



On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter

Winter
2014/15



Getting Picky

The final stages of the litter pick - lifting off bags and loading them onto the City of York Council truck.

Our final litter pick for 2014 went well, with nine people attending. The turnout was somewhat disappointing, but was clearly offset by the enthusiasm of those taking part. We had volunteers on the 'cruise ship' with others walking along the banks of the river. The area from Blue Bridge to Yearsley Bridge was covered; 18 bin liners were filled, and other items of litter collected.

Our appreciation goes to the City of York Council for the supply and delivery of the grabs and black bin bags, and for the use of the boat and pontoon, which was superbly skippered by the very cheerful and friendly Mark. And of course, thanks to the volunteers.

We could not retrieve the solitary life belt found - this was in the open stretch of river along Huntington Road and too far out from the bankside. There is also a fallen tree about 100 metres downstream from Fossway bridge, blocking the river from bank to bank. An excessive amount of litter, including two large drums, has built up on the upstream side of this tree.

See Page 2 for details of our Spring litter pick.

Barry Thomas



Even though it's winter, photographer Tony Ellis has been capturing scenes of wildlife with his camera. This black headed gull keeps watch on the Foss bank at New Earswick



Spring's Coming

MARCH

Wed 4th: Foss Walk 1 A circular walk of about 5m, leaving the Dutch House near Crayke at 9.30 am and arriving back for lunch at about 1 pm. Contact Bob Jowett tel: 01904 764702 or e-mail bob.jowett1@btopenworld.com

Thurs 19th: A special evening for Members who have joined since March 2012 (and any prospective members) at the Huntington Community Centre at 7 pm. This will be an opportunity to meet the Committee and each other, hear about the Society's activities and enjoy some light refreshments. There is no need to book. Contact June Card tel: 01904 766196 or e-mail junecard700@gmail.com

APRIL

Tues 7th: Foss Walk 2 A linear walk of about 5 miles. Meet at 9.30 in Terrington at the T-junction leading to the church, parking where convenient. Volunteer drivers will then drive to the start at Sheriff Hutton. Lunch in either Terrington or Sheriff Hutton at about 1 pm. Contact Bob Jowett as above.

Wed 15th: Annual General Meeting at Strensall & Towthorpe Village Hall preceded at 7 pm by a talk by Dr. Neil Moran on "Flowing through History – the River Foss and York". All are welcome to join us.

Sat 18th: Litter Pick on foot and by boat. Meet, suitably clad, at 9.30 at the arched footbridge opposite Morrisons on Foss Islands Road. This is a rare opportunity to experience the Foss from the water. Contact Barry Thomas tel: 01904 490081 or e-mail barrythomas1@googlemail.com

On the Foss at New Earswick



Tony Ellis photographed this lovely Moorhen on the edge of the Foss. Its toes are nearly as long as its legs!

Enjoying Autumn

The well attended October Open Meeting enjoyed an inspiring talk by Terry Weston, warden of Dunnington's Hassacarr Nature Reserve. Using his stunning wildlife photographs, Terry told us the story of how a community project turned derelict land into a thriving green area.

Hassacarr is now home to many species of butterfly, dragonfly and water beetle, and over 90 bird species have been seen there as well. It serves the community as a great resource for schools and a wonderful green area.

Sunday 7 December, a sparkling sunny day, was a perfect backdrop for 45 members and guests to enjoy a wonderful Christmas meal at Novotel. Celebrations started with a talk by York Archaeological Trust's Nicky Rogers about the finds discovered during investigation into the Fishergate area's early history. As June Card previously explained (*On the Foss, Autumn 2014*), this was an important area of York after Roman occupation and before Viking conquest.

With beautifully decorated tables, delicious food and crackers (of course!), we could not help but be put into the Christmas spirit.

It's time to pay ...

Subscriptions for 2015 are now due and will be accepted up to and including the date of the AGM at the current rates, which have remained unchanged since 2009, at:-

- Family £12; Individual £8;
- Concessions (under 18, over 60) £6;
- Parish/Town Councils £18;
- Schools and Societies £18;
- Commercial Organisations £25.

Payment may be made direct to the Society's bank, HSBC account no. 51349538 sort code 40-47-31, making sure to put your name in the reference box. Cheques, made payable to the "River Foss Society", and any other membership enquiries, should be addressed to:

Peter Hopwood, Membership Secretary, 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU 01904 768071, e-mail chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk

Your membership card will be sent as a receipt.



Left: The CAN group enjoy a tea break after a nature walk and work on bird boxes. Photo by Chris Sturgeon.

Below: Learning how to make bird boxes. Photo by Will Durrant.

A constituted group led by John Reeton, Nick Milner, Peter & Julie Edwards and RFS member Will Durrant his wife Christine, and supported by Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust have formed CAN - Community Action for Nature. The long term plan for New Earswick is to form a wildlife corridor joining it with other local villages.

Yes we CAN!

This corridor will be formed using existing Foss footpaths starting from Willow Bank, utilising waste land and surrounding river bank woodland, as well as the existing John's Walk way-marked footpath.

This area includes John Barker-Wyatt's Walk, formed in memory of this JRHT trustee who loved walking. The walk is being rejuvenated and re-opened with the

hope of more wildlife being introduced over a period of time.

The group hopes to involve local volunteers such as the Scouts and other interested organisations. For young volunteers a system of badges, possibly for work in clearing the Foss of rubbish, or clearing woodland scrub and bushes, is proposed. This could include various RFS-led projects to maintain the Foss corridor. Administrative details such as Youth Group Insurance have been considered/discussed, so working



with young people and their parents should not present a problem.

The efforts of this group in New Earswick mark the beginning of a partnership with JRHT intended to make Trust properties all over Yorkshire more nature friendly.

We look forward to the development of CAN and its positive work for New Earswick and the Foss corridor.

John Millett

Birding Along the Foss

On a cold but sunny December day in Strensall, a walk along the river produced a good number of birds. The star sighting was a Kingfisher beside the new houses on the Tannery Site. The disruption of building these houses does not seem to have scared the birds away; also seen were flocks of Goldfinch, several Reed Buntings, numerous Blackbirds, Robins, Long Tailed Tits, House Sparrows and a single Coot.

The Alder trees on the 'Old Filter Beds' along the Foss



Siskin photographed by John Spring

at Strensall are currently home to approximately 50 siskin. These birds, usually high in the trees feeding on the Alder seeds, can be hard to see, but they do come down to local garden bird tables where they feed off niger seed.

The condition of the footpath by the new houses is very poor, the original hard surface of the path having been churned up by builders' vehicles, leaving a very muddy and slippery surface in places. Those walking this stretch of the river should take great care; walkers are advised to use the route along New Lane.

The developers will be asked to re-instate the footpath to its original condition as soon as building work is complete.

John Millett

Don't Forget our website:

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

Bob Jowett remembers the last two walks of 2014 ...

Walking out of 2014

Walk 7 on Thursday 4 September was the second of the harder walks on the programme, the first being the two day 'Foss Walk'. These walks were planned to give an opportunity for those who want to walk a bit further with some hilly walking.

The group met at the Hovingham village car park at 9:30 am, drove to Sheriff Hutton, and started walking at 9:45 am. The weather was perfect - sunny and warm. We dropped John Millett off at Terrington as he wished to do a shorter walk, about half the distance.

This walk is part of the Ebor Way and the Centenary Way and is attractive, if a bit hilly with nice scenery. The walk goes through the attractive village of Terrington. On the second half of the walk we met a very friendly farmer who was keen to show us his pigs and explain about farming.

Three walkers completed the full distance; we rejoined John at the finish. The entire group enjoyed a post-walk tea at the Bakery in Hovingham.

Four walkers met at the Dutch House Mill Green to start Walk 8 – the final walk for 2014. The weather was warm and sunny with good visibility. Although we advertised that we would walk up to Pond Head and Oulston reservoir, it was decided to try another walk of similar length. This new walk went via Brandsby and followed the Foss Walk back to the Dutch house.

After Launds Farm the path had not been reinstated through a large field with crops, and so we walked round the edge, eventually finding the stile and little bridge. The farmer's son told us to look for a traffic cone marking the stile in the hedge - we spotted this when we almost reached the stile. This is a nice, fairly flat walk and, notwithstanding a navigation error on my part, was fairly easy to follow.



Top: A beautiful view from the path of Walk 7; above: approaching Hovingham.

Left: Derrick Spence, Anne Bednarski and Carol Carr on Walk 8; below: coming into Brandsby



The entire group of walkers stayed to have lunch at the Dutch House at the end of an enjoyable walk.



Tony Ellis photographed this Peacock Butterfly at the end of Autumn 2014.

On the Foss

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