

## Christmas Event

Yes we know.....

However we are planning a Christmas Lunch at The Riverside Room at the Novotel, Fishergate on Sunday the 2nd December at 12 noon. The cost is £12.99 per head for 3 courses, tea or coffee and mince pies. If you would like to attend then please get in touch with June Card for more information and a menu—contact details on the front page of this newsletter. It would be really great to see you and we are sure you'll have a great time. There is parking at the hotel or at the Peel St car park which is free on Sundays.

Numbers may be limited so please get in touch sooner rather than later—all bookings, payments and menu choices are needed by Saturday the 27th October. Families and 'Significant Others' are all welcome, space permitting and June will have menus at the next open meeting on Wednesday the 17th October.

If you would like to work up an appetite then why not walk along the Foss Basin & Bar Walls—we are planning on meeting together at 10.15am at the Blue Bridge.

Now let's not mention 'it' again until November at the very earliest!

*'Chestnuts roasting on an open fire.....'*



## News...News...News...

Thanks to all the people who have been so positive about the new look newsletter. If you have any feedback then please let us know. We are always looking for articles and other material that are Foss focused. Please forward material or suggestions to [mandy.watterson@ntlworld.com](mailto:mandy.watterson@ntlworld.com)

It is really important that members are heard and we are planning on a number of events to let this happen. Check out the open meeting in October and please come along if you are available. We'd really love to see you there.

## And Finally...

Thanks for taking the time to read this edition of the River Foss Newsletter. It is really important to us to be able to communicate about all the issues and developments along the river – the thinnest nature reserve in the City!!!

It would be really helpful to be able to send the newsletter to you via email so if you do have an address can you get in touch with Mandy Watterson – [mandy.watterson@ntlworld.com](mailto:mandy.watterson@ntlworld.com) and we will happily arrange to send you the next editions. It is so much more cost effective and more environmentally friendly.

Thanks.

**Mandy Watterson**  
Editor



# On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter Autumn 07

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

## Dragon Boats and English Summers

*No fear of a hosepipe ban then.....*

The River Foss Society stoically shared a stall and gazebo with the Inland Waterways Association on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> July as part of the City's River Festival. Even though the weather was somewhat 'challenging' the stall was really successful in grabbing the attention of passers by, cards were sold, conversations were initiated and a couple of new members were recruited.

The Dragon Boat Races went ahead as planned making quite a spectacle and it was great to see so many people supporting the event despite the weather. The River Foss Society stall was visited during the day by VIP's including the Lord and Lady Mayor of the City and the Sheriff of York Keith Hyman and his wife Karen who showed great interest in what the society does.

The recent rain, and consequential flooding, has highlighted the importance of keeping the rivers managed well to allow for viable drainage when required. I am sure that there will be more in the media regarding proactive river management in the future.

Thanks goes to all who manned the stall on the day and it is hoped that the festival will be repeated next year.

Picture from L to R

Karen Hyman  
Tom Claxton  
Keith Hyman  
Amanda Watterson  
June Card



June Card - Secretary  
The River Foss Society  
C/O Stable Mews, The Old Village  
Huntington York YO32 9RA



[junecard@waitrose.com](mailto:junecard@waitrose.com)

# Walking the River

Our Chair John Millett has been out and about walking the Foss and has kindly forwarded this report.

## Sheriff Hutton 25<sup>th</sup> Jun 07

Twelve members attended the walk at Sheriff Hutton on a mild and fortunately dry summer evening, a perfect break in the weather in what was proving to be a very wet month of June. Our leader for the walk was Mr Robin Wardell, a local historian, who took us on a tour of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century St Helen & Holy Cross church and churchyard. We then moved to the site of the first castle and completed the tour at the later castle – including a visit to one of the remaining rooms.

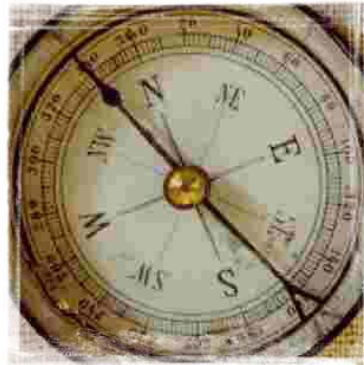
We were given a running commentary of the castle's history which was very interesting and entertaining, after which we finished the evening at the Highwayman Public House where we enjoyed an excellent meal.

## Stillington to Crayke 11<sup>th</sup> July 07

This walk is ideal for members without their own transport as the starting point at Stillington can be reached by Reliance Buses, from York. Four members attended the 5 mile walk from Stillington to Crayke and we were very lucky with the weather as we chose a warm, dry afternoon free from rain.

The route we took followed the Foss past the site of Marton Abbey Priory, crossing the Helmsley road and up the gradual climb to Crayke. At Crayke we took the new permissive footpath, again following the Foss to Mill Green. It is hoped that in time this permissive footpath becomes a permanent one so that it can be come part of the Foss Walk. To celebrate the Millennium this part of the footpath is decorated in various places with mosaic plaques depicting farm scenes, horsemen, birds and animals.

Arriving in Crayke at 5.10pm we caught the bus back to Stillington, so ending a really pleasant afternoon walk.



# Planning News

You've applied for planning permission for a new conservatory and suddenly you are inundated with advertisements for conservatories. Why? The providers are watching the Council's planning website and when your application comes up, they send off their blurb.

The website is a mine of information. Most applications that I see in my weekly trawl are for home extensions, permission to lop or remove protected trees or put up signs but sometimes I am alerted to a proposal that would affect our river.

The River Foss Society has raised objections to two such recent proposals. An application for a touring caravan site at Landing Lane, Haxby, was subsequently withdrawn. The massive Hungate Development borders the Society's Foss Islands Nature Reserve and impinges on a river corridor for wildlife. At the Planning Meeting to consider Phase 1, the Developers were required to contribute to improvements to the Reserve. Bob Missin, the Council's Countryside Officer, will update us on their proposals during our Open Meeting. Meanwhile we have "a spy in the sky" because Dr. Terry Goody, a Committee Member, has a wonderful view of happenings on the Hungate Site, the Reserve and the River from the coffee room in the DEFRA building where he works.

The Fishergate Centre, alongside Castle Mills Lock, is being turned into the new hostel for the homeless. After visiting the site and studying the plans, we felt that this was not a case where the Society had an interest to express. I am keeping an eye open for any further news of the Castle/Piccadilly and Strensall Tannery sites, both with River Foss frontages.

If you have any planning concerns or can give me an early warning about future developments, please get in touch.

June Card

# Dates for your Diary

## Wednesday 17th October 2007

### Open Meeting at Strensall Village Hall. 7pm.

This meeting is open to all members and other interested parties. There will be wine and nibbles and we shall be asking 'an important question'. We will have a guest speaker - Bob Missin, the City of York's Countryside Officer, and he will be giving us a progress report on the Foss Islands Nature Reserve. Why don't you make a date and come and participate....or just enjoy the wine!

## Sunday 2nd December 2007

### Christmas Lunch at the Novotel.

Details of this festive time are on the back page of this newsletter.



# Nature on the River

## Russian Visitor on the River.....

When Peter Walls contacted me about his discovery on the banks of the Foss I was intrigued. Some of you may know Peter for his section on the Natural History of the River Foss in the excellent book, The River Foss - Its History and Natural History, which is on sale through the River Foss Society website and at meetings.

Peter and Veronica gave me a warm welcome at their home in New Earswick and after a short walk along the old towpath, 50 metres upstream past Sleeper Path Bridge also known as Station Road Bridge, Peter showed me a stretch of river bank with a patch of attractive long stemmed blue daisy - like flowers. Peter explained that this was the Common Blue Sow Thistle, *Cicerbita Macrophylla* which is very rare in York.

Peter explained the when he first came across the attractive flower he was really stumped as to what it was so he contacted the Council and asked them to refrain from cutting the banks until it had been identified. After much research and pondering he approached Janette Lambert of the Yorkshire Museum who confirmed his identification. The Common Blue Sow Thistle is an introduced species which has become naturalised in many places on rough or waste ground, and on roadsides. It was first recorded as a "wild flower" in this country in 1915, and is native to the Urals.

Peter has been trying to introduce the flower to other Nature Reserves in York but so far he has been unsuccessful.

*If you see Cicerbita Macrophylla on your walks down the river please remember—look, enjoy but don't pick!*



# Stop Press...

At time of writing there have been regular sightings of a Heron on the river. The heron seems to have made a temporary pit stop between the bridge near Peasholme Green and the bridge at the roundabout near Sainsbury's. There have also been sightings of Kingfishers at New Earswick and reports of Deer drinking from the river at Strensall.