



HELP! We need somebody Could it be you?



Learning to test river water

Do you have a talent the River Foss Society could use?

Could you help out manning a stand at a local fair?

Would you like to attend occasional meetings with the Environment Agency or other conservation groups, to find out how the river is managed and put the Society's point of view?

Are you interested in attending training courses to learn more about the environment?

Would you like to help map out the Foss and its flora and fauna?

Do you have experience with websites?

Or would you like to help in any other way?

The committee needs help from RFS members in a number of oc-



Meeting the public at Huntington Gala

casional and more permanent roles. The tasks need not be onerous and can be interesting and enjoyable!

For more information contact Alison Scott on: alisonscott3029@hotmail.com or 01904 766206.



Part of our find

Pick it up!

On what turned out to be a fine morning, 12 RFS members and two visitors met, as usual, at the Footbridge along

Foss Islands Road. The CYC boat on this occasion was not being used because of the small amount of litter floating on the water.

Hence we split up into three groups to make a concerted effort of removing litter from along the river banks from our start point downstream to the River Ouse at Blue Bridge. As a result of an earlier reconnoitre of the river banks the majority of our attention was directed to the Rowntree's Wharf and Wormalds Cut area, the Castle car park, and Castle Mills lock.

As the photos show, a successful litter pick was done

resulting in our collecting 14 bin liners full of rubbish, as well as several larger items including an old Xmas tree, a large plastic seat, a microwave oven and many large polythene sheets which were removed from the water at Wormald's Cut.

Most of the bin bags were disposed of at the tip in James Street, and the heavy bags and bulky items were left in a safe place to be collected by the City Council. My grateful thanks go to all those helping on the day.

Barry Thomas



Hard working pickers with some of the day's haul



Summer into Autumn

JULY

Friday 20th July Bat walk with Will Durrant - Community Action for Nature. Meet at 9.00 pm at New Earswick. More information from Mike Gray. Booking Essential! Cost £2 per person.

Saturday 21st July Litter pick along the Foss. Meet at 9.15 at the Blue Bridge opposite Morrisons. Contact: Barry Thomas.

AUGUST

Wednesday 8th August Coxwold and Husthwaite Walk. Meet at 9.30 at Coxwold Car Park. Contact: John Millett.

Saturday 11th August Boat trip from Melbourne to Bielby on the newly opened section of the Pocklington canal. Meet at 10.30 am. Contact Peter Hopwood ASAP for details.

Thursday 16th August Moth evening at 9.00 pm with Alistair Fitter. (Possibly also 8.30 am following morning). Contact: Mike Gray for more details.

Wednesday 29th August Evening walk of approximately 5 miles around Kirkham. Meet at 6.00 pm at the Stone Trough. Contact: Anne Bednarski.

SEPTEMBER

Friday 7th September Evening walk about three

miles around Strensall. Meet at Ship Inn. Contact: John Millett

Saturday 15th September Circular Walk around Moor Monkton approximately 5 miles. Meet at 10.00 am. Contact: Mike Gray for meeting place.

Friday 28th September Bat walk with Will Durrant - Community Action for Nature. Meet at 9.00 pm at New Earswick. More information from Mike Gray. Booking Essential! Cost £2 per person.

Thursday 11 October Walk from Dutch House to Mill Green via Pond Head approximately 5 miles. Meet at 9.30 am at Dutch House, Crayke. Contact: Bob Jowett.

Wednesday 17 October Autumn Open Meeting and talk about the Hungate dig. Meet 7.00 pm at Strensall Village Hall. Contact: John Millett.

CONTACTS

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Finding the way ...

The public footpath following along the west bank of the Foss from Strensall to Sheriff Hutton, marked Centenary Way on OS Maps, passes Lock

House, Strensall, where the footpath narrows down as it passes the end of the garden and the river bank. At this point a slippage has occurred which makes the path virtually impassable and dangerous to use. This footpath has now been closed for some months and according to The Rights of Way Office of the City of York Council is unlikely to be re-opened until November 2018, when repairs should be completed.

There are two alternative routes which bypass this problem. The first route is to walk up Sheriff Hutton Road, turn right along the track to Duncombe Farm, then follow the path down to the River Foss. This brings the walker out on the other side of the slippage and back onto the riverside path to Sheriff Hutton.

The second route is to follow the footpath from Brecks Lane – marked 'Foss Walk' and 'Ebor Way' on OS Maps – down beside the railway line, pass Walbutt's Water Treatment plant and Walbutt's farm, and cross over the Foss by the iron bridge. You are then back on the footpath to Sheriff Hutton.

John Millett

The first pleasure boat – "Natterjack" – for some 20 months went through Castle Mills Lock on 12 June. Michael Cadoux (Inland Waterways Association, North Riding Branch) takes bookings and had one for another narrowboat "Waterway Routes" (www.waterwayroutes.co.uk) on 6 July – subject to River Foss water level.

Castle Mills Lock



Opening the lock

Passage was refused by IWA/RFS because of the water level. This was understood and accepted. This was unfortunate as Waterway Routes

films canals and rivers of Britain and produces DVD's, maps and other waterways information.

Although opening the only remaining lock on the river is hard work, it is much appreciated by boat owners passing through and seeing the centre of York from the River Foss. The team of trained lock operators is small and trained volunteers are always needed to be available to open this lock. By agreement between City of York Council and the IWA, volunteers can be trained in this rewarding work. If anyone is interested in being trained please initially contact Peter Hopwood by email: peter147haxby@gmail.com (or telephone 01904 768071).

Peter Hopwood

Walk 3 – The Derwent Barrage



Five walkers met on 10 May at the Tidal Barrage at Barmby on the Marsh. Like the Foss Barrier, this controls water from the Ouse flowing back into the

River Derwent. Enjoying a dry, sunny and warm day, the group first visited the Barrage and Lock then followed a route along the Ouse flood bank.

Passing the remains of the impressive bridge and embankment of the now disused railway, the group turned from the Ouse, eventually climbing the flood bank of the Derwent and then finishing the walk at the Barrage. Unfortunately the pub was closed so the group headed home after this interesting walk.

Bob Jowett

The entire 28 mile long Foss Walk is walked annually in two sections on consecutive days. This ensures that the Society has a full knowledge of the state of footpaths and the presence of obstacles.

22 June We started the walk this year on a hot and sunny day. Four walkers met at Blue Bridge and six more joined at Huntingdon. After finding the path just before Strensall re-routed onto a track, our first stop was at the Ship Inn, Strensall. Due to another footpath closure (see page 2), we left Strensall on the east side of the Foss and headed towards Sheriff Hutton, going over two bridges, one over Black Dyke, then another crossing the Foss.

After Sheriff Hutton, we continued towards Cornborough Manor. Not long after, we discovered another path obliterated by oilseed rape, so we followed the right of way through the field. To finish our first day eight walkers enjoyed a good meal at the Blacksmith's Arms in Farlington.

June 23 We started our second day at Farlington and headed north. After walking through fields planted with various crops we headed onto the Farlington to Stillington Road, which has no footpaths. Using Harryfield Lane, an overgrown unclassified road, we

2018 Two day walk



*Top: battling through oilseed rape;
Centre: fording the Foss;
Below: the entire group*

reached the site of Marton Abbey. The path crosses the Stillington to Brandsby Road into Crayke; outside the village we arrived at the Dutch House. As always we were made very welcome there, and enjoyed morning coffee and refreshments.



After reaching Oulston reservoir and eating our lunch by the dam, we headed to Oulston. Usually the path is found at a stile here but this one is now overgrown to the point of obscurity. The path to the Kyle beck was also totally overgrown so walking was again slow and difficult; tractor tracks through the crops along the beck proved useful. To complete the walk, we followed the Foss Way into Easingwold.

On this year's walk, we had found footpaths generally dry but obscured in many places by grass growing very high. Some stiles were also overgrown and difficult to use. The summer crop of oilseed rape made footpaths in some fields hard to follow as the front walker had to separate the plants to get through. And, as reported before, the Foss Walk is sadly short of signing and waymarking. Despite these problems, we had enjoyed the walk and glorious weather, so headed back to the Blacksmith's Arms back in Farlington for drinks to celebrate our achievement.

Bob Jowett

Boating through central Leeds

With a viewing of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme

Arriving at Canal Wharf in Leeds by various ingenious transport methods but on time (thanks again), 27 members and friends were joined on board Yorkshire Hire Cruisers the "Kirkstall Flyer", built in the 1980s as restaurant trip boat by Stuart McKenzie (Canal and River Trust). Canal Wharf faces the recently redeveloped Granary Wharf area.

Leaving the mooring at the east end of the 126 mile long Leeds & Liverpool Canal, turning and dropping down through Leeds River Lock into the River Aire, part of the Aire & Calder Navigation, "Kirkstall Flyer"

passed magnificent old riverside buildings, many now converted into flats and offices. As Leeds Lock was approached the entrance to Clarence Dock was passed along with the Royal Armouries Museum. Leeds Lock was drained earlier in the year for a pair of new lock gates to be fitted.



Enjoying the buffet lunch

Stuart, whom many had met on visits to the Tees Barrage, then gave a talk explaining that as Freight Operations Planner/Harbour Master for the C&RT he has many responsibilities which include the River Tees and Barrage as well as more locally to Leeds including part of the River Ouse. As "Kirkstall Flyer" progressed Stuart then explained details about the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, Phase One, intended to reduce any future flooding such that which occurred at the same time as the River Foss flooding in December 2015.

(Stuart also explained that the C&RT is responsible for most canals and some rivers in England and Wales



Arriving at "Kirkstall Flyer" moored at Canal Wharf



A good turnout of 27 members and friends

although not the River Foss [CYC]. It is also being reorganised from 10 areas to 6 regions with one remaining in Leeds).

It was fascinating to see how a 600m stretch of land known as Knostrop Cut Island had actually been removed to allow the river and cut to merge into a very wide river

to create additional capacity for flood water.

As Knostrop was approached it was explained how new type moveable weirs in the UK had been built at Crown Point, passed earlier, in Leeds City Centre and at Knostrop.



Knostrop weirs

Then everyone disembarked to see the Knostrop weir from a bridge across the weir built to connect the Trans Pennine Trail with the north bank. The sun came out to improve what was already a cool but dry and pleasant day.

Shortly afterwards "Kirkstall Flyer" turned at the Thwaite Mills Museum mooring for the return journey. Everyone enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch with special thanks for the vegetarian food offered. The bar was open all the time for the purchase of both hot and cold drinks.

Although boat trips can often get delayed "Kirkstall Flyer" arrived back at Canal Wharf on schedule and John Millett thanked skipper Adam assisted by crew Simon, caterer Sharon and Drew running the bar and particularly Stuart for providing so much information from his 40 years involvement with waterways.

Peter Hopwood

Don't forget our website:

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

Nature in all its glory

On Sunday 10 June eight members visited Tophill Low nature reserve, near Hutton Cranswick, East Yorkshire. The 290 hectare site is mainly woodland and meadow, surrounded by open countryside bordering the River Hull.

The site, owned by The Yorkshire Water Authority, has large reservoirs and lagoons forming part of the treated water plant which supplies most of the city of Hull with fresh water.

We had the good fortune to have as our guide Richard Hampshire, the site Warden, whose knowledge of the reserve is encyclopaedic. He pointed out many items of interest, including the extremely vocal marsh frogs. Beside the path, a grass snake was seen warming itself in the midday sun.

The reserve pathway verges are a profusion of wild flowers, with carpets of Red Campion, St John's Wort, Ox-eye Daisies and a host of other wild flowers including Marsh and Bee Orchids. During our tour round the reserve we saw or heard forty-two species of birds. It was a highlight



Above: Richard Hampshire (centre) leads the way

Left: An egret struts his stuff

to view a Green Woodpecker, Little Egret, Ringed Plover and White-throat.

This reserve is well worth a visit. We were told that during the winter when the 'D' lagoon is drained for maintenance, it exposes a base of thick silt which apparently encourages hundreds of wintering birds, creating quite a spectacle.

John Millett

Our President, Alastair Fitter, was kind enough to invite members to visit his garden in Huntington which is not only much longer than you might expect, but is completed by a recently excavated pond at its boundary along the Foss. It's a fascinating area with old apple trees and all man-

An inspiring garden

ner of plants, some quite unusual, and many thriving in the shady woodland. Alastair happily told us what they were and where they came from.

We were greeted by a selection of refreshments and homemade goodies – most welcome on one of the hotter evenings. All in all a very pleasant and informative evening.

Mike Gray



John Oxley (fourth from left) shares his knowledge of the Foss

On 13 June, we were privileged to have John Oxley lead this walk on a very warm evening. John, the archaeologist of the City of York, took the subject of 'Walking through the King's Fishpool 1067 to 2017'. Twenty-one members and friends started the walk at the Blue Bridge, headed to the Fishergate Postern, St Denys' Church, Walmgate, then followed the Foss to Hungate and Layerthorpe Bridge finishing at Monk Bridge.

At various points along the way John described the

Along the historic Foss

differences in the former topography of the landscape and surrounding area. He then told us how the Foss was dammed to create the King's Fishpool. John also highlighted historic locations along the route including the former fish market on Foss Bridge, the Hungate burial grounds and an earlier Layerthorpe Bridge with its raised centre section for the passage vessels of the Foss Navigation.

Our final stop was at Monk Bridge where John described how the original structure was also altered for the passage of vessels. He explained that the knowledge gained from various archaeological digs had indicated the structure of various bridges crossing the Foss. This was an extremely interesting walk and talk, made more so by John's enthusiastic delivery, and he was warmly thanked by everyone.

John Millett

Cruising the Calder & Hebble Navigation

Having commented in a previous report about participants always arriving in good time, who should be five minutes late this time? The organiser (and two others)! The maximum of 12 members and friends boarded "Lady Rhodes" at Shepley Bridge Marina, Mirfield, on 2 July – another lovely summer's day.



Twelve on the passenger list



"Someone please pass the rope"

"Lady Rhodes" is a 55ft narrowboat, one of five boats operated by the Safe Anchor Trust, a long established award winning local charity providing access to the waterways for disadvantaged groups. The marina is close to a lock at the east end of a cut (a canal section of the C&H Navigation) usually made to avoid a meandering section



Rather than using a windlass a wooden spike is used to open many locks on the C&H Navigation

of river, in this case the River Calder. Travelling west along the cut and arriving at an open Ledgard Bridge Flood Lock, "Lady Rhodes" joined the River Calder but then at Battyeford Lock again joined a cut. After passing through Batty Flood Gates and reaching Cooper Bridge Lock "Lady Rhodes" rejoined the river. Immediately after passing through

open Cooper Bridge Flood Gates the Huddersfield Broad Canal was seen leaving to the south before becoming the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, one of three canals passing over the Pennines and including the famous Standedge Tunnel visited last year. On reaching Kirklees Low Lock, "Lady Rhodes" was turned and retraced her way back to Shepley Bridge Marina. (Flood Gates and Flood Locks are used to control a river in times of high river levels).

The trip went through surprisingly pleasant and peaceful countryside but, perhaps because of the heat, only a heron, cormorants, the usual mallards and greylags at a lock were seen with very few boats actually moving.

Thanks are due to contact Kevin and crew Graham, David and Andrew from Safe Anchor Trust. (Lateness was due to trains from the north being delayed due to a Network Rail points problem at Darlington!).

Peter Hopwood



Evening walking at Stockton on Forest

Anne Bednarski writes: Another beautiful, sunny evening with a light breeze was enjoyed by 13 walkers. We started off at the Fox Inn and walked through fields admiring the wide vistas, up a quiet country road, through a wood and back to the pub where we tucked into a delicious meal.

On the Foss

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Did you know that
River Foss Society is on
Facebook too?