

Cofnod Director Biographies

David Hill

David has had a lifelong interest in natural history, and a Forestry and Soil Science graduate of Bangor University. He went on to complete a Masters Degree in Biological Recording in 2015, with a dissertation on Marsh Clubmoss in Wales using LERC data and has developed a particular passion for ferns and lycophytes. He teaches for various Universities and is a Fellow of the Linnean Society, Honorary Secretary for the British Pteridological Society and became a Cofnod Director in 2017.

Barbara Owsianka

Having studied botany and zoology at Bristol University, followed by a Master's in countryside management, Barbara's whole career has been spent working in nature conservation, almost entirely in local government. She retired in 2021 after 25 years as Conwy County Borough Council's ecologist. She is a keen supporter of many environmental organisations, both local and national/international. Most of her time is spent outdoors, whether gardening, walking, sometimes cycling (though she prefers cycling along flat French canals than in the mountains at home), always with a pair of binoculars and a hand lens to hand. Barbara maintains close ties with Poland, the land of her genes.

Geoff Radford

Trained in botany and ecology but quickly moved into biological data handling. This began with the International Biological Programme at the Biological Records Centre, work that continued with IUCN and included helping to establish the early series of local records centres in Britain. Then worked for the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at Monks Wood on GIS applications and at Bangor on upland and overseas ecology. Later freelancing included Cwm Idwal vegetation monitoring and data management for the Environmental Change Network. More recently, voluntary work for the North Wales Wildlife Trust and Cofnod.

Lesley Rider

Lesley grew up on a farm on Anglesey and subsequently has lived and worked in many places including spending 35 years in South Africa, before returning to Anglesey in 2017. She graduated in Biology from Queen Mary College, UL and then between 1972 and 1979 she had several zoology-based jobs at Royal Holloway College and Reading University. In 1979 she retrained as a Systems Analyst & Designer and then spent 20 years in the IT industry, specialising in data management and architectures. During that time, she had several senior management roles at major global corporates which has given her insight and experience of a range of business practices. From 1995 to 2022 she focussed on mentoring, training and consulting in project management, strategy and business practices. She had her own training company and worked all over the world. On moving back to Anglesey, she became involved as a tutor / mentor for the North Wales Business Academy (NWBA) at Bangor University. She joined the Board of Cofnod in 2019.

Mike Willis

Mike is a botany graduate of Royal Holloway, University of London and ecology postgraduate of Bangor. He returned to North Wales in 1992 to work for the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), having previously worked in local government and the voluntary sector in NW England and elsewhere. He was involved with Cofnod prior to its formal constitution and became one of its founder directors. He retired from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), in late 2019, after over 40 years working as an ecologist/environmental land manager. He continues to actively work for the profession through the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), where he was elected a fellow of CIEEM in 2021. He is also a member of Cwm Cadnant Community Council and its vice-chairman and also actively involved as a volunteer with Grŵp Naturiol Seriol, undertaking conservation management work on SE Anglesey LNRs.

Maureen Parry

Maureen grew up in Mold and was encouraged in her interest in natural history as a child. After an English degree at UCL, she continued to live in London and worked as a piano accompanist and teacher. She developed her interest in wildlife, and botany in particular, by joining the London Natural History Society and for a number of years has been a member of their Botany Committee. She moved back to North Wales in 2022 and is a keen supporter of the NWWT, the Pensychnant Conservation Centre and is involved in a grassland regeneration project on the Vardre in Deganwy. Although based in North Wales, she's back in London regularly for piano lessons and to attend LNHS field trips. She goes out as often as possible with the North Wales BSBI botanical recorders.