



On the Foss

Spring
2014

The River Foss Society Newsletter



These kingfishers were photographed by Mark Sessions at the bottom of a garden in Huntington Road, York during summer 2013.

Kingfishers have been seen flying quickly over the river in previous years, but in 2013 they settled on branches and fished.



Our Most Distant Member

Did you know that we have a member in Slovakia? John Skelton was a keen naturalist and River Foss supporter and Committee member before moving there in 1996. The 1997 AGM noted that his vigilance would be missed and Committee Meetings would be less riveting (and also shorter!). He has, however, maintained his membership and is now our most distant member.

John says that he is reminded of those happy days by a picture of a kingfisher on his wall in Slovakia. He tells a special story about a six week old kingfisher which was accidentally disturbed near the Castle Museum and flew into a car near the Foss Bridge.

It was here that it was rescued, photographed by John, and looked after by another RFS member before being returned in full health to the Foss five days later.

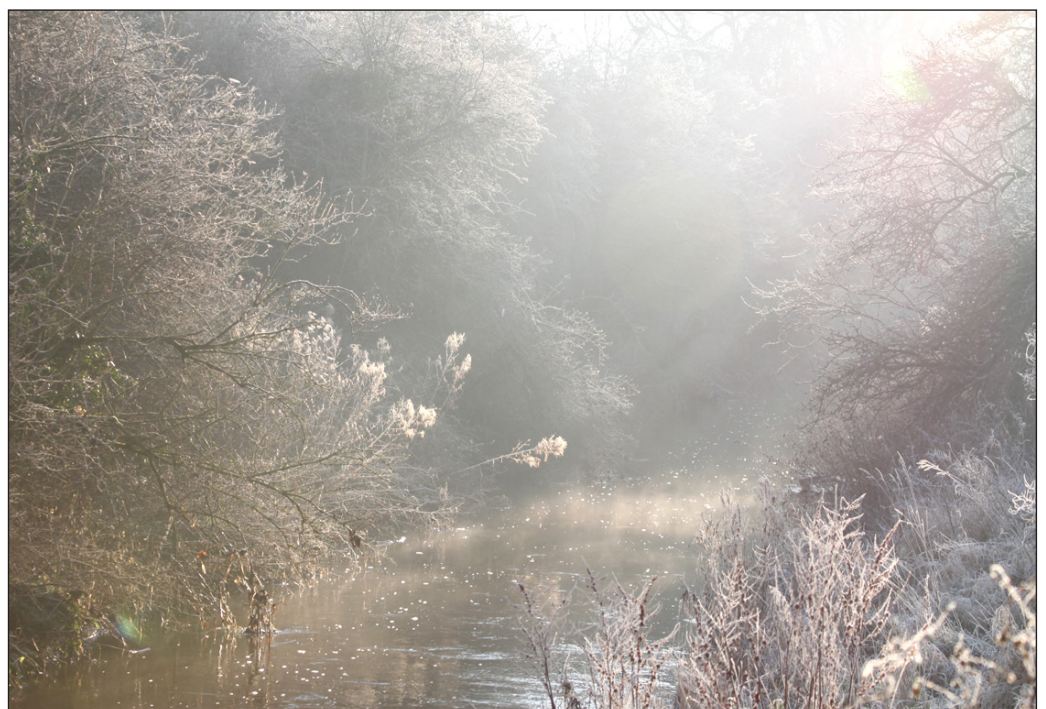
Kingfishers are always enchanting. As you see to the left, at least one member has been able to grab photographs of them this year!

Peter Hopwood

A Time of Beauty



Local photographer Tony Ellis caught these wonderful shots on the Foss during the winter. Enjoy more of his beautiful images of Foss wildlife on our back page..





Lots ahead!

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Always check the website for last minute alterations

APRIL

Wednesday 9 Open Meeting and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at 7 pm at Strensall & Towthorpe Village Hall. All welcome. Before the AGM Tim Ward will speak on Askham Bog Nature Reserve (a follow-up to last year's visit).

Saturday 12 City Centre riverbank and CYC boat Litter Pick. Meet at 9.30 am at the footbridge to the Nature Reserve on Foss Islands Road for about 2 hours' work, wearing suitable clothing and substantial footwear. Contact Peter Hopwood.

Saturday 26 Foss Walk 2 Yearsley to Coxwold. Distance 5m. Meet at 9.30 am in the free car park at Coxwold for lift to start at Yearsley. Meal in the Coxwold Tea Rooms after the walk. Contact Bob Jowett.

MAY

Friday 9 Foss Walk 3 Yearsley to the Dutch House, Mill Green. Distance about 5m. Meet at the Dutch House at 9.30 am to order lunch and for drive to start at Yearsley cross roads. Contact Bob Jowett.

Saturday 17 Boat Trip on the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society's 'New Horizons'. Max 10 people. 10 am start at Melbourne, boat to East Cottingham across the R. Derwent to the Ferry Boat Inn and back, approx. 7.5 hours. Suggested cost donation £15 per person. For more details and booking form contact Peter Hopwood. (See also Wed. 4th June.)

Thursday 22 Evening History Walk around Easingwold. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we have had to cancel this event, but we hope to be able to include it in next year's programme.

Friday 30 Following Mike Sherlock's talk at the Christmas Lunch, a day out on the Wensleydale Railway. Min no. of 12 required for group ticket from Leeming Bar to Leyburn and Redmire. Options include Market Day at Leyburn, a visit to Bolton Castle and a guided wildflower walk of about 5 miles. For further details and to book contact June Card before April 30th.

JUNE

Wednesday 4 Second boat trip on 'New Horizons'. See May 17 above for details.

Friday 6 & Saturday 7 An opportunity for walkers to attempt the complete Foss Walk in two consecutive days. A car will be available at about every 5 miles to offer refreshments and a lift for those who cannot complete the distance. Walk speed about 2 mph. It is not compulsory to do both days: you can walk either day or for part of route. Contact Bob Jowett.

Day 1: About 15 miles. Car or bus to start at Blue Bridge at 9.30 am and walk to Farlington Blacksmiths Arms, where a car will collect walkers. Refreshment points at Huntington Church and the gravel heaps near Sheriff Hutton Bridge.

Day 2: About 13 miles. By car for a 9.30 am start at Blacksmiths Arms, Farlington, for walk to Easingwold Market Sq., finishing about 5.30 pm. Refreshment points at Crayke and on the road at Black Fir Plantation.

Thursday 19 Upstream Himalayan Balsam & Litter Pick. We are hoping to recruit volunteers from the wider community for a major effort. Assemble at 9.30 am in the car park of the Flag and Whistle on the Huntington Road near the Link Road, wearing gloves, stout footwear and clothes to protect against stinging nettles. A hoe would be useful. A barbecue lunch may be ordered here before teams disperse to different stretches of the river. Contact June Card by Tuesday 17 June.

Wednesday 25 Foss Walk 4 Circular walk of about 5 miles via Husthwaite, starting from Coxwold car park at 9.30 am. Lunch afterwards in the Coxwold Tearooms. Contact Bob Jowett.

Sun 29 Walk along the Foss as part of the "York Curiouser" project. (See page 4). Meet at 11 am by the riverside upstream from Monk Bridge for a walk of about 1.5 hours to Blue Bridge. Contact June Card.

JULY

Thursday 3 City Centre Litter Pick jointly with Rotary Club of York Vikings. Volunteers required to clean up the river and river banks by boat and on foot. Meet at 2 pm at the footbridge to the Nature Reserve on Foss Islands Road wearing suitable clothing and footwear. Contact June Card by previous day.

Wednesday 9 Wildlife walk at Jugger Howe, Fylingdales Moor, with Tanya Eyre of the Hawk and Owl Trust, who spoke on her work at last year's AGM. Meet at 10 am for coffee and to select lunch at the Flask Inn in the layby on the Whitby to Scarborough Road, Grid Ref. 931007. This event is aimed at walkers as there is a very steep climb at the start which Tanya will take slowly. Once up the ground is fairly flat but muddy so boots are recommended with a change of footwear for the Inn. Min. 6, max. 30. Contact Bob Jowett.

Following the walk earlier in 2013 with Adrian Lovett crewing and Sue Day, the Horseboating Society chair, horse 'Bilbo Baggins' and narrowboat 'Elland', an opportunity arose and was taken on 17 October to travel on board a narrowboat with Adrian, Sue, horse 'Bilbo Baggins' again but this time pulling trip narrowboat 'Vixen'. The journey was from Brearley to Stubbins Wharf through Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge on the Rochdale Canal.

On both occasions the weather was kind and members were given an idea about what happened in the days when the River Foss was navigable from its junction with the River

Messing About in Boats – With Horses!



Above: Bilbo Baggins moves narrowboat 'Vixen' at a stately pace along the Rochdale Canal



On the bow, Adrian prepares to leave a lock Ouse upstream to Strensall and then through a double rise lock off the river and through a cut across to Sheriff Hutton Bridge (before the money ran out!).

Inevitably such events and some other boating related opportunities can only be organised at short notice. Please let me know if you are interested but feel that you are missing out.

Peter Hopwood

Autumn and Spring Walks

John Millett led walkers on 7 September as our usual leader Bob was ill. On a dry, sunny day, we had very good views of the White Horse as we approached Husthwaite. In spite of earlier rain the paths were surprisingly dry and mud free.

After the walk some of us enjoyed a well deserved lunch at The George, Easingwold.



September walkers



Spring lambs – a welcome sight

First Walk of 2014: Monday March 3rd. This year's walks started from Oulston. Six members joined this walk and chose well, as it was the warmest, sunniest day of the year by far – is

spring in the air? Skylarks and Yellowhammers were calling and the first sight for any of us, this year's lambs gambolling and skipping around in the sunshine.

After the walk we ended another perfect day with coffee, soup and sandwiches at The George, Easingwold.

River Foss members Anne Bednarski, Carol Carr and Bob Jowett took up the challenge of doing the entire Foss Walk in two days – Thursday and Friday 29 and 30 August. Setting off at the Blue Bridge,



Bob, Carol and Anne at the Blue Bridge

The Foss in Two Days!

York, they walked in hot, sunny weather, and eventually got to Farlington at the end of the first day.



Sadly, Friday's walk saw only Bob and Anne taking part, as Carol had been injured on the previous day. Starting at Farlington, they had to use some alternative routes as this part of the path is heavily overgrown near Marton Priory. A better track led to the elevated village of Crayke and then finally to Oulston. At this point, they added two miles (!) to their walk and visited the source of the river. With an unclear route and more overgrowth, the last stint into Easingwold proved challenging.

We offer our congratulations to these three hard working walkers who dealt with injury and difficult paths to complete this special walk.

Curious?

On Sunday 29 June, the River Foss Society is teaming up with contemporary art event York Curiouser to explore and re-interpret the familiar, yet often overlooked urban section of the river between Monk Bridge and Blue Bridge. York Curiouser, which runs from 14 June to 7 July, is dedicated to exploring forgotten corners of the city via “contemporary art interventions in colour, texture and word”. We hope that Matt Hawthorn, head of art at the University of York St John and one of Curiouser’s commissioned artists, will be able to share with us on 29 June his artistic take on the river. The short walk, which will also be open to non-RFS members, will be a chance to tell some stories about the history, ancient and modern, of this stretch of the river, as well as to view it through the eyes of a contemporary artist. The route includes a lot of steps and, sadly, is not suitable for wheelchair users. The rendezvous is at 11am on Sunday 29 June on the paved riverside area just upstream of Monk Bridge on Huntington Road. The walk will last about an hour and a half and will disperse at Blue Bridge. Please let June Card know if you would like to come. For more details of York Curiouser, see <http://www.yorkcuriouser.com/>

Mark Gladwin

The RFS’s financial year is the calendar year. Thanks to the one third of members who responded to the note in the Programme for 2014 and have already paid their subscriptions. The Committee will again recommend to the AGM that subscriptions remain unchanged (they have been the same since 2009!). Early payment keeps costs down and helps the cashflow. Rates are:

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

**Subscriptions
Please!**

Payment may be made direct to the RFS’s bank, HSBC 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 or telephone no 01904 768071. Your Membership Card will be sent as a receipt. Thank you.

Oops! In *On the Foss* Autumn 2013, page 1, we wrongly identified the baker of cakes as Hilary Kay. The master baker was of course our own Hilary Shepherd. Many apologies.

On the Foss

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Maureen Hume was joint Membership Secretary of the River Foss Society with her husband, John, in the mid 1990’s. Sadly, she died a few years later.

In October 2008 a tree and plaque (above) were planted in Maureen’s memory on the piece of land adjacent to the River Foss between Monk Bridge and Foss Bank — less than 100 metres from where they lived. Over the years the area has become overgrown and caused concern to the RFS. The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (an RFS member), who are believed to be owners of this piece of land, agreed to clear the area and this was done earlier this year. Our thanks go to them for an excellent job.

Peter Hopwood



Tony photographed these jewel-like Foss residents during the autumn

