has been a largely solo effort. Contributions from members are always welcome and can be submitted at any time during the year. They can be a few paragraphs or a short field note of just a couple of sentences, with photos if available but they are not essential.

Andy Millard

## Field Meeting: Ox Close Wood

### Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May

In contrast to 2022 our first field meeting of the year was blessed with good weather (mainly sunny with a light breeze) and an excellent turnout of eleven members, three members of the East Keswick Wildlife Trust and one guest. Melanie Smith led us on an inspiring and informative walk around the wood. She explained how the east-west rides were managed to include wider section sun traps for invertebrates, which also benefitted from a lot of dead ash and elm, and large log piles, some of which were now covered with grass, all helping to diversify the habitats. She also indicated that Dexter cattle were used for grazing now as they were more effective than the sheep used previously.



St. Mark's Fly *Bibio marci* on Wild Garlic, on the approach to Ox Close Wood. 03/05/2023. Photo: A. Millard

The botanical highlights were probably the two substantial clumps of the flowering ancient woodland indicator, Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*, one clump of which was in the meadow area, which also supported a splendid display of flowering Cowslips *Primula veris* and Early Purple Orchids *Orchis mascula*. One other botanical point of interest was the Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*, another ancient woodland

indicator, found in damp calcareous woodland. Its additional point of interest is its apomixis, i.e. production of seeds asexually. The edible fungus St. George's Mushroom *Calocybe gambosa* was also recorded.



Herb Paris in flower at Ox Close Wood. 03/05/2023. Photo left: A. Millard; Photo right: Graham Heffernan.

Butterflies included Peacock, Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue and a good number of Brimstone. Other insects noted were 7-Spot Ladybird, Buff-tailed-, Red-tailed- and Common Carder Bumblebees. Two other common bee species noted were the Orange-tailed Mining Bee *Andrena haemorrhoa* and the Flavous Nomad Bee *Nomada flava*.

## Field Meeting: Adel Churchyard

### Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May

The grounds of Adel Church have been managed for wildlife and at the time of the meeting were displaying a very attractive meadow community. The weather was dry with sunny intervals but also quite a cool westerly breeze. Ten members attended the meeting.

The meadow was a colourful display of Hay Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Pignut *Conopodium majus*, Bulbous Buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, Bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Common Cats-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus*



*pratensis*, Greater Stitchwort *Stellaria holostea*, Germander Speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, Bush Vetch *Vicia sepium*, White Deadnettle *Lamium album*, Thyme-leaved Speedwell *V. serpyllifolia*, and Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. There was also Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata* and a moss *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, with its downward curled leaves, commonly found on lawns. Wild garlic *Allium ursinum* and Field Woodrush (*Luzula campestris*) were also noted.



Meadow at Adel Churchyard. 16/05/2023. Photo: A.Millard



Left: Female Tawny Mining Bee. Photo: A.Millard. Right: Male (note white hairs on face & long antennae) Red Mason Bee. Photo Graham Heffernan. Adel Churchyard. 16/05/2023

Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and Magpies were heard. The only butterfly noted was Speckled Wood. The distinctive hoverfly *Leucozona lucorum* was seen, along with the Common Carder Bumblebee, the Tawny *Andrena fulva* and Orange Tailed *A. haemorrhoa* Mining Bees. A large, dead tree trunk had several male Red Mason Bees *Osmia bicornis* inspecting nest holes, presumably in the hope that females would emerge!

### Field Meeting: St. Aidans

#### Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June

Seven members and one guest attended. The weather was largely overcast with a cool North East breeze in exposed places, which kept the insect life largely down amongst the vegetation. The meeting met at the southern entrance of the reserve in the carpark at the end of Fleet Lane.

The warblers were in good voice with Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Sedge warbler and, particularly noticeable, the explosive song of frequent Cetti's Warblers. Black-headed gulls were apparently depleted in numbers because of avian flu but still in good voice. Other birds noted were Common Tern and a Kestrel hunting.

Sheltering in the tall grassland were Blue-tailed and Common Blue Damselflies, along with Banded Demoiselle. The only bumblebees were Buff- and White-tailed. The only other insect noted was the Swollen-thighed Flower Beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*), on *Ranunculus* sp. This is widespread in southern England and Wales but a lot less common in the North. A passerby claimed to have seen the leaf beetle *Galeruca tanacetii* on Sallow. While widespread across the country there are few records of this for the Leeds area.



Swollen-thighed Flower Beetle (left) & probable *Larinioides* sp. of spider (right) at St. Aidans, 01/06/2023. Photos: A.Millard.

A spider, probably a species of *Larinioides* (photo), frequently found around water, was also observed. The main focus of vegetation interest was Hemlock *Conium maculatum*, growing on the river bank and Pocket Plum galls caused by the fungus *Taphrina pruni* growing on the Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*.

### Field Meeting: Rodley Nature Reserve

#### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June.

The weather was good and a pleasing total of 10 members attended the meeting. One of the main areas of attention was the collection of dragonfly ponds where several Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum* were recorded, along with Four-spotted Chaser *Libellula quadrimaculata*, some Common Blue and Azure damselflies and Banded Demoiselle.



Four-spotted Chaser at Rodley, 14/06/2023. Photo: A.Millard



Butterflies included several Whites, too far away to identify, Large Skipper and one Brimstone. A passing regular visitor suggested it had been a bad year for butterflies, except Brimstone. Only common bumblebees were noted (Red-tailed, White-tailed, Buff-tailed and Common Carder).

A Lapwing was observed attacking one of three or four Carrion Crows; Greenfinch and Chiffchaff were in song; Swallows were around, along with a single Buzzard, Kestrel, Grey Heron and Canada Goose with chick.



Water Violet at Rodley, 14/06/2023. Photo: A.Millard

Water Violet *Hottonia palustris* and Flowering Rush *Butomus umbellatus*, the latter previously seen along the Leeds/Liverpool Canal, were also noted.

### Field Meeting: Bardsey Field Nature Reserve

#### Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July.

Leeds Naturalists' Club made a contribution towards the purchase of this new reserve by the East Keswick Wildlife Trust. For this, our first visit, there was a good turn out with 10 members & 5 'guests'. However, the long grass & quite uneven ground made it a bit tricky for some members who had to leave early.

The vegetation was very dry and fairly desiccated after what was the hottest UK June since records began in 1884 and little of note was recorded. However, Bradford Botany Group had visited at the beginning of June when they recorded a list of 158 plant species. A report on their visit can be viewed here:

<https://sites.google.com/site/bradfordbotanygroup83/where-have-we-been/field-reports-2023/bardsey-fields>

We had good views of Kites which had been nesting in a large oak on the boundary. Noisy youngsters from a Kestrel family which had been presumably nesting in a large ash towards the bottom of the field were noted.



Young Kestrel at Bardsey Field, 6 July. Photo: A.Millard

Great Spotted Woodpecker & Chiffchaff were frequently heard.

Butterflies put on quite a good display with large numbers of Ringlet and Small Skipper, several Gatekeeper, together with occasional Meadow Brown and a Painted Lady. Five and Six spot Narrow-bordered Burnet moths were noted and Peter Tannent recorded a common grass moth *Chrysoteuchia culmella* and the Blood-vein moth *Timandra comae*.

Harlequin and Seven Spot Ladybirds were noted, along with the common bumblebees Tree, White-tailed and Buff-tailed. A furrow bee, *Lasioglossum calceatum*, was also observed on Valerian. Of some interest in view of its widening distribution was Roesel's Bush Cricket (*Roeseliana roeselii*).



Roesel's Bush-cricket. Bardsey Field, 6 July. Photo: A.Millard

### Field Meeting: Ledston Luck

#### Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July.

The four who attended were very lucky with the weather which stayed dry with short sunny intervals before rain started around lunchtime, at the end of the meeting.

This former colliery site, through the process of reclamation, now has a variety of soil types including acidic, basic and wet, together with open water and swamp habitat, thereby supporting a diversity of species. It is managed as a reserve by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.



Yellow-wort at Ledston Luck, 18<sup>th</sup> July. Photo: A.Millard

Plants noted during the relatively brief visit included: Long-stemmed cranesbill *Geranium columbinum*, Black Medick *Medicago lupulina*, White Clover *Trifolium*



*repens*, Common Centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, Melilot *Melilotus* sp., Reed Mace *Typha latifolia*, Yellow Loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*, Hay Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*, Perforate St. John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Common Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Ox-eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Meadow Cranesbill *G. pratense*, Eyebright *Euphrasia* agg., Red Bartsia *Odontites vernus* and Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*.



Six-spot Burnet Moth at Ledston Luck, 18<sup>th</sup> July. Photo: A. Millard

Butterflies were quite active and included Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Small Copper and Small Skipper, along with a Six-Spot Burnet moth. Red-tailed, Buff-tailed, White-tailed and Common Carder Bumblebees were noted, together with the leaf-cutter bee, *Megachile centuncularis*. Goldcrest and Chiffchaff were noted.



Robin's Pin Cushion on *Rosa* sp. Caused by the Gall Wasp *Diplolepis rosae* Ledston Luck 18<sup>th</sup> July. Photo: A. Millard

## Field Meeting: Ledsham Banks

### Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August

Six members attended on a warm and sunny day.

A good number of plants were recorded, a number reflecting the more basic soils of the Magnesian Limestone. These included Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Black Bryony *Tamus communis*, White Bryony *Bryonia dioica*, Crosswort, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Eyebright *Euphrasia* sp., Common Restharrow *Ononis repens*, Autumn Gentian *Gentianella amarella*, Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum* and, Yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*. Two calcareous soil species of particular interest were Autumn Lady's-tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* and Pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris*.

Other plants recorded were Red Bartsia, Greater Celandine *Chelidonium majus*, Wild Arum *Arum maculatum*, Field Sowthistle *Sonchus arvensis*, Cut-leaved Cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*, Upright Hedge Parsley *Torilis japonica*, Great Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, Rough Hawksbeard *Crepis biennis*, Common



Autumn Lady's-tresses at Ledsham Banks. 10<sup>th</sup> August. Photo left: A. Millard; Photo right: Graham Heffernan.

Centaury *Centaureum erythraea*, Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, Dyer's Greenwee, *Genista tinctoria*, Betony *Stachys officinalis*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* and Devil's Bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*.



Leaves of Pasqueflower (example circled in red; it flowers in April-May), one of a small number of plants in the re-establishment programme at Ledsham Banks. 10<sup>th</sup> August. Photo: A. Millard



Autumn Gentian at Ledsham Banks, 10<sup>th</sup> August. Photo: Graham Heffernan.



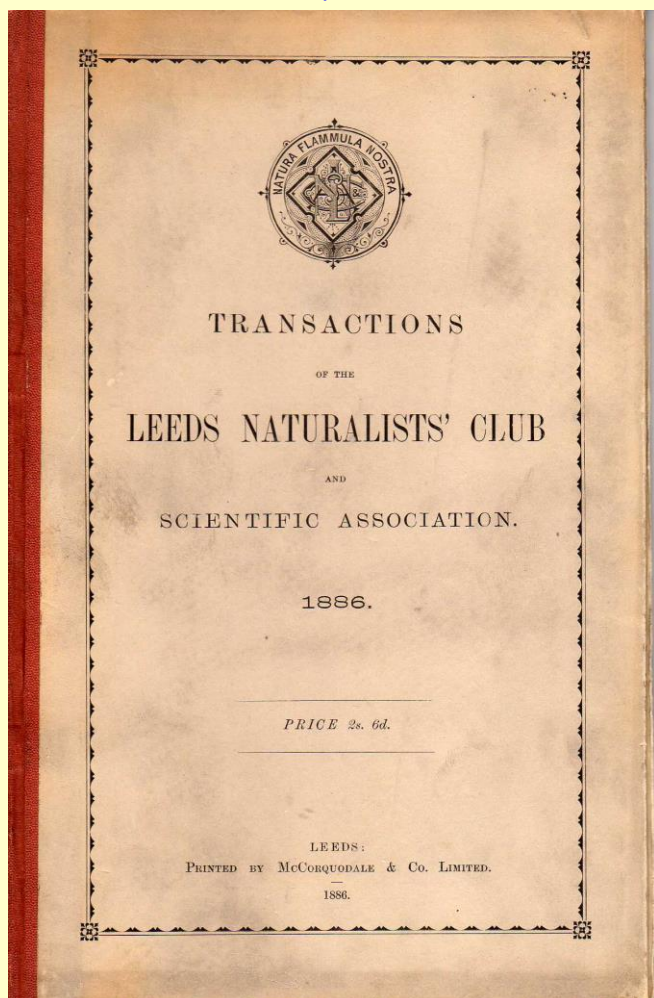
Butterflies recorded were: Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Holly Blue, Gatekeeper, Common Blue and Small White. Only two species of bumblebee were seen, the Common Carder and Red-tailed, along with the social wasp *Vespula vulgaris*. Two solitary bees were recorded, *Lasioglossum fratellum*, which is widespread throughout UK, apart from the East Midlands and East Anglia, and *Halictus tumulorum*, common and widespread in southern England but less so in the North. A Long-winged Conehead *Conocephalus fuscus* was recorded. This bush-cricket was first recorded in the UK in 1945 and in Yorkshire in 2012, where it is now actively spreading.

Buzzard and Great Spotted Woodpecker were heard.

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### Leeds Naturalists' Club Archives

The Club, which has been in existence since 1870, has a number of historic documents deposited with the West Yorkshire Archives (part of West Yorkshire Joint Services at Morley) under the Catalogue Finding Number WYL765. A list of these documents can be found on our website at <https://leedsnats.com/about/>.



Transactions of Leeds Naturalists' Club for 1886 and destined for deposit with the West Yorkshire Archives Service.

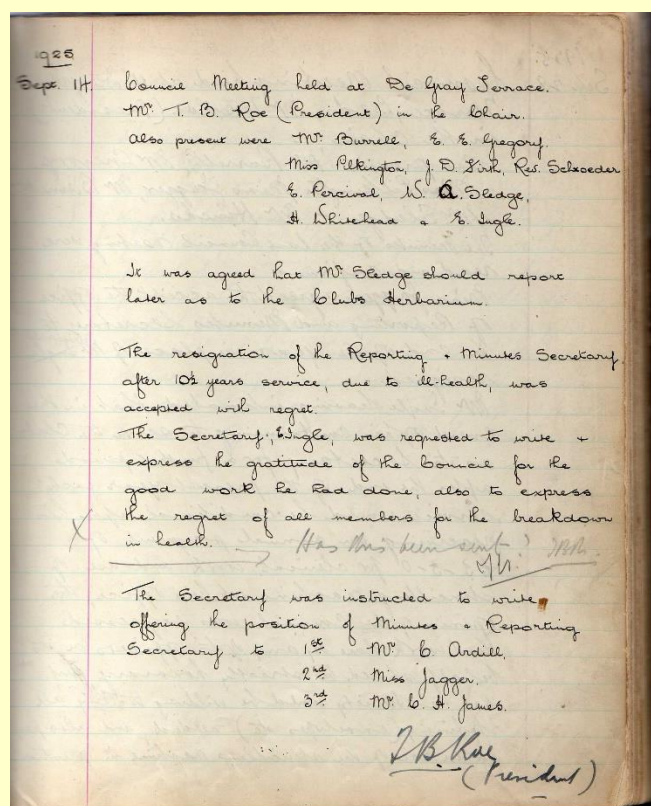
Earlier this year Peter Larnar and Andy Millard met to consider the various Leeds Nats potential archival material they each had. These included bound copies of the *Transactions of Leeds Naturalists' Club* and

*Scientific Association* for 1886 (see photo above) and 1890, a loose leaf file of pressed flower specimens associated with the 1962 typed-up floral survey of Roach Hills by E.W. Abbatt, a bound book of Leeds Nats Council minutes from 1925 to 2012 (see below) and the Honorary Treasurer's Cash Book from 1948 to 1976.

Some of the items examined were selected for depositing at the West Yorkshire Archives. Andy Millard had visited the Archives earlier in the year to look at some Leeds Nats and Yorkshire Naturalists' Union material and to familiarise himself with the procedure for both examining and depositing archival material.

Finally, Peter Larnar has written a very informative article on the history of Leeds Naturalists' Club, published in *The Naturalist*.

Larnar, P (2014) Leeds Naturalists' Club 1870-2014. *The Naturalist* 139: 210-216.



First page of the Leeds Naturalists' Club Council Minute Book from 1925 – 2012.

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### Leeds Naturalists' Club Bank Account

For many years, certainly from well before the current Treasurer took over from Les Eastwood in 2006, the Club has banked with Yorkshire Bank. As is so often the case these days, the Bank has undergone a succession of takeovers, mergers etc. with it now trading as Virgin Money plc. At the 2022 AGM, in the light of ongoing bank branch closures and the subsequent need to provide alternative ways of transferring money, change to an online banking account was discussed and this has since been enacted.

The Club now has an online current account with Lloyds Bank but can also receive and issue cheques if needed. The account details are:

Name: Leeds Naturalists' Club & Scientific Association  
Account No: 46173960  
Sort code: 30-99-50

### Leeds Naturalists' Club 2023 AGM

This year's AGM took place on Monday 11 December via Zoom when eight members attended and there were apologies from six members. It was agreed that this newsletter would substitute for the Secretary's report, The Treasurers' accounts were accepted and Council members were elected as follows:

President	Mary Larnar
Vice-president 1	Peter Larnar
Vice-president 2	Robert Collins
Treasurer & Memb. Sec.	Andy Millard
Programme secretary	Mike Bowles
Newsletter Editor	Andy Millard
Webmaster	Genny Twigge

Recorders remain as per 2023, namely:

Aculeate Hymenoptera	Dr A Millard	0113 258 2482
Birds	Mr P Larnar	0113 261 2589
Botany (Higher plants)	Mr R Collins	
Dragonflies & Lepidoptera	Mr P Larnar	0113 261 2589
Fungi	Mrs M Larnar	0113 261 2589
Vertebrates (other than birds)	Ms K Hockridge	0113 247 5558

No face-to-face evening meetings are planned for 2024 but members will be alerted to the various YNU Zoom meetings, which they can attend.

It was agreed that annual subscriptions should be increased to £8 to cover the ongoing average annual costs of website subscription, printing and public liability insurance.

### List of Leeds Nats Field Meetings for 2024

<b>Thu 18 Apr</b>	<b>Ledsham Bank:</b> Meet at Car Park – Holy Rood Lane, Ledsham at 10.30 am, GR SE460297.
<b>Thu 16 May</b>	<b>Fitts Fields</b> (managed by East Keswick Wildlife Trust): Meet 10.30am. Parking available on the verge towards the top of Cleavestry Lane. SE357452.
<b>Wed 5 Jun</b>	<b>Otley Chevin:</b> 10.30am. Meet in Surprise View carpark. SE204441.
<b>Wed 19 Jun</b>	<b>Roach Lime Hills:</b> 10.30am, Meet in Garforth Garden Centre carpark. There is the possibility of extending the meeting to Town Close Hills & Kippax Meadow
<b>Tue 23 July</b>	<b>Ledston Luck:</b> Meet at Ledston Luck Enterprise Park on A656 Ridge Road at 10.30 am. GR SE429307 (Reserve is 300 yards up Ridge Road towards Garforth).

<b>Wed 7 Aug</b>	<b>Rodley Nature Reserve:</b> 10.30am, Meet visitors' carpark, SE230362.
<b>Tue 10 Sep</b>	<b>Golden Acre Park, Adel Dam &amp; Breary Marsh.</b> Meet at Golden Acre car park, Bramhope at 10.30am. SE266417

Suggestions of amendments, alternatives or additional trips are welcome. If you plan to join a field meeting please email [leedsnats@gmail.com](mailto:leedsnats@gmail.com). Any changes to the schedule will be posted on the website.

**YNU Vice-County Excursions for 2024 (all on Saturdays, starting 10.30am; visit:**

<https://www.ynu.org.uk/news-events/events>

**for updates & details)**

18 May	<b>VC63 Excursion:</b> Anston Stones Wood, between Sheffield & Worksop. Meet carpark. SK521842.
22 Jun	<b>VC64 Excursion:</b> Lower Winskill Farm, Langcliffe, Settle. SD826664.
6 Jul	<b>VC65 Excursion:</b> Preston-under Scar, Wensleydale; SE076914.
20 Jul	<b>VC61 Excursion:</b> Priory Meadows, Cottingham, Hull.
10/11 Aug	<b>VC62 Excursion:</b> Castle Howard Estate. Meet Bog Hall SE725707. 10.30am. A 2-day meeting, not a residential, so members can attend either or both days.



The ground beetle *Carabus glabratus* photographed this year by Colin Rew (a Leeds Nats member), where he lives near Huddersfield. The beetle is widespread in central and northern Europe but in the UK is most common across northern and western Scotland including the Western Isles and Orkney, but otherwise local and scarce, mainly in north Wales and northern England. It is a moorland species found, for example in heather moors and on peat bogs. Mike Denton, who confirmed the identification, has indicated that the last Yorkshire record was at Bridestones in 1985