



On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter

Autumn 09

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

Hi There...

Welcome to this edition of the River Foss Newsletter, we hope that you find it informative. There is a lot to get through with some great features and photos. Can I highlight the Society's Open Meeting on the 13th in October. We are really privileged to have Professor Sir John Lawton—the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental pollution presenting "Climate Change: Its Impact on Flora & Fauna". Don't miss out.

Finally I have heard reports of a fisherman catching a 4lb 4oz Chub near Earswick - a sure sign of the health of the river. So please keep on watching this valuable resource.

Amanda Watterson

Food for Free Walk. Wednesday 3rd June 09

A 30 strong group of St Thomas' Scouts, Cub Scouts and parents joined members of the RFS to forage along the Foss, led by Stephen Whittaker, the City of York Council's Senior Ranger. Edible plants were collected and brought back to the Scout Hall where, after washing our hands with scrunched up horse chestnut leaves, we ate a salad of Lime leaves, Jack-by-the-Hedge, Elder flowers, Lady's Smock and Wild Garlic. This was followed by cooked Stinging Nettles, Woodavon and Himalayan Balsam.



OK! Lady Moth

A late Evening Visit to Doug Heald's Garden on the Foss to Look at Moths.

This was a fascinating outing to a garden, within the sound of the York Minster bells, bounded by the Foss on two sides. We saw the remnants of Yearsley Lock, built in the 18th century, as part of the canalisation of the river. After refreshments the evening light was fading and it was time to switch on the mercury vapour lamp to attract moths. Bats were already circulating above our heads in anticipation of a moth feast!

David Chesmore of York University gave us an excellent introduction to more than 20 species of moth on an evening which was quite cool but at least dry!

Walking the River - Huntington

A Gentle Stroll Along the Foss – Sunday 28th June

On a sunny summer Sunday afternoon we met to walk the Foss from Huntington Church to the Earswick pedestrian bridge and back. On returning we enjoyed Strawberries and Cream in June's garden and were shown around the gardens of her neighbours, Erica Town, Mike and Penny Sherlock and Tom and Jan Claxton.



Walking The Foss Walk 2009

Wednesday 20th May, Strensall to Farlington.

Five members took part in this walk following the Foss and later taking the shorter and more direct path from Cornborough Farm to Farlington. We enjoyed a brilliant, warm, sunny day and had a picnic lunch sitting on the bridge wall over the river at Foss House. Whilst having lunch a fox was seen making its way casually over a nearby meadow. This was a very enjoyable walk.

Tuesday 9th June, Farlington to Crayke

A recce of this walk found the footpath between Farlington and Marton Priory Farm in a very rough state. (Our Footpaths Officer, Pat Rattenbury will be taking this up with the Council.) We therefore started the walk proper at Harrymans Lane. It was a pretty walk that included a pleasant coffee stop at Mill Green Farm Shop.

Thursday 9th July, Crayke via Pond Head to Brandsby.

We chose a brilliant warm sunny day for this walk. During the morning we saw and heard numerous Skylarks, Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps. Arriving at Pond Head reservoir we stopped for lunch and saw a flock of about thirty Mallards, a single Swan with two young, a pair of Grey Wagtails and several species of Dragonfly. After lunch we continued via the source of the Foss to Yearsley village then walked down the hill via Peel Wood to Brandsby. It was a really pleasant walk.

Wednesday 22nd July, Pond Head to Husthwaite via Coxwold.

Six members attended the walk. We started from the source of the Foss and walked towards Coxwold via Low Lion farm where we joined a farm track known as Colley Broach Road. From the track we had splendid views of Byland Abbey and the village of Wass nestling at the base of the hills. After a picnic lunch, we walked into Coxwold and past the long abandoned railway track with its former station and signal box, a reminder that these isolated villages were once linked to the national rail network. From Coxwold we were faced with the long climb up Beacon Bank Hill towards Husthwaite where we were reunited with our cars. It was a most enjoyable walk and we managed to dodge the only shower of the day by sheltering beside a farm trailer.

The River Foss Open Meeting

"Climate Change: its Impact on Flora and Fauna"

A Presentation by Professor Sir John Lawton, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution.
Tuesday 13th October at 7pm Village Hall Strensall

The Society Christmas Lunch 2009

The Society will be holding its Christmas Lunch on Sunday the 6th December at the Novotel, Fishergate, York. Our President Professor Alastair Fitter will give an illustrated talk from 11.15am on "Early Influences on Darwin: The Beagle Years" to mark the centenary year of Darwin's birth. This will be followed by lunch at 12.30 in the River Room. 3 courses plus coffee and mince pies for £14.95 per head. Orders and payment before the end of October, please, with menus available at the open meeting and on request from June.



The Tannery Site, Strensall

Demolition and levelling work has recently been carried out on this site. The River Foss Society has expressed its concerns over the risk of the River being contaminated, the state of the public footpath, which is part of the Foss Way, between the River and the Tannery site and the need to preserve the historic John Carr Bridge.

As a result, Contaminated Land Officers from the Environment Agency and the City of York Council are visiting the site to remind the owners about the risks posed by the land and to find out how their work will minimise them.



An old Foss Walk signpost propping up a derelict barn.



Pond Head Reservoir



At the source of the Foss

A Trip Down The River on Syntan

Syntan originally carried cocoa beans for Rowntrees from the docks in Hull to the wharf. For 20 years she was laid up near Doncaster Power station. She'd been cannibalised for parts, vandalised and allowed to decay. She was rescued by members of the Beverley Barge Preservation Society in 1999 and restored to her former glory.

On July 16th Syntan retraced her old route for the River Foss Society. Three varying but enjoyable trips took place between King's Staith on the River Ouse and the old Rowntree Wharf on the River Foss. The trips travelled under Blue Bridge and the Foss Barrier, through the Foss Basin and Castle Mills Lock, past the Merchant Adventurers Hall, turning at Rowntree Wharf, stopping behind the Telephone Exchange and later turning in the Foss Basin.

The weather started pleasantly but, during the evening, changed to heavier and heavier rain. The result of these downpours resulted, two days later, in the Syntan being marooned at King's Staith.

With approval of the City of York Council the lock was operated by trained members of the Inland Waterways Association with whom the RFS is pleased to co-operate.



Another Otter Casualty.

Will and Christine Durrant reported yet another otter casualty outside Lock Cottage, Earswick. A dog walker found an otter on the grass verge opposite the cottage, he assumed it was dead and therefore he didn't think to report it to anyone. Later in the day the same dog walker noticed the otter was still alive and at last notified the RSPCA. The inspector took the otter to the Battleflats Vets for medical care, but unfortunately it died under anaesthetic. They said it was a male otter about two years old and it had a broken shoulder and fluid on the lungs. Will and Christine having seen the otter before it was taken away said it was beautiful animal and they were very upset that again another casualty had happened.

As previously recommended in the Newsletter if you do find a dead or injured otter, please report it to Will Durrant immediately, tel 640198. If it is injured and urgent attention might help in saving the animal. If it is dead a post-mortem will add to our knowledge of otters.

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



June Card - Secretary
The River Foss Society
C/O Stable Mews, The Old Village
Huntington York YO32 9RA



junecard@waitrose.com



01904 766196