



A New Adventure on “Waterstart”

After boarding Yorkshire Waterways Museum’s wide-beam “Waterstart”, we cruised upstream along the River Calder, then entered the Aire and Calder Navigation (canal). We went through three electrically controlled locks before disembarking at the two famous Aqueducts at Stanley Ferry.



“Waterstart” leaving Birkwood Lock on the A&C Navigation

On 22 June, 11 members joined Jon Horsfall, the Canal & River Trust’s N E Regional Manager, and two colleagues at the junction of the Rivers Aire and Calder on the edge of Castleford. The C&RT, a Charity with some secure funding until 2027, succeeded British Waterways. It shares responsibility with the Environment Agency for managing most inland waterways. This does not include the River Foss, which has the City of York Council as its Navigation Authority.



Steve shows us around the workshop

Most of us enjoyed a quick lunch at the Ferry Boat Inn before visiting one of C&RT’s two remaining Workshops which make lock gates. In the yard we saw the wood, generally British oak, which is used; its size (and cost!) are very impressive. The new replacement gates, made to be installed during the winter closures, are being kept damp in the yard.

In the Workshops Steven Brunt, Workshop Supervisor, explained that each gate is made individually because every lock – built some 150/200 years ago – is differently sized. Steve was an excellent guide, patiently answering many questions. He is also the man who has to go to each lock and measure up for the replacement gates!

Our thanks go to the “Waterstart” crew of Patch and Keith (once again) and particularly Steve who made the Workshop visit so interesting. Thanks also go to those at the YWM and the C&RT who helped arrange the day.

Peter Hopwood

Birds on Benefits



Social housing in the shape of a nesting box, within five metres of a food bank (or feeding station) – those nuthatches really had it good! The restoration of Jon’s Walk at New Earswick to maximise its attraction for wildlife is one of the projects undertaken by CAN, short for Community Action for Nature. As well as providing nest boxes, CAN has improved the footpath, managed the

vegetation and planted bluebells. A group of RFS Members, led along the Walk by Member Will Durrant, one of the Founders of CAN, was impressed by what had been already achieved. As we continued into the New Earswick Nature Reserve the heavens opened but there was a magic in the darkening green stillness, broken only by the patter of rain on the leaves of the trees, some rare, surrounding the lake. Thank you, Will.

June Card

Will Durrant’s photo shows a thriving nuthatch



Into Autumn ...

OCTOBER

Thursday 6th Day Walk 7. Circular Walk of about 5 m from Farlington via Whenby. Meet at 9.30 am in the car park of the Blacksmith's Arms, Farlington. Contact Bob Jowett.

Wednesday 12th "A Year on the River Foss", a presentation about their special project by a group from the York Photographic Society. Starting at 7 pm at the Strensall & Towthorpe Village Hall, this is an Open Meeting to which non-members are warmly welcome. This will also be an opportunity to reserve places for the Litter Pick, the visit to the Archives and the Christmas Lunch (see below).

Saturday 15th Litter pick of about 2 hours on foot and by boat. Meet at 9.30 am at the footbridge opposite Morrisons on Foss Islands Road wearing protective clothing. Contact Barry Thomas, who would find it very helpful to have names in advance.

Monday 17th 6.15 to 7.45 pm, a visit to the City of York Archives, where our own archives are now stored. There is a charge of £3 each and a group maximum of 16. If oversubscribed, an extra visit can be arranged for a week later. Please book before October 12th or at the Open Meeting. Contact June Card.

DECEMBER

Sunday 4th Our Christmas Lunch will take place at 12.30 pm at the Novotel, Fishergate, at a cost of £20.95 per head including free parking but excluding drinks and tips. The lunch will be preceded at 11.15 am by a presentation by RFS Member John Shepherd entitled "My View - Life after Retirement". Please arrive in time to order and pay for drinks at the bar before the start of the presentation. Payment and menu choices are required by Friday November 4th. Book at the Open Meeting or contact June Card.

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A thrilling evening started by meeting Peter Sanderson, Minster Ringing Master, who led our visit. The Minster's delightful carillon could be heard playing a variety of tunes from outside and as we entered the splendour of this magnificent cathedral. Having viewed the Bellfounders' window from inside, we slowly ascended the circular staircase of 100 steps to the ringing chamber. On a rainy/drizzly evening, our view to the outside was not so good, but what a bird's eye view we had down into the nave!

The bells rang out



This huge weight helps to ring Great Peter

Before the bell ringers arrived, we heard another round of tunes on the carillon, and saw its large, wooden 'piano' keys and the practice keyboard, played by a player wearing headphones.

The bell ringers, including RFS members Robert and Gail Cater, then demonstrated bell ringing; a brief description of individual bells was followed by a short demonstration of ringing. We also saw books of bell ringing patterns.

Picking up ear defenders on the way, the party, in two halves, climbed further up the tower to see the bells turning over as they were being rung. Descending from the south west tower, we crossed the parapet to see the clock bells and Great Peter in the north-west tower. We saw, heard and **felt** Great Peter - 10¾ tons - in action. Once the largest bell in the country, Great Peter's sound waves reverberate like harmonics.

Today, the bell chimes are operated from below by a satellite radio clock. The sound of the Minster Bells is lovely, and on a good day they can be heard as far as Huntington. Seeing and hearing them close up was one of those not-to-be missed experiences. Thanks to Robert and Gail for suggesting such a memorable outing. After drinks and nibbles, we dispersed at 9.30 pm.

Mary Pringle

PICK IT UP!

On Saturday 23 July 12 members and one non-member turned up for a summer litter pick at the footbridge along Foss Islands Road. Because the CYC boat and pontoon were not available, we were split up into small groups and directed to where most of the litter could be found along the river banks, both downstream and upstream.



Kay was a keen litter picker

One party took the opportunity to do a litter pick and Himalayan Balsam pull at the rear of Yearsley Baths. In the end we collected 12 bin liners full of litter, which were disposed of by the City Council. Hopefully the boat and pontoon will be at our disposal for the litter pick on Saturday 15 October.

Barry Thomas

The Foss Walk in Full

Bob Jowett tells us about this year's 2 day Foss Walk...

Each year we do the entire Foss Walk in two consecutive days: Friday 24th and Saturday 25th June were chosen for this year's event.

On the first day, ten walkers met at 11:00 am at Huntington

Church in hot and sunny weather. Having decided not to do the first section from town because of the extra time needed, we set off, stopping at the Ship Inn, Strensall for drinks. We crossed the road and had our lunch by the very overgrown John Carr bridge.

Heading east through two fields, we found a crop field with a rudimentary path, so had to walk the right of way through the planting. The group soon reached the Blacksmiths Arms, Farlington, where we had drinks to end the day.

Only four walkers could join us on the second day, which started by following the Foss Walk path towards Marton Priory. This path is overgrown and narrowed by an electric fence so we left it and walked by the hedge. This route took us along the road to Marton Abbey,



Eight of the ten walkers on the first day



Approaching Old Humpy

reservoir for a lunch break by the dam. Afterwards we passed Pond Head Farm onto the road to Oulston. This took us east along the road before turning down to footpath leading to Oulston.

After going through Oulston we picked up the path at the stile. This stile was so overgrown that it was difficult even to see; we cleared this and climbed over into the field, where the cows stayed well away from us. The path to the Kyle Beck was also totally overgrown, making walking very slow and difficult.



Four walkers finished the walk in Easingwold

Finally, we found the Foss Way path into Easingwold, where we celebrated our achievement with an excellent meal in the George Hotel.



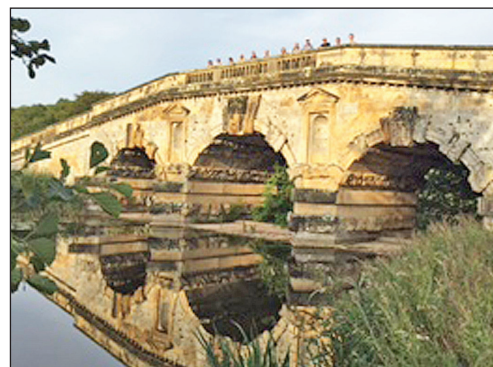
Meeting at the Durham Ox

Twelve walkers led by Anne Bednarski set out in hot and sunny weather on the evening of 13 July for a 4 mile circular walk from the Durham Ox, Crayke. Going along the road towards Brandsby, we went a short distance along before turning right down a lane. This led us to a Permissive path which eventually took us to the River Foss. We followed the river to the Dutch House, where we crossed the Brandsby road. After

walking up to the church and castle, we made our way to the Durham Ox for an evening meal.

Bob Jowett

Thirteen members and guests plus one dog gathered on 23 August for a walk at Castle Howard on a glorious warm summer evening. Anne Bednarski led us on a route which took us via East Moor Wood, across the elegant New River Bridge, and beside Ray Wood. Our return journey went through Bog Hall farm to join the Centenary Way path to return to Welburn village.



Crossing Castle Howard's New River Bridge

Along the way we saw a small deer eying our group cautiously before scampering away to the safety of the undergrowth. We also saw a large covey of partridge, extremely well

camouflaged against a freshly ploughed field.

After the walk we enjoyed a tasty supper at the Crown and Cushion in Welburn.

John Millett

In 2014 several members visited the South Ferriby, (Lincolnshire) moorings of the Humber Keel & Sloop Preservation Society's keel "Comrade" and sloop "Amy Howson" (*On the Foss* Autumn 2014). We learned then that keels are single masted square rigged craft designed to work the inland waters round Hull whereas the later sloops are fore and aft rigged and better on coastal runs. Both craft, like barges, are relatively short and wide to suit the wide beam locks of the local inland canal system. The HK&SPS arranges group trips on the River Humber and so we booked two for this year.

13 August was warm and sunny but initially it seemed that keel "Comrade" (built in 1923) would not be leaving Humber Dock Marina, Hull, due to high winds. But, once the wind dropped, 12 members boarded the keel with a crew of six – a maximum of 20 are allowed on board. Leaving the Marina under engine power, through the large lock and into the Humber Dock Basin, "Comrade" turned up river with the incoming tide. The friendly and helpful crew pointed out Albert Dock, an array of laid up oil rig support vessels, the riverside businesses, etc. Continuing winds made it dangerous to raise the sails so "Comrade" chugged along at 4 knots under the 30 hp engine. After passing under the impressive Humber Bridge, we turned opposite South

Exploring the Humber



Above: Some of the hardy sailors on the choppy Humber. The Humber bridge is in the background. Below: Becalmed!



Ferriby at high tide time. We enjoyed the Humber-side scenery along with hot drinks on the return journey, passing back through the lock into the Marina ready for the following day's trip.

"Comrade" was booked for the same trip on 14 August but 45 minutes later due to tide times. Turning up river as the tide changed, the top sail was raised, then the main sail – hard work for the crew and a very impressive sight. The engine was stopped but the wind had dropped altogether and "Comrade" was becalmed – silently bobbing about until rocked by two cargo vessels! The Humber Rescue Boat, based under the Humber Bridge, also passed – perhaps in attendance at a cross-river swim under the bridge. Finally the sails were dropped and the engine restarted for the journey back, by which time a head wind had blown up. The Zeebrugge ferry was seen leaving King George Dock whilst the Rotterdam ferry was still moored in the river. Approaching the lock, its gates opened and a quickly lowering 600mm of

water could be seen emptying it – an unusual sight! Both days had been a safe, interesting and different boating experience for RFS members. Our thanks go to skipper John and the crew, including the RFS's contact, Keith.

John Millett and Peter Hopwood

Let them pass!

The promised eel pass in the weir at Foss Basin is now installed and working. Fish and eels in particular can be negatively affected by river structures like weirs; a single weir can remove an entire species from an area if placed in a migratory bottleneck. Freshwater eels are an endangered species so it is heartening to see that they can at least safely pass that weir.

Left: The eel pass is the structure going diagonally down from the weir. Eel passes allow eel young - elvers - to climb upstream to continue their life cycle.



Don't Forget our website:

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

The River Foss Society regularly monitors planning applications made to the City of York Council and comments, where appropriate, on those that may have an effect on the River and its environs. It also responds to relevant public consultations.

Two important consultations have recently taken place. The Minerals and Waste Joint Plan for North Yorkshire contained no current proposals for either mineral extraction or waste disposal in the vicinity of the Foss but we commented that the safeguards for such activities in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were insufficiently robust.

We note with relief that the latest City of York Local Development Plan has dropped land at The Brecks, Strensall, from its list of development sites following the Secretary of State's rejection of an appeal on the grounds that it would impact on 4 of the 5 Green Belt purposes. The Plan also reduces by half the development site at the former Joseph Rowntree School at New Earswick and provides open space between the proposed housing and the River Foss. Encouragingly, this decision was based on two surveys by Natural England, one mapping green corridors important for the environment with

regard to wildlife, recreation, flooding etc. and the other identifying important deciduous woodland. We did, however, query whether the current calculations of the effect of run-off from the proposed housing (and therefore of flood risk) were adequate in the face of the expected increase of rainfall resulting from climate change.

Riverside developments for which planning permission is sought can vary in size from the later stages of the

Hungate development to a small plot of land beside the Huntington pumping station. We have recently commented on the controversial plans for a visitor centre at Clifford's Tower and noted the measures to be taken to reduce risks to pedestrians and cyclists using the new bridge at the Strensall Tannery site.

At present, local authorities must comply with the EU Directive that provides for public consultation on plans and programmes likely to have significant effects on the environment. This Directive is incorporated into English law. Post Brexit, will it remain in force or be repealed? If the latter, will it be replaced by new, adequate safeguards?

June Card

Discovering Ripon's waterways

19 July was an exceedingly hot day as 23 visitors assembled at the original Canal Head, Ripon, before boarding Ripon Scenic Cruises' two boats "Yoredale" and "Pride of Ripon". Travelling along the Ripon Canal, a stop was made at the Facilities Block at what, for many years, was the temporary end of the Canal before it was fully re-opened to Canal Head.

Passing down three locks, the boats entered the surprisingly peaceful and wide River Ure (more than 10 miles before the name changes to River Ouse) and carried on past Newby Hall to Westwick Lock where most members found some shade to eat their picnics.

Then 10 brave souls set off in searing heat to walk back along the canal tow-path with the promise that they could be picked up by the boats if needed. Many were pleased to be picked up, but congratulations to the four who walked all the way back to Ripon.

Passing many other boats, herons, mallards with young and swans with one cygnet were seen. Unfortunately it was too hot and the wrong time of day to see many birds. There are excellent Interpretation Boards along the Canal and at Westwick Lock.

Thanks go to Richard, proprietor of Ripon Scenic Cruises, along with his crewmen Stuart and Steve.

Peter Hopwood



"Yoredale" and "Pride of Ripon" go through a lock together



Picnicking in welcome shade on the Island at Westwick Lock



After turning, the two boats headed back

Water Walking

Three more summer walks celebrating 'Water'...

On July 8 four walkers met in Melbourne at 9:30am. In warm and sunny weather, we walked along a track to the Pocklington Canal, then crossed over and followed it as it heads north after turning. We crossed another footbridge and continued to head north along the canal.

Unfortunately we did not have enough time to walk to the canal head near the A1079, so we chose a point to turn back along the same path to enjoy the view in the other direction.

Because we finished our walk too late for a local pub meal, we headed to Monks Cross where the group split to have meals at two different venues.

We learned that the canal is not navigable as far as canal head, but there is an appeal to raise money to restore more of the canal.

Bob Jowett

As part of Bob's series of walks with a water theme, the walk on 17 August started at the Derwent Flood Barrier at Barmby on the Marsh. At the time this structure was undergoing maintenance with the dam being lifted, allowing the water from the Derwent to flow into the Ouse. Looking over the dam we were greeted by sixty plus swallows who were using the dam's concrete structure as a nesting site.

On a warm, sunny day, six walkers started from the Barrier and went along the flood bank of the Ouse, eastwards past what is left of the impressive bridge and embankment of the now disused railway. Turning north from the river, we saw five buzzards soaring high, communicating with their loud 'mewing' being distinctly heard.

The return route took us over the Barmby road, up the flood bank of the river Derwent and along to the barrier.

Our venue for lunch was the King's Head at Barmby, where we had an enjoyable meal. Carol Carr and Anne Bednarski were our guides for the walk, and gave us an enjoyable day out.

John Millett

Just three walkers met in the Forestry Commission Low Moor car park on the morning of 6 September. On a hot, sunny day, we walked along a pleasant forest track through Allerthorpe Common east towards Allerthorpe village. On arriving in the village we found that the Plough Inn was unfortunately closed.



Top: Three of the walkers at Melbourne; Above: Stopping near some of the canal boats

However, we continued this pleasant walk through the village, then turned right past some houses and headed west. Passing Lake Lodge, then Waplington Hall, we went onto a good track heading to Warren House Farm. This took us back onto Allerthorpe Common and to the car park after a circular walk of 4.5 miles.

Bob Jowett



A forest track at Allerthorpe

On the Foss

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