



# On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter

Spring  
2015

## For Pat ...

On 20 March, a group of RFS committee members met at the Blue Bridge to dedicate the newest feature of the Foss Walk. Standing at the official start of the walk, a new 'finger' sign points upriver to Easingwold. This sign, and the brass plaque on it, stand as a modest tribute to one of the Society's sadly missed officers.

Owen Patrick Rattenbury (Pat to everyone) was born in London in 1921. He started his long engineering career at the Air Ministry in London and was involved in building military airfields all over the world.

After a long career, Pat retired in 1984. He and Mary moved to Haxby in 1992 to be near son Keith. Retirement gave Pat scope for enjoying many of his interests. He was an active Methodist and always loved outdoor activities, especially walking. Soon after arriving, Pat joined the River Foss Society becoming a very active Footpaths Officer, leading walks at a brisk pace!



He campaigned for footpath access, writing careful letters to York City Council detailing access issues, and maintaining stiles correctly. Pat was intent that footpaths would not be lost, and trudged his family through many a muddy footpath to ensure this! The family cite their love of nature and the countryside to Pat's enthusiasm; his grandchildren particularly remember walks with him.

Even in his 80s, Pat carried on investing in the community, keen as ever in his commitment to groups, organisations and campaigns.

Pat, in good health for most of his life, took a heart attack in 1993 in his stride and fought cancer in 2007. It was a shock in late 2009 to hear of his sudden hospitalisation and death there from pneumonia at the age of 88.

In the words of Haxby's Methodist Church News, Pat's church magazine: "Here was a solid, dependable man, who loved his family and worked hard to make the world a better place."

We still miss Pat. But we know that he would now be delighted to be pointing walkers onto the Foss Walk.

*Top: Pat strides along; and below: Barbara Rattenbury (wife of Keith), Peter Hopwood, Keith Rattenbury, June Card, Tom Claxton and John Millett gather to dedicate the new sign to Pat's memory*

The RFS's financial year is the calendar year. Thanks to the fifty members who responded to the request in the Winter Newsletter and have already paid their subscriptions. Early payment keeps costs down and helps the cash flow. Rates are:

- Family £12.00
- Individual £ 8.00
- Concession £ 6.00
- Parish/Town Councils £18.00
- Schools and Societies £18.00
- Commercial Organisations £25.00

Payment may be made direct to the RFS's bank, HSBC

## Time to Renew

account no 51349538, sort code 40-47-31, please put your name in the reference box. Alternately please send a cheque made out to the "River Foss Society" to Membership Secretary, 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU. Queries and any other membership enquiries to e-mail: [chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk) or telephone no 01904 768071. Your Membership Card will be sent as a receipt.

The Committee will recommend to the AGM that subscriptions should be increased from 1 January 2016 for the first time since 2009.



## A Busy Time Ahead

Contact details: June Card Tel: 01904 766196

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**Don't Forget! AGM, 15 April, 7.00 pm**

### MAY

**Sat 9th** Foss Walk 3 Terrington to Hovingham, about 5 m. Meet at 9.30 am in the village hall car park at Hovingham. Volunteer drivers will then drive to the start at Terrington. Contact Bob Jowett.

**Tues 12th** **NOTE CHANGE OF DATE** Visit to garden of our President, Alastair Fitter, 6.30 pm, 533 Huntington Road. Park in nearby Burn Estate. Max. number 20. Contact June Card by May 4th at the latest to book and to reserve disabled-sticker-only parking in drive (at own risk).

**Mon 18th** Evening country walk around Linton-on Ouse with Ann Bednarski. Meet at 6 pm at the entrance gates to Beningbrough Hall. Contact Bob Jowett.

**Wed 20th** Visit to the Hawk and Owl Trust at Ravenscar. Meet at 10 am for coffee and to order lunch at the Falcon Inn, which is in a loop road to the east of, and signposted from, the A171 Scarborough to Whitby road about 3 miles north of Cloughton (GR972981). We will meet Tanya Eyre at the Ravenscar Mast at 10.30 for the start of a slow and easy walk during which we hope to see curlews. A minimum number of 8 is required for this walk. Please book with Bob Jowett at least a week in advance.

**Sat 23rd** Boat trip on the Beverley Barge Preservation Society's converted mud hopper "Sun" from Beverley Beck onto the Upper River Hull to Tophill Low Nature Reserve for a brief introductory talk before returning. Approximate time taken 7 hours. Requires 12 people to be viable. "Sun" has a small bow seating area, large saloon, small kitchen and disabled WC. For full details and booking form contact Peter Hopwood as soon as possible.

### JUNE

**Wed 3rd** You may take part in either or both of the following events: Morning Foss Walk 4 Easingwold to Coxwold about 6m. Meet in the village hall car park in Coxwold at 9.30 am Volunteer drivers will then drive to the start at Easingwold. Contact Bob Jowett. Afternoon

Private Visit to Newburgh Priory, Coxwold. We have permission to picnic in the grounds before a tour of the House at 2.15 pm. Park on the Coxwold to Crayke road near the lake (GR5417630) and be ready to enter the grounds in convoy at 1 pm, when the gates will be open for us. Entry £5.50 for group of 20 or more, otherwise £6. Names, please, to June Card before 26th May.

**Fri 5th** Evening country walk around Strensall with John Millett. Meet at 6.00 pm at the Ship Inn where you may if you wish book for an evening meal on return at about 7.30 pm. Contact John Millett.

**Sat 13th** Morning Himalayan Balsam Pull. Meet at 10 am on Yearsley Bridge at the junction of the Huntington Road, Haleys Terrace and Fossway. Bus routes 1, 5 and 13 or street parking nearby. Wear protective clothing, especially gloves. A hoe would be useful. Names, please, to June Card.

**Tues 16th** Evening History Walk around Easingwold led by Valerie Taylor. Meet before 6 pm under the Market Cross in the Market Square, where orders will be taken for a meal afterwards, if desired, at the George Hotel at about 7.45 pm. Nearby free parking is signposted. There is a maximum of 20 for this walk: please book with June Card before June 9th.

**Fri 26th and Sat 27th** An opportunity to walk the full Foss Walk on consecutive days or, if preferred, to walk sections of it. Travel to the Blue Bridge by car or bus for a 9.30 am start on the 15-mile walk to Farlington, with tea breaks at Huntington Church and the gravel heaps near Sheriff Hutton Bridge. There will be a meal at Farlington at the Blacksmiths Arms, where cars will have been left for the return journey. On Saturday, drive to Easingwold to leave cars for the journey home then drive back to Farlington to resume the walk. There will be morning coffee at the Dutch House, Crayke, and a lunch break near Pond Head. Names, please, to Bob Jowett, who has further details.

### JULY

**Thurs 2nd** Foss Walk 5, about 5m circular from Farlington. Meet at 9.30 am at the Blacksmiths Arms, Farlington, and walk to Whenby Church for coffee before returning for lunch to the Blacksmiths Arms. Contact Bob Jowett.

**Wed 8th** Boat Trip from Whitley Bridge on the Aire & Calder Navigation aboard the Yorkshire Waterways Museum's broad-beamed boat "Waterstart". Travel to Goole, around Goole port then back to the YWM for a visit and lunch before the return journey. Approximate time taken 7 hours. Requires 12 people to be viable. "Waterstart" has a small bow seating area, large saloon, small kitchen area and toilet. For full details and booking form contact Peter Hopwood.

**Thurs 16th** Litter Pick by boat and on foot jointly with Rotary Club of York Vikings. Meet at the footbridge opposite Morrisons on Foss Island Road, wearing protective clothing, at a time to be announced. Names, please, to Barry Thomas.

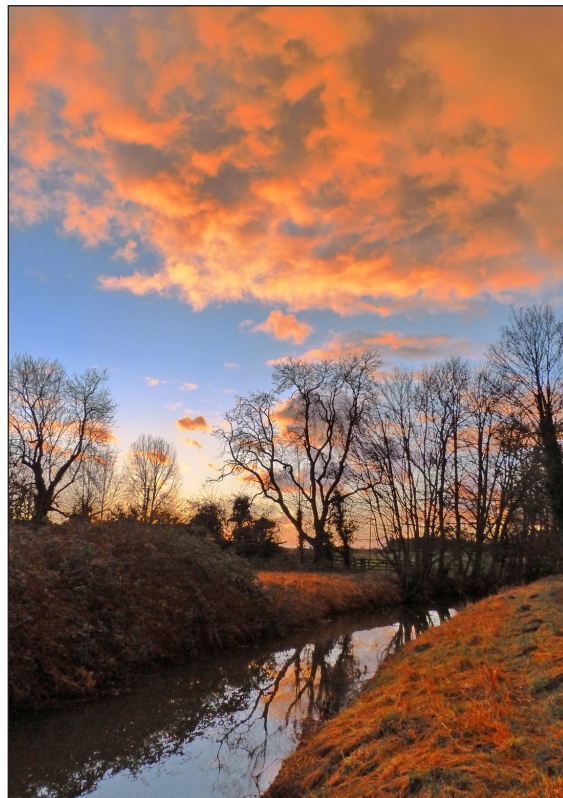


# It's Spring!

Our regular photographer Tony Ellis saw this blue tit (right) amongst branches, and a moorhen (below) nesting on the bank of the Foss



Member Tom Fothergill captured this dramatic sunset (right) on the Foss near the Tannery development.



Bob Jowett introduces the 2015 walking programme...



## Spring Walking

Left: Walks Leader Bob Jowett shows the walkers the route and above: approaching Launds Farm

On March 4, Walk 1 of 2015 took place. Seven walkers – one new member and two non-members – met at 9.30 am at the Dutch farm, near Crayke, where we had permission to park. Walking in warm, sunny weather with good visibility, our route took us up the road towards Crayke but before Crayke, where we turned

left to Launds Farm. After a few fields, we crossed the B1363 at Seaves Farm. We walked into Brandsby, crossed the road and walked to Beckfields farm. We joined the Foss Walk and walked south back to the Dutch House.

After an enjoyable morning walk, three walkers had a meal at the White Bear in Stillington as the Dutch House, still on a winter schedule, was closed.

## On the Foss

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## Vigilance, please ...

During February a suspected sewage spill was reported coming from Goland Dike and finding its way into the Foss, downstream from Towthorpe Bridge. Goland Dike is the stream which passes under the Towthorpe to Haxby road and follows along the hedgerow into the river.

We ask walkers in this area to be extra vigilant, look out for any similar occurrences and report them to the Environment Agency on tel 0800 80 70 60, who are aware of this incident (ref. 1322281). Or contact John Millett on 01904 491290.



The big York Springclean took place on a very wet and windy 28 March. Many of our usual litter pickers could not be there, but a group of eight people, some not members, took part.



## Cleaning up York

Council boatman Mark, did an excellent job. Seventeen bags of rubbish, a hubcap, a fishing rod and several bits of broken furniture, as well as a number of hypodermic syringes were collected. The boat went upstream almost as far as the

Iron Bridge and cleared a big floating island of rubbish behind the Denison Street flats.

Unfortunately at 12.30 we ran out of time, so the boat had to leave a short section uncleared below the Hungate flats near the nature reserve. On land, we cleared the nature reserve and all the way down to Castle Mills lock.

A hoe and rakes carried on the boat proved really useful in hooking rubbish – something to bear in mind for future occasions.

*Mark Gladwin*



Top left: many bags were filled; top right: one volunteer worked in the nature reserve; below: the boat performs a tricky manoeuvre

## The Chop!



Those of you who have walked along the river at Strensall will have noticed that some of the trees that have been growing out of the lock wall close to the 'Old Humpy' road bridge have been removed.

It was first thought that this was a programme to remove all of the trees whose roots are damaging the the lock wall. But it seems that the trees were removed on instructions from the City of York Council Bridge Officer, as they could damage the bridge, should the trees collapse under storm conditions.

It is hoped that the remainder of these trees will be cut back in the near future as the roots are displacing the masonry blocks of the lock walls, destroying an interesting industrial archaeological feature of historical worth.

*John Millett*

## YORK GATEWAY TO HISTORY

This project to create a York Archive is a spin-off from the York 800 celebrations, funded by a £1.8m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and by the City of York Council. The Archive is housed in purpose-built accommodation at York Explore and is open to the public.

Explore York Libraries and Archives are running free one-day workshops aimed at local community groups looking to manage and preserve their own collections. Are there any River Foss Society members with a general interest in records who would like to attend one of the workshops (Saturday 25th April, Thursday 9th July, Thursday 24th September, Saturday 24th October) and who would then be willing to lend a hand in preparing our own archives for deposit? We have in mind a day in the autumn when we will meet to sort, box and label our records.

If you are interested, please get in touch with June Card, tel: 01904 766196, e-mail: [june-card700@gmail.com](mailto:june-card700@gmail.com)

*June Card*

Don't Forget our website:

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