



# On the Foss

The River Foss Society Newsletter

Spring  
2013

## A Time of Beauty

Although this has been a cold and dreary winter, photographer Tony Ellis has still found images of great beauty for us to enjoy.



Water voles are one of many species seen on the Foss. This one is tucking into a snack.



Tony captured this wonderful shot of a jewel-like insect - almost camouflaged - on one of his daily walks.



Saturday October 27th saw our last litter pick of 2012. Two groups of volunteers, including Keith Hyman, York's Lord Mayor (left), worked through a very cold morning with sleet, rain and sun! Workers on the boat and the bank found it a worthwhile and almost enjoyable experience! Our efforts are certainly appreciated by many, not only at City of York Council but also by the general public. More litter picks are planned for 2013. (See inside).



On Sunday 3rd September Chris Dunn and Tony Berry, our Foss Navigation experts, led a circular guided walk around Stensall for 33 members of the York Civic Trust. The walk went through the village to New Bridge ('Old Humpy'), above, before returning up the footpath to the upper lock opposite the old tannery. The walk finished at the Ship Inn. Chris and Tony will be leading an archaeological walk around Stensall for us on 11 April. (See inside.)



## Lots to do ...

Details of contacts are listed below.

### APRIL

**Wednesday 10th** An archaeological walk around Strensall with Tony Berry and Chris Dunn. Meet at 10.00 am at the Ship Inn, lunch afterwards if desired. Contact Bob Jowett (below).

**Thursday 11th** Additional walk. A chance to walk with the Horseboating Society and Adrian Lovett along a stretch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal for 4-5 miles. For further details contact Peter Hopwood.

**Wednesday 17th** Open Meeting at 7.00 pm at Strensall & Towthorpe Village hall. Tanya Ayre will speak on "Managing the Fylingdales Moor - The Hawk and Owl Trust's Perspective", followed by the Annual General Meeting. All welcome.

**Saturday 27th** Dr. Neil Moran will conduct a historical walking tour for us around York. Meet at 10.00 am outside 'Explore' (York Central Library). Numbers limited and pre-booking essential. Contact Bob Jowett before Saturday 20th.

### MAY

**Thursday 9th** Circular walk of 4 to 5 miles in the vicinity of the Derwent Flood Barrier near Barmby on the Marsh. Meet at 10.00 am at the car park at the Barrier. Map ref. OS 291 GR682 287. Contact Bob Jowett.

**Saturday 18th** Boat Trip of about 2½ hours and picnic lunch (tea and coffee provided) on the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society's narrowboat "New Horizons". Suggested cost £8 per person. Minimum of 10 required for an 11.00 am start and maximum of 12 each for two starts at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm, so pre-booking essential. For more details and a booking form e-mail Peter Hopwood (see below) or send a stamped, addressed envelope to 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU.

### JUNE

**Tuesday 4th** Evening visit to Askham Bog Nature Reserve led by our President, Professor Alastair

Fitter. Meet at 6.00 pm at the Reserve car park just off the A1036 near Copmanthorpe. If you are interested in a pub meal afterwards, contact June Card (below) by Saturday June 1st.

**Saturday 15th** Walk from Sheriff Hutton Bridge to Stillington - about 5 miles. Meet at 10.00 am in the lay-by on left just before junction with Main Street if you are coming from the Sheriff Hutton/Farlington direction. Possibility of Fish and Chips or pub lunch afterwards. Contact Bob Jowett.

**Friday 21st** A river maintenance morning. Volunteers needed for either a Litter or a Himalayan Balsam Pick, according to conditions. Meet at 10.00 am in the car park of All Saints Church, Huntington. Pub lunch afterwards if desired. Contact June Card.

### JULY

**Tuesday 2nd** Walk from Yearsley crossroads to Coxwold - about 5 miles. Meet at 10.00 am in the car park at the Village Hall, Coxwold. Contact Bob Jowett. Followed by:

12.45 pm Lunch at the Coxwold Tea Rooms, followed by

2.30 pm private visit to Shandy Hall, Coxwold. Cost £6 per person.

You don't have to do the walk to enjoy the lunch and/or the visit! To book lunch and visit to Shandy Hall, contact June Card by Saturday June 29th.

### CONTACT DETAILS

Peter Hopwood Tel. 01904 768071,  
e-mail: chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk.

Bob Jowett Tel. 01904 764702,  
e-mail: bob.jowett1@btopenworld.com

June Card Tel. 01904 766196,  
e-mail: junecard700@gmail.com

Always check the website for last minute alterations

You  
Have a  
Vote!

Don't Forget our Open Meeting and AGM on Wednesday April 17 at Strensall & Towthorpe Village Hall. This the best way for members to take part in the running of the Society. Please come and tell us what you think!

There will also be a talk by Tanya Ayre titled "Managing the Fylingdales Moor - The Hawk and Owl Trust's Perspective".

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## Autumn Walks

Our walk on 14 September started at Marton Church, after 11 walkers were ferried from the parking lot of the Dutch House restaurant at Mill Green. We had a warm and dry day, with a strong wind.

After a quick look around the church, we walked a little way on the Stillington Road and turned right along Harryfield Lane. We passed the site of Marton Abbey (Priory), then crossed the road into Marton Park. We went towards Crayke but turned right onto the permissive path past the sewage works towards Mill Green. We crossed the river Foss and then followed it to the Dutch house.

An excellent meal was provided by the Dutch House, whom we thank for allowing us to park. Thanks also to Marjorie Burton, John Nicholson and John Millett for driving us to and fro.

*Bob Jowett*



*Setting off at Marton Church*

Fourteen walkers met in Sheriff Hutton on 6 October for the last walk of 2012. The weather was warm and sunny with little wind and excellent visibility.

We found some paths ploughed over, so with no visible way, we had to cross three large fields to find direction arrows. The recent rain had also left many paths very muddy. Part of our walk followed the Centenary



*A spare boot lace comes in handy!*

Way, leading to Stittenham Wood, through the wood, into the pretty village of High Stittenham.

A very friendly dog decided to walk with us, showing no sign of turning back. Two horse riders knew the dog and feared that he might not know the way back. Approaching Mowthorpe wood, we found a sheep caught in a wire fence. We managed to free it, keeping the dog safe on a 'lead' - a spare boot lace. After turning south, we released our new friend, who led us through Stittenham Wood. Two of us followed the dog, the remainder taking the lower path to avoid a steep climb.

Starting our return loop after delivering the dog, we met his grateful owner, who insisted on running us back to Sheriff Hutton. We were running late, so took his kind offer.

After a good, if challenging walk, nine of us enjoyed a well earned excellent meal at the Highwayman in Sheriff Hutton.

*Bob Jowett*

On 14 October, 2012 a two-phase scheme to plant wildflowers on the Foss bank at Willow Bank in New Earswick was started by a group of residents as part of the Good Life Initiative. This was supported by Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust and New Earswick Sharing Together (NEST) and funded by the New Earswick Parish Council. It is planned to continue the project in the near future with meadow wildflower planting, but this has still to be confirmed.

A month later, on 17 November, the Good Life and New Earswick residents planted copse trees from the Woodland Trust's Jubilee Woods project on Willow Bank green. The group was joined by Cllr Keith Hyman, Lord Mayor of York, and planted 420 trees, including hawthorn, hazel, silver birch, rowan, cherry and dogwood. A Royal Oak sapling from one of the Queen's estates was planted by The Lord Mayor. This project was also supported by Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust and The Conservation Volunteers.

## Digging In



*Wildflower planters (above) and below, the tree planting group joined by the Lord Mayor, Keith Hyman - at the left.*

In September 2012, Will Durrant found another dead otter on the roadside just across from Lock Cottage.

Three days before, Will had informed the Joseph Rowntree Trust that the otter fence, installed to protect the colony of otters on the Foss, had been vandalised. When the river floods, the otters cross the road to reach the pond in the Nature Reserve, some being killed.

This otter, a young female, measured



## Otters at Risk

an impressive 38 inches (97 cm) nose to tail. Will had to bury her, as the Environmental Agency's body store for research animals is full. Sadly, this is at least the seventh otter to be killed on this road in the past five years.

Also in September, birdwatcher Peter Richmond found another dead otter, killed on the ring road north of New Earswick. Sex or age of this animal could not be determined, as it was too decomposed.

## Subscriptions Please

The Society's financial year is the calendar year and therefore payment of subscriptions will be appreciated. Up to and including the Annual General Meeting the 2012 rates apply:

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

Please make payment by cheque made out to the "RIVER FOSS SOCIETY" and send it to the Membership Secretary, 147 York Road, Haxby, York YO32 3EU. Alternatively please make payment direct to the Society's bank account: HSBC account no. 51349538, sort code 40-47-31, please put your name in the reference box. Any queries to: Tel. no. 01904 768071, e-mail: [chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:chrisandpete@haxby147.fsnet.co.uk).

Your Membership Card will be sent as a receipt.

## Christmas Cheer

Our 2012 Christmas lunch was held at Novotel on 2 December. A good crowd attended, and enjoyed the beautifully presented Christmas fare.

Before the lunch, member Michael Turvey gave a fascinating talk about the Mills of Stillington, all powered by the Foss. With many interesting photos, some from village archives, Michael told us about the standing Stillington Mill, now converted to a residence. The mill wheel can be seen in a new extension.

Three other mills existed in or near the village. One stands half a mile up the Foss from Stillington and is used as storage. Two other mills, both connected with monasteries, are known to have existed at Marton, and at Moxby.

We thank Michael for sharing his knowledge of this piece of Foss history. And we thank Novotel for another lovely meal.

## Guarding the Coffers

The Society's hard working Treasurer, Val Hill, has decided to stand down from this position after the April AGM. We thank her for her 3 years of service in doing what is an essential and skilled job for our group. Luckily, the Committee found a volunteer to step into the breach following Val's departure and co-opted Hilary Shepherd to be the new Treasurer.

Hilary and her husband have lived in Huntington for just over forty years, having lived in the south, north, west and east of York. Now a grandmother, she has enjoyed walking the banks of the Foss, alone, or with family members and/or dogs.

Hilary worked with primary school children before retirement and now enjoys walking, reading, gardening and knitting. She will be standing for formal election as Treasurer at the AGM in April.

## Let's Party!

Just so you can get this in your diaries - our 40th birthday is this year, and we're having an evening party on 23

July at the New Earswick Folk Hall. There will be a buffet supper, a bar and 'Buzzing by the River' - an entertainment by Anneliese Emmans Dean.

Tickets - £10 per person - will be available at the Open Meeting and AGM on 17 April, or from Hilary Shepherd at 7 Mill Hill Drive, Huntington, York YO32 9PU. If you want Hilary to send your tickets, please send a cheque (made out to River Foss Society) with an s.a.e. Pre-paid tickets can also be collected at the door. However, please note that tickets cannot be bought at the door.

See you there!



Don't Forget our website:

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