



# On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter

Summer 2009 [www.riverfossociety.co.uk](http://www.riverfossociety.co.uk)

## Opening of Castle Mills Lock

On Sunday 26 April 2009 members of the River Foss Society and the Inland Waterways Association co-operated in advertising the Castle Mills Lock as a gateway for Narrowboats to explore 1.5 miles of the River Foss.

The barge "Janine" entered the River Foss from the River Ouse at Blue Bridge. With all lock gates closed the lock filled up with Foss river water from underground pipes, enabling the other lock gates to be opened, so that the barge could continue up the River Foss through the City of York, but only for about 1.5 miles upstream. After about an hour the barge returned to Castle Mills Lock after a successful journey.



## AGM Strensall Common

The Society's AGM on 22nd April was attended by about 50 members and guests. The talk was by Julian Small who followed up his presentation about Strensall Common by leading a walk there a couple of weeks later. Once away from the road, the only noises were of the wind blowing through the Birch trees, the bleating of the lambs whose mission in life would be to eat the Birch seedlings to prevent them from taking over and the call of a distant Cuckoo.

In this large expanse of ancient heathland we were shown some of the small things that make up its ecosystem. Holding up a Birch leaf to the light we could see the tiny caterpillar nesting between its layers. Small sprigs let us see the difference between the two types of heather that grow there. The creeping Willow displayed its pussy flowers at ground level. Slight undulations in the soil were the remnants of the sand dunes laid down as the glaciers of the Ice Age receded.

Julian pointed out the ponds formed from old brickworks, whose bricks would have been shipped in barges down the Foss. The whole Common acts as a sponge, gently releasing water into our river.



## Heritage Lottery Application

We are hoping to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding for Interpretation Boards to illustrate the plants and animals to be found on the river. This will add to the enjoyment of the River, which is one of the aims of our Society.

But, we do need someone who could help to prepare the Application, perhaps by joining a small working party. This might involve a couple of evening meetings. If you are interested please get in touch with June Card.

## Forthcoming Events

### Sunday 28 June 2pm

A gentle stroll along the Foss followed by Strawberries and Cream at June's House – see below. Meet up at Huntington Church car park. Please let June know if you are coming.

### Thursday 9 July 10.30am

The Foss Walk 3 from Crayke via Pond Head to Brandsby led by John Millett. Park on Church Hill, meet at the church and bring a picnic lunch. Please let Pat Rattenbury know if you plan on coming 01904 761168

### Sunday 12 July – Dragon Boat Race Day

We are again sharing a stand with the Inland Waterways Assc. If you would like to help man the stall for a couple of hours please ring John Millett on 01904 491290

### Thursday 16 July

The original planned visit to the moored barge Syntan has been 'upgraded' to a river trip. Members please find details, with a booking form on the attachment.

### Wednesday 22 July 10.30am

Foss Walk 4 from Pond Head via the source of the Foss to Hustwaite led by John Millett. Meet on the access road to Pond Head Farm, off the Oulston to Yearsley Road and bring a picnic lunch. Again please let Pat R. know if you are coming.

### Tuesday 25 August 7.30pm

Visit to Douglas Heald's nature garden on the Foss at 'Woodlands' 147 Huntington Road.

### Saturday 5 September

The Society will have a stand at the Strensall and Towthorpe village show at the village hall. Please come and give a hand.

### Tuesday 15 September 7pm

"The Role of the River Foss in the History of York", a talk by Peter Connelly, Hungate Project Director for the York Archaeological Trust at the Merchant Adventurer's Hall. This is an open meeting so please come and bring guests.

### Future Events....

#### Tuesday 13 Oct 7pm

Open Meeting – Sir John Lawton on climate change.

#### Sunday 6 December

Christmas Lunch – details of both of these events in coming newsletters.



## A Wander Round Nature



On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April a small party led by Pat Rattenbury, left the Folk Hall to explore Bootham Stray and the old railway line where they were met by Brian Jardine of the Joseph Rowntree Trust to be taken by lock and key into the Nature Reserve. The Reserve, created by the extraction of clay for the bricks which built New Earswick, offered an area of tranquillity with wildfowl bobbing on the lake and an interesting array of flora. Brian was able to point out some of the archaeology of the area which included an ancient well. The Reserve was enclosed in 1999 after abuse of the area and can only be accessed by anglers and those who have been entrusted with a key.

## And finally.....

Just a quick and friendly reminder that the Society is reliant on the subscriptions given to continue. Thanks to all who have already paid and a *subtle reminder* to everyone else to send in their cheque!

Please contact Peter Hopwood tel 01904 768071 for more information and rates.



Thanks



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