



On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter
Autumn 08
www.riverfossociety.co.uk

Keep Watching...

Hi and welcome to this Autumn edition of the River Foss Society newsletter. I can't believe that summer is almost done and thoughts are turning to events at the end of the year!

The Festival of the Rivers in July was a really exciting day and offered a great opportunity to promote the work of the Society to the wider community. Thankfully the weather 'held' and the stall attracted quite some attention and conversation. Thanks to all those who helped out.

The river is in full flow at time of writing as a result of the extremely wet summer we've had. This highlights the importance of a healthy, flowing river and can I encourage all who care and show an interest to keep vigilant. The Foss is a vital and worthwhile natural resource and well worth looking after - there is always something new or interesting to see. To highlight this I recently saw a Woodpecker fly from the river, peck at the telegraph pole at the rear of my house and then disappear into the tall trees on the bank side.

The things you see – you just have to keep on watching.

Amanda Watterson, Editor



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Dates for your Diary

History of Foss Navigation

Tuesday 14th October 7pm at Strensall Village Hall

Tony Berry and Chris Dunn will be presenting their investigative work carried out on the history of the Foss Navigation. This includes details of the canal locks and bridges, with much of the work entailing Tony and Chris to be knee deep in mud and water!

River Foss Christmas Lunch

The Christmas Lunch has been booked for **Sunday, 7th December 2008 at 12.30 pm** in the Riverside Room at the Novotel, Fishergate. The cost will be £14.50 per person for three courses, mince pies and coffee. The lunch will be preceded at 11.15 am by an illustrated talk on "Birds to spot along the Foss". Payment and menu choices have to be made in advance: for further details and to book your place, please phone or e-mail June Card before the end of October.



River Wardens

Heavy rain in July and August has led to high water levels and some localised flooding along the Foss leaving some footpaths very muddy and slippery. In June we enjoyed an occasional warm day and whilst walking the river near the Brecks, Strensall, a fox was seen resting in the middle of the meadow. More surprisingly it was being mobbed by a gang of irate Magpies. The fox seemed unconcerned, only occasionally getting up to chase off a persistent bird.

At 5 pm on the 28th June a Barn Owl was seen hunting along the banks of the Foss between Towthorpe Bridge and Landing Lane, Haxby. Also seen were a mixed flock of Swallows, House Martins & Swifts, a Kestrel and a pair of Reed Buntings feeding their young. The Foss adjacent to the Sessions Nature reserve continues to be productive, four Kingfishers have fledged and although late in the season Chiffchaff continue to call and Heron sweep the river in search of their next tasty morsel.

River Wardens carry out an important work on reporting the condition of the footpaths and stiles, water quality, pollution by oil or littering.

The current wardens are:

Roy Pitchford:	Blue Bridge to Heworth Green
Adrian & Rowena Lovatt:	Heworth Green to Huntington Church
Will & Christine Durrant:	Sessions Nature Reserve to Huntington Church
Ruth & Alan Powell:	Towthorpe Bridge to Strensall Bridge
Peter Braithwaite:	Strensall Railway Bridge to Wallbutts Farm
John & Terry Millett:	Wallbutts Farm to Sheriff Hutton Cricket Ground

There is a vacancy for a warden to cover the walk, or part of the walk, from Huntington Church to Towthorpe Bridge. If anyone is interested in taking this on please get in touch with John Millett (01904) 491290 or email johnmillett1@talktalk.net

There are no strict rules and the walks can be done when it is convenient.



Food for Free Walk. Wednesday 16th July 08

On a rain free evening the Society went on a 'Food for Free' talk and walk along the Foss, starting at Huntington Church, and led by Stephen Whittaker of the City of York Council's Parks Department and Vicki Hadon from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

There were 25 members and visitors present including two children who were most enthusiastic. Armed with several labelled buckets, we collected young leaves from thirteen different plants, some we ate raw and some we cooked. Amongst those sampled were stinging nettles, Dock, Jack by the Hedge, Lime tree leaves, Hawthorn and Jews Ear.

Back at the table and mini gas stoves the leaves were washed and prepared by the group. We ate raw Dandelion, Cress, Lime leaves and also Garlic and Horseradish roots.

The Stinging Nettles and Dock leaves were boiled and put on plates to sample. They were quite edible. The Jews Ear fungus –often found on Elderberry trees – was fried and proved to be very tasty.

The culinary activities were finished by 8.30pm and, as appetites had not been extinguished by the gastronomic delights of the evening, several members retired to the Blacksmith's Arms in Huntington for chips and other excellent fare.



Foss Barrier Visit

On the 6th August 21 members visited the Foss Flood Barrier. The visit was arranged for those members who missed out or were unable to attend the previous visit. Richard Boaz of the Environment Agency showed the group around the site and explained in detail how the barrier works. The visit coincided with heavy rainfall and flash flooding, which raised the river level and necessitated Richard having to dash off to check that emergency pumping systems were able to operate.

The visit proved to be very informative and the group retired to the Cherry Tree restaurant to enjoy an excellent supper.



2008 Subscription Rates

Many thanks top those members who have already paid their subscriptions. For those who have not yet paid their subscription or wish to join the rates for 2008 are :-

Family	£ 9.00	
Individual	£ 6.00	
Concessions	£ 4.00	
Schools and Societies	£15.00	Parish and Town Councils £15.00
Commercial Organisations	£25.00	

Please make payment by cheque made out to "RIVER FOSS SOCIETY" by post to the Membership Secretary, Peter Hopwood, 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU. Thank you. Any queries to tel. no. 01904 768071.

Acheological Survey of the River



David Andrews from English Heritage, York very kindly assisting with the surveys.

In anticipation of Tony Berry's talk on the 14th October we asked him to write a brief note on his vital work....

During the past year we have been busy completing a survey on the River Foss at New Bridge and lock at Strensall.

Our intentions were to investigate and record the surviving archaeological features and structures associated with the 'rural' part of the Foss navigation (Yearsley to Sheriff Hutton Bridge). We also looked at how it has been used since its closure in the latter part of the 19th century.

Finally we intend to examine the wider archaeological landscape of its immediate hinterland.

As well as the survey, we are gradually compiling documentary material so if members have any old photographs, drawings or paintings of the navigation, please contact us as we would love to see them.



Foss society members recording the former lock keeper's cottage at New Earswick: Left to right Christopher Dunn, Will Durrant and Tony Berry.

Who are we...?

The River Foss Society was set up in the 1970's to care for the river.

For more information about the Society or becoming a member please contact our Membership Secretary.

Peter Hopwood chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk or check out the Society's web at:

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

