



On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter
Spring 2010

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

Welcome....

At time of writing it seems that Spring has finally 'sprung'... there is the sign of new growth and the nights beginning to lighten up. I hope that you find this newsletter informative and can I encourage you to get involved in all the ongoing work.

New Years Honours were bestowed on Alastair Fitter. We congratulate him on his CBE and thank him for his interest and support as our President. His excellent lecture which preceded the last Christmas Lunch displayed many of the qualities which must have brought him to the notice of the Queen!

Amanda Watterson — Editor

AGM 2010

The Society will be holding its AGM and open meeting on Tuesday the 13th April from 7pm at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall. The guest speaker will be Anneliese Emmans Dean, a poet, wildlife photographer and performer, who will be presenting a show in celebration of insects that live near rivers called 'The Big Buzz'.

All are warmly invited to attend and we ask for a £2 payment to cover costs and to provide coffee and biscuits on the evening.



Pat Rattenbury

We were sorry to hear that Pat Rattenbury died unexpectedly, only a couple of weeks after he attended the River Foss Society Committee meeting on 23 November, 2009. Pat was essential to the Society in many ways, in particular he researched the walks along the River Foss and, until recently, led most of them himself. Fortunately he has left detailed notes for us to use to continue these walks. We send our condolences to his family. We plan to remember his contributions to the River Foss Society in appropriate ways.



On Friday December 18, 2009 "a thanksgiving for a quietly remarkable life" at the Haxby and Wiggington Methodist Church was well attended with family, friends and members of the River Foss Society. We all learnt something of the remarkable life of Pat Rattenbury starting in Muswell Hill, London, moving to seemingly countless places around the world and ending in Haxby. The Society was unaware of the diverse interests of this "quiet" man amongst us but we could see why he was an invaluable member of the Committee and will be sorely missed.

If you haven't already seen the February issue of 'The Yorkshire Dalesman', try to get hold of a copy. The article, 'The Keepers of the Foss' by journalist Helen Johnson, is a sympathetic account of the history, aims and activities of the River Foss Society and has led to enquiries from as far afield as Barnard Castle, Derby and Ross on Wye.

Just a quick reminder of the cold beauty of the past winter.

This photograph of John Carr Bridge over the Foss is by Peter Braithwaite.



The former lock keeper's cottage at New Earswick, a listed building, and the footpath beside it, part of the Foss Walk, were in danger of falling into the river as the bank collapsed. Residents Will and Christine Durrant, who normally see Kingfishers from their kitchen window have been looking on heavy machinery for the last few weeks. Pile driving was out of the question as there was not enough space to bring in the equipment and in any case, the vibration would probably have shattered the cottage. Instead a gabion wall has been built by stacking up metal cages filled with rocks. The work, carried out by the City of York Council's Brian Hebditch and his team, is expected to be finished by the end of March.



Saturday 27 March — Litter Pick

We will be holding a litter pick in response to letters from the children of Yearsley Grove Primary School. Volunteers needed, please, to meet at 10am opposite the Yearsley Grove pub on Huntington Road. Could you let June know in advance (tel 766196 or email junecard@waitrose.com) if you are planning on attending.

Tuesday 13 April — River Foss Society AGM

7pm at the Strensall and Towthorpe Village Hall. The meeting is open to all. The Big Buzz— a show in celebration of the insects that live near rivers presented by Anneliese Dean. Admission £2 including coffee & biscuits. The village hall is easily accessible from the No. 5 bus

Wednesday 28 April — Visit to the Session's Nature Reserve

This visit to one of York's best kept secrets will be led by warden Will Durrant. Meet in the New Earswick Folk Hall car park at 10am.

Saturday 15 May — Foss Walk1: Sheriff Hutton Bridge to Stillington 10 am

We aim to walk the whole length of this long distance footpath annually and this year we have broken it down into easy sections, each of about 5 miles. We begin on Saturday 15th May at 10am with the stretch from Sheriff Hutton Bridge to Stillington. Meet in the layby on the side of the road signposted Stillington just off the Strensall—Sheriff Hutton Road near the Cricket Club GR 631646. Please phone Bob Jowett in advance (tel 764702) if you are coming so that he can arrange transport back to the starting point.

Tuesday 25 May — Bird Walk on Strensall Common lead by John Millett

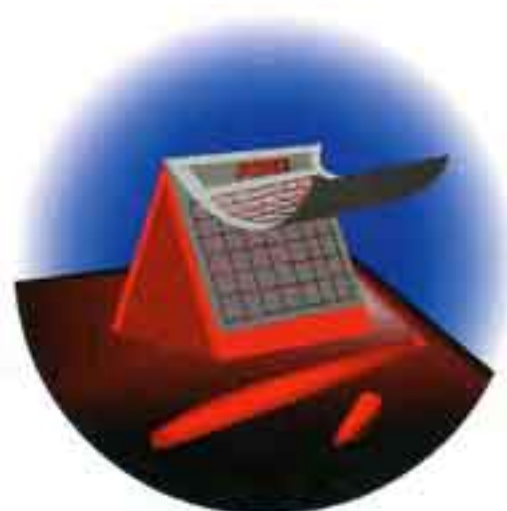
The walk starts at 6.30pm. Meet at the car park immediately on the right after crossing the first cattle grid on the Strensall—Flaxton Road coming from the York direction GR648613 The walk will be followed by a fish and chip supper at Thompson's Restaurant on the Malton Road A64.

Thursday 10 June — Joint Walk and Social Evening with Friends of New Walk.

Meet at 6.30pm at St George's Field car park for a riverside round walk of about 1.5 miles followed by a get together in a local pub. Please let June know (tel 766196 or email junecard@waitrose.com) by Monday 7th June if you are coming.

Wednesday 23 June — Foss Walk2: Marton Abbey to Newburgh Priory

A picnic for walkers and non walkers followed by an afternoon visit to the Priory and its grounds. Walkers meet at Oulston village GR546745 at 10am, having notified Bob in advance (see above). Non walkers meet them at 12.30pm near the Priory in the layby next to the lake on the Oulston to Coxwold Road or, if full, on the verge of the farm track just beyond to the left. Bring your own picnic lunch.



Subscription Rates

It is that time when we ask you to renew your membership of the Society. The Committee will recommend to the AGM that the current subscription rates remain the same -

Family	£12.00
Individual	£ 8.00
Concessions (under 18, over 60)	£ 6.00
Schools and Societies	£18.00
Parish and Town Councils	£18.00
Commercial Organisations	£25.00

Please make payment by cheque made out to "RIVER FOSS SOCIETY" either by post to the Membership Secretary, Peter Hopwood, 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU or at the AGM when cash will also be accepted. Alternately please make payment direct to the River Foss Society's bank account—HSBC Account No: 51349538, Sort Code 40-47-31. If using the latter please advise the Treasurer or Membership Secretary separately. Thank you in anticipation. Your Membership Card will be sent as a receipt. Any queries to the Membership Secretary tel. no. 01904 768071, e mail chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk

Please try and encourage others to take out membership and join us.

River Watch

Heavy snowfall and rain has reduced the footpaths along the Foss to a quagmire in places and very muddy in other areas. However the brave souls who have walked the river have reported seeing a good choice of wildlife including seven Goosander seen near Huntington in late December.

Later, Goosander were reported at Towthorpe possibly the same birds. Snipe have also been seen near Earswick. Meanwhile the resident Kingfisher does not appear to be put off by the cold weather and has been seen frequently flying along the river near Huntington church. Three Roe Deer were seen on Strensall Common and also near the Foss at East Lilling House Farm.



Snipe photographed on Christmas Day from Lock Cottage, New Earswick



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