

# NFBR Annual Report for 2014

## Membership

The Forum continues to be a UK-wide organisation, with a wide range of interests and public, private, academic and NGO sectors from across Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England reflected on NFBR's Advisory Council. Member numbers have remained steady since the Forum's establishment and seem set to rise in 2015. There has been a gradual change in the ratio of individual to organisational members – with the former now in preponderance - partly reflecting the public sector cutbacks of recent years.

## Organisation

At 2014 AGM we were fortunate to have new Trustees and Council members to continue the work of NFBR, providing a full complement for both our Executive Committee and wider Advisory Council. Clare Langrick had to stand down as Honorary Treasurer, after several years being expertly in charge of our funds. She left with our best wishes and sincere thanks, not least for her ongoing caretaking of our existing banking arrangement whilst we set up new accounts elsewhere.

Following Paul Harding's stepping down as a Trustee, we were sad to also lose the valuable help of John Newbould who had guided us through becoming a charity and was our Honorary Secretary after being Treasurer for many years. He retired with all our thanks and best wishes for his increasingly active recording career in Yorkshire and Dorset. In addition, we had to say goodbye to Trevor James, the third of our NBN honorary member, founder Trustees. You'll probably know him as much from his work with the NBN Trust as for all that he did for NFBR. Together with the late Charlie Copp, John, Paul and Trevor were the heart of what NFBR was and all that it achieved over the last ten years. All of us on Council owe them a huge debt of thanks. NFBR and the recording community in the UK would be very different without them.

Although, owing to an ever-growing, increasingly international workload, Helen Roy also had to stand down as a Trustee, she remains an active member of Council. Thankfully, we've been able to fill the vacancies that arose during the course of the year, and we'll be pleased to encourage wider involvement in NFBR's future activities.

## 2014 Conference

We had a successful 2014 Annual Conference - the last to be organised by Trevor and John over 10-12 April. Held at the Derby Conference Centre. **'Habitat - what is it, and why do we need to know?'** attracted 56 delegates for a wide ranging and hugely informative look at biological recording of habitats: from individual trees or substrates for fungi to the communities of the sea bed just south of Dorset. A main conclusion was the need for recording to consider the added value of including habitat data with species. This led to the more general recognition that we still know so little about how many animal and plant communities function, and that field recording can provide exciting new insights by studying more than the presence or absence of species. The field naturalist is needed again – and has all the advantages of modern technology at their disposal.

## Consultations

Alongside, its preparations for the future, NFBR has responded or contributed to the:

- National Biodiversity Network Extraordinary General Meeting
- Natural England consultation on Biodiversity Evidence (on behalf of DEFRA)
- DEFRA workshop on biodiversity Evidence for the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy,
- DEFRA workshop on Local Nature Partnership themes

- All Party Parliamentary Group on Biodiversity: review of ecological expertise available to local government
- National Biodiversity Network: consultation on its future, including attendance at its workshops

### **Contributions to other Groups**

NFBR contributes to the Biodiversity Data Group (convened by the Chartered Institute for Ecology & Environmental Management) and the Linnean Society's Systematics and Taxonomy Committee. The Forum continues to have a nominated Trustee on the National Biodiversity Network Trust.

### **Communications**

Thanks to Martin Harvey, NFBR produced two well-received Newsletters during the year (Our thanks to the many contributors). Our wider social media following continues to grow, which means that important news and messages also reach well be Facebook group followers on Tw and planned improvements to its website which will take place in Spring 2015.

### **Bilateral Meetings**

Following on from publication of the Recording to Revelation strategic plan in 2011, and the establishment of the Forum as a charity in 2013, we've conducted a series of bilateral meetings with the major organisations with a connection or interest in biological recording. We rounded this off in 2014 with sessions with the Society of Biology, State of Nature Partnership, Natural Sciences Collections Association, British Ecological Society and the National Biodiversity Network Trust, and will be look to collaborate on a range of activities with these bodies. We'll also be expecting to meet with other bodies in 2015.

### **Plans and Projects**

Our Conference Organising Work Group made plans for the 2015 Conference, to be run in collaboration with the Macroecology Special Interest Group of the British Ecological Society at Sheffield University over 23-25 April 2015.

Much of the planned work for the Forum over the next couple of years will build on the meetings with 'the Bilaterals', the strengthening of established partnerships and development of new relationships. We made progress with the Forum's short and longer-term plans and pursuing options to secure funds to deliver them in 2014 and hope to gradually build up from small steps in 2015. By the time of the 2015 AGM we'll know what the outcome is of an application for funds that would help kick-start all that we have planned.

### **And looking forward**

2016 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the National Federation for Biological Recording and we'll be looking at ways to celebrate this and further promote biological recording along the way. We'd love to have your suggestions.

Graham Walley

NFBR Chairman

March 2015