



# On the Foss

Summer  
2014

The River Foss Society Newsletter

## New Horizons reached

After last year's trips on Pocklington Canal Amenity Society's 'New Horizons', two longer trips were arranged this year from the Melbourne Arms to the River Derwent.

17 May was a lovely late Spring day with sunshine, blossom and green countryside. Possibly the biggest excitement - was it or was it not a tansy beetle we saw at Cottingwith Lock landing stage? Answer: unlikely, but probably a green dock (or a dogbane) beetle! 'New Horizons' joined the actual River but the landing stage for visiting the Ferryboat Inn was out of action.

Heavy rain on 4 June eased considerably. Both trips went down to Cottingwith and through the Lock into the River Derwent cut. Because of the high water level



*Hearty sailors ready for the June trip*



*Is it or isn't it?*

following recent rain in the River, it was necessary for safety reasons to turn immediately in the cut below the Lock. Having passed a C&RT dredger on the way to Cottingwith, the return trip was handicapped by the Canal water level being lowered to enable the dredger to get under Hagg Bridge. 'New Horizons' passed the dredger later as it worked at the Gardham Lock area.

Many thanks for a lovely day to the PCAS narrowboat crews - Alistair, Roger and Ivor. All the arrangements were skillfully provided by Alistair (again!), Ernie, RFS member Adrian and Bob from the PCAS.

*Peter Hopwood*



## Look at this!

Walkers on the Foss at Earswick Chase will have noticed an attractive new facility in place there after 1 May. This large (A1), attractive interpretation panel gives information about the care and protection of Water Voles, as well as other flora and fauna - Kingfisher, Grey Heron, Roach - found on that stretch of the river. It tells a brief history of the Foss and outlines the Society's role in providing river support, walks and other activities.

This project was supported by a generous grant from the Earswick Residents' Forum to Earswick PC. We worked with the Parish Council, with our chairman John Millett as the main organiser and contact. The panel was produced by Adrian Bury Associates working with EPC and RFS.

We thank John Millett and John and Jean Nicholson for their help. The Nicholsons are also keeping an eye on the panel as it is sited near their home.



*Dragonflies are appearing now. These - a Damselfly (top) and a Beautiful Demoiselle (below) were photographed last year by member Tom Fothergill near Lock House, about a mile upstream from Strensall.*

## Beauties of the Foss



Thanks to all those who have already paid their subscriptions. Those who have not paid will shortly be receiving a reminder! Queries and any other membership enquiries to e-mail: [chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk) or telephone: 01904 768071.

**A gentle reminder...**





## Enjoy late summer

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Always check the website for last minute alterations

### JULY

**Thursday 3rd** City Centre Litter Pick. For details see Spring Newsletter.

**Wednesday 9th** Hawk & Owl Nature Trail. See Spring Newsletter or website for details.

**Tuesday 22nd** Foss Walk 5 Farlington to Whenby circular, about 5 miles. Meet in the car park of the Blacksmiths Arms, Farlington, at 9.30 am. Contact Bob.

**Monday 28th** 6.30 pm Treasure Hunt suitable for small teams and individuals and taking about an hour to complete. Start and finish at the Huntington Memorial Hall where there will be a display commemorating the First World War. A light buffet supper will be available. Names, please, to June before Saturday 26th.

### AUGUST

**Monday 4th** Foss Walk 6 Haxby Landing to Blue Bridge, about 6 miles. Meet at 9.30 am at the entrance to Landing Lane (from Haxby centre walk east across the roundabout and the level crossing and continue a short distance). Return by No. 1 Bus from Theatre or Railway Station. Contact Bob.

**Friday 15th** Evening History Walk around York with Neil Moran 6-8 pm. Meet on Clifford's Tower steps, meal afterwards at Masons Arms, Fishergate. Numbers limited to 20 so booking required by Wednesday 15th, please. Contact June.

**Wednesday 20th** Visit to the Humber. Morning visit to, and talk about, Humber Keel 'Comrade' and Humber Sloop 'Amy Howson' celebrating her 100th

birthday at South Ferryby. Maximum of 20 people. Lunch and visit to the Waters Edge Country Park and Visitor Centre at Barton on Humber. Optional walk from South Ferryby to Barton, 4.5 miles on S. Humber Heritage Trail viewing the Humber Bridge and the devastating flooding in December 2013 of the Far Ings Nature Reserve and the Old Tileworks Museum. Contact Peter.

### SEPTEMBER

**Thursday 4th** Foss Walk 7 Sheriff Hutton to Hovingham on the Centenary Way 7.5 miles. Meet at 9.30 am at Hovingham Village Hall car park (or park at Malt Shovel). Volunteers will then drive us back to the start at Sheriff Hutton Village Hall. Contact Bob.

**Tuesday 9th** Visit to Worsborough Mill Museum and Country Park, near Barnsley. Leave the M1 at Junction 36, take the A61 direction Barnsley and follow the brown signs for about 2.5 miles. Car parking £1 per hour, max. £3. A guided tour of this magnificent old flour mill has been booked for 11.15 am, cost £4.10. There is a tea room for lunch and marked trails of different lengths around the Park. Contact June before Sunday 7th.

**Wednesday 24th** PROVISIONAL Morning talk at the Masons Arms, Fishergate, on the now commissioned Environment Agency's tilting weir sluice adjacent to Castle Mills Lock followed by operational demonstration. Max. 15 people. Lunch to be followed, hopefully, by another visit to the EA's Foss Barrier. Contact Peter.

### OCTOBER

**Thursday 9th** Foss Walk 8 Mill Green to Pond Head circular 5 miles. Meet at 9.30 am in the car park of the Dutch House, Mill Green, near Crayke. Contact Bob.

**Wednesday 15th** Open Meeting at Strensall & Towthorpe Village Hall. Details to be announced.

The River Foss Society will have a stand in the marquee on Huntington Parish Council's Gala Day on **Saturday 15th August** at the Huntington Sports Club. If you can spare an hour or two to help out on the stand, please contact John Millett or June Card.

## The Changing face of Strensall

*The historic John Carr Bridge over the Foss at Strensall now has a modern neighbour. As part of the Tannery Development a new foot and cycle bridge has been built next to the eighteenth century road bridge. John Millett's photograph shows the central span being lifted into position.*

*We hope that the riverside footpath will be restored and re-opened as soon as possible so that all can continue to enjoy a stroll along the Foss.*

### Sad News

We were saddened to hear of the death, on 12th June, of Ros, wife of our President Alastair Fitter. We send our condolences to him and to the family.





Bob Jowett did a great job organising this full length River Foss Walk - Blue Bridge, York via Pond Head Reservoir to the market square in Easingwold - nearly 30 miles over the two days. He gave us helpful hints and tips about the route, popped up at various points along the way with reviving refreshments, and selected tempting hosteries to keep us motivated even when our legs began to ache!

Friday 6 June dawned much brighter than the weather forecast - a beautiful sunny day. Seven of us, and Flynn the dog, set off from Blue Bridge, past Clifford's Tower and The Merchant Adventurers' Hall, through the suburbs of New Earswick and Haxby to Huntington churchyard for our first tea-break. By then, our numbers had peaked at ten, and we romped away along the old towpath, only pausing briefly to cool down in some welcome shade on the outskirts of Strensall, and then on to drinks and a welcome loo-stop at The Ship Inn.

Finding our rhythm, we pressed on with a long haul across wide open spaces, skirting Sherriff Hutton, with a tea-stop near the cricket ground. More miles before we could rest, but at last - after beautiful views along the Howardian Hills - we reached the Blacksmith's Arms at Farlington. Time for a welcome pint, a truly delicious meal, and best of all our transport home!

Saturday dawned, far worse even than the weather forecast! It was to be a VERY wet day. The first leg was a mixture of gentle lanes and increasingly overgrown paths towards Crayke and a chance to dry out (a bit) with 'twelveses' at The Dutch House. By then the rain

had really set in, and we had to try hard to convince ourselves this was still a good idea. But the Pond Head drew us on, despite some quite heavy going; at last we were rewarded with a glimpse of the reservoir. Our picnic lunch turned into a quick sandwich huddled under dripping trees. A deep breath, then on again.

I'd expected the extra miles to Easingwold, downhill, to be a bit of a doddle, but it was actually the most gruelling part of the walk. A narrow path, through fields of overhanging barley, finally soaked my few remaining dry patches. At several points the path disappeared altogether - surely a very good argument for doing walks like this - to keep these heritage footpaths open. Then, unexpectedly, a wonderful glimpse of wild nature made it all worthwhile. We spotted five young hares, running in spirals, quite oblivious of us, from end to end of a huge meadow, and kick-boxing with each other for sheer delight!

We felt strangely elated as Easingwold came into sight and for the last few minutes of the walk the sun came out. The magnificent seven, and faithful Flynn, had finally made it, the full length of The Foss Walk!

And the sight of Bob, there with transport to whisk us home to a hot bath, was heaven. Thanks Bob, we'd never have done it without you!

Adrian Lovett

## The Foss in two days - Adrian's diary



Tom Claxton, Beryl Little, Dennis Little, Philip Manders, Adrian Lovett, Anne Bednarski and Rowena Lovett. Other 2-day walkers were Carol Carr and Jackie Butler (not in this picture).



Flynn takes a well-earned break



Soggy walkers dodge puddles on Day 2.

## Share your views on flooding

What do you think about flooding and flood risk management in York? A student of Geography at the University of Edinburgh is doing an undergraduate dissertation on Natural Flood Management within the Upper Ouse catchment and would like views of local people on this, either in one-to-one interviews or a small discussion group. Contact Kathryn Rudsdale on 07743 498412 or 01904 481036 if you're interested.



The cry went out to voluntary groups in York each to create a banner to adorn the Bar Walls during Le Grand Depart. It was too late to circulate our full membership but four Committee members – Tom Claxton, Mark Gladwin, Hilary Shepherd and June



Mark, Hilary and June with their stunning artwork.

## We painted a banner!

Card - volunteered to have a go. The cotton banners, 1m wide and 5m long, were prepared by the Quilt Museum. For a unified effect, the banners came marked into three zones divided by decorative bands. We chose the motif for the decorative bands from a prepared selection but could decide what to put in the main panels. Hilary booked a suitable venue and, guided by artist Emily Harvey, who also supplied brushes and acrylic paint (it takes a lot of paint to cover 5m<sup>2</sup>!), we set to work.

Tom suggested that we fill the largest, top panel, with a 'map' of the River Foss, tracing it from its source in

the Howardian Hills to its junction with the Ouse in York. Names of some villages through which it flows were added, together with representations of some of the creatures and plants to be found in and around it. (Mark's greylag goose is a minor masterpiece.) Our frog logo occupies the middle section and the message "Let's keep the river flowing" fills the bottom panel. For maximum impact we used a limited

palette of two shades of green, two shades of yellow and dark blue.

We do not know where our banner will hang but we hope that our members will get a glimpse of it as the bicycles flash by.

June Card

## A grand day out in Wensleydale

The rain had obligingly stopped as our party of 22 set off from Leeming Bar Station on 30th May. Our train made stately progress, allowing us to admire the lush scenery of lower Wensleydale and to see the heroic scale of the work that had been needed to repair the line after a landslide.

At Redmire, furthest station on the line, the group split up. Jean Croft and Chris Stride remained on the railway and succeeded in travelling on each of the six trains, including a steam train, running that day. Nine members did the short walk across the fields to Bolton Castle to explore the medieval fortress in which Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned, enjoy the gardens and watch a display of birds of prey including a mighty red kite and Cleo, a glamorous Indian eagle owl.



Cleo takes flight.

Eleven members set off on a six mile wild flower walk along the River Ure back to Leyburn, where, under the guidance of expert botanists, they were able to identify about 90 different species. Leyburn Glebe Meadow, never cultivated, is notable for its small orchids.

Back on the train back from Leyburn, we shared our different experiences of a grand day out.

June Card

## Foss Walk 2. Saturday 26th April. Yearsley to Coxwold.

Chairman John Millett stepped into lead this walk, as Bob Jowett was ill. Though dire weather was forecast, eight brave members turned up for the walk. However, it turned out to be a dry warm morning for a very enjoyable walk. The Coxwold Tea Rooms gave us a very warm welcome and an enjoyable lunch.

### Foss Walking

## Foss Walk 3. Friday 9th May. Yearsley to Mill Green.

Our chairman John Millett was again leader in lieu of Bob Jowett. Seven members joined the walk after heavy overnight rain. During the morning the weather remained dry with a strong brisk wind. However, we did have to contend with muddy and slippery conditions underfoot in places.

Near Beckfield House Farm we were treated to the sight of roe deer and hare, whilst overhead several lapwings were flying in an agitated manner and giving alarm calls. We probably had gone near their nests and young.

After the walk we retired to the Dutch House café for a delicious lunch of savoury pancakes and bacon.

## On the Foss

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