



This photo was taken by Lynne Kinder on the Foss and found its way into the *Telegraph* and then the *York Press*, so you've probably seen it before. Lynne has since joined the RFS and been litter picking with us. It's a graphic reminder of what happens all over the world, though. Single use plastics especially, are finding their way everywhere. Much of this plastic gets ground down and adds to the growing level of microplastics – microscopic fragments so small that only recently have scientists been able to find them. They are pervading our world and our bodies, with effects yet to be ascertained.



have found their way into the water, as we have found during our regular litter-picks. Oh, and by the way, bottled water can contain more microplastics than tap water! Problems for the human animal too, maybe.

A recent article in the *Guardian* said that plastics now account for 59% of the litter found in canals in England and Wales, and that according to the Canal & River Trust – the charity that looks after 2,000 miles of canals

For Shame!

Mike Gray reminds us of the threat

We have no excuses. Alternatives such as refillable or returnable bottles are around, consumers can be educated not to jettison their plastics, if indeed they must be used. The efficacy of banning or charging for single use plastic items has been demonstrated by the reduction in the number of

plastic bags in our waterways to less than 1% of overall debris. After bottles, food wrappers, such as crisp and sweet packets, make up the second biggest type of plastic pollution in our rivers, followed by cigarette butts. All of these can cause problems for wildlife and are hard to clean up once they

and river navigations – plastic pollution could be cut drastically. If everyone walking along a canal or river picked up and recycled just one piece of plastic on each visit, our waterways could be plastic-free in a year.

This is a subject that we shall doubtless be returning to, and learning more about, on the 17th September when Dr James Comerford will be discussing the threat of plastic in his Mark Gladwin Memorial talk at the Merchant Adventurers' Hall.

Wild and wonderful

On 23 May around a dozen RFS members were treated to a unique visit. We went to the Sylvan Nature Reserve run by 'Make it Wild', a habitat creation project at Kirk Hammerton. In 2011 Helen and Christopher Neave



We were led around Sylvan Nature Reserve by Helen Greave, one of the creators .

bought 25 acres of rough pasture unsuited for arable farming. It is bordered by, and often flooded by, the River Nidd, and over the next few years they oversaw

the planting of some 18,000 native deciduous trees, with support from the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission. They also sowed wildflower meadows, and created several ponds and scrapes.

We were shown round the site by Helen and Christopher, together with Tony Knowles, their bird expert, and were enthralled by our surroundings, and surprised by the speed with which this young woodland was maturing. The 'Forest of Flowers' they had sown was sadly past its best, but you could see what it had been like. At one point on a beach at the edge of the river we found several surprisingly large empty fresh-water mussel shells, most likely left from an otter's lunch. Yet more signs of a healthy environment.

We were lucky to have chosen a lovely day and were all impressed by what can be done to restore nature and to work towards a better ecological balance.



A beautiful resident

Mike Gray



Enjoying Summer

JULY

Sat 20th July 09.15 Footbridge opposite Morrisons. Litter pick along the Foss. Contact Barry about car parking. Contact: Barry Thomas

AUGUST

Thurs 1 August 17.30 Huntington All Saints Church car park. Evening walk along the Foss from Huntington to York, 3 - 4 miles depending on where we end up. Return by No 1 or No 5 bus. Meal afterwards venue TBA. Contact: Mike Gray

Wed 7 August 9.30 Coxwold Car Park. Yearsley to Coxwold walk, about 5 miles. Meal afterwards. Contact: John Millett

Sun 18 August 12.30 to 17.00 Huntington Parish Council Gala - RFS will have a stall. Come and chat and bring some friends!

Wed 21 August 18.00 Ship Inn Car Park. Strensall via Walbutts walk, about 4.5 miles. Contact: Mike Gray

Fri 23 August 21.00 Bat walk with CAN: as last year but along another route. We have been warned that it might be darker and muddier! Contact: Mike Gray

SEPTEMBER

Thurs 5 September 10.00 Car Park off Brayton lane, Selby YO8 9DU. Selby horseshoe circular walk along the canal, about 9 miles. Contact: Bob Jowett

Thurs 6 September 20.00 to 23.00 approx. Moth trapping evening in Christine Gray's garden

run by Alastair Fitter. A chance to find out what flutters around after dark. Bring your cameras. More details when you book a place. Contact: Mike Gray

Tues 17 September 19.00 The Great Hall, Merchant Adventurers'. The Mark Gladwin Memorial Lecture. Dr James Comerford, York University Chemistry Department will speak on 'Plastics and Our Environment - the threat'. Contact: John Millett

OCTOBER

Wed 16 October 19.00 Strensall Village Hall. Autumn Open Meeting and talk by Professor Alistair Boxall on 'The Global Problem of Pharmaceutical Pollution in Rivers'. Contact: John Millett

Sat 19 October 9.15 Footbridge opposite Morrisons. Litter pick along the Foss. Contact: Barry Thomas about car parking

CONTACTS

Anne Bednarski 01904 764086

Mike Gray 01904 758510

sdmike.05@gmail.com (preferred)

Peter Hopwood 01904 768071

peter147haxby@gmail.com (preferred)

John Millett 01904 491290

Bob Jowett 01904 764702

bob.jowett1@btopenworld.com

Barry Thomas 01904 490081

barry1thomas@googlemail.com



On April 27, a cloudy day, with the threat of rain shower, 16 people turned up at the footbridge along Foss Islands Road. Three people were allocated to litter pick off the CYC boat/pontoon and the rest were split into

An important job

three groups to work along the river banks downstream to Blue Bridge and the junction with the river Ouse.

On the boat the rubbish collected filled four large builders' bags, whilst from the river banks we collected 17 full green bin bags of waste. Additionally we retrieved two road signs, three large barrels and several items of furniture. Overall this was one of the best litter picks that we have had, and the three persons attending for the first time were very impressed by our success.

We were pleased that the first heavy shower did not occur until immediately after we had completed the litter pick; I give my grateful thanks to those who turned up on the day.

Barry Thomas

Don't forget our website:

www.riverfossociety.co.uk

We hope you can help

Many members receive their newsletter on-line or in the post. We have a number of members who act as distributors to their local area and deliver the newsletter by hand.

Areas covered are: Wigginton, Haxby, Haxby (Towthorpe Rd), Strensall, Earswick, New Earswick, Huntington (N. East), Huntington (West), Monkbridge, Heworth.

They do a really great job and are very efficient. They save considerable postage costs for the society. Thank you!

Currently we need a distributor (preferably two) for Haxby and someone who would be willing to step in as a backup for any area.

It's a pleasant job, especially if you like fresh air and walking.

If you would like to help, please contact Marjorie Burton at: Marjorie.burton@btinternet.com or by telephone on: 01904 760871



This Little Egret was seen at New Earswick and photographed by Will Durrant. This is the second sighting of a Little Egret on the Foss this year; four were seen on Wallbutt's lagoon in May. These are welcome sightings of this very attractive bird and a good indication that they are moving further north.

John Millett

On the Foss

Editor: Beth Shurter Tel. 01904 631125

email: york.beth2@gmail.com

Secretary: Alison Scott Tel. 01904 766206

email: alisonscott3029@hotmail.com

Membership: Elaine Mephram

Tel. 01904 769168

email: membership@riverfossociety.co.uk

Have you entered yet?

River Foss Society Photographic Competition 2019

CLOSING DATE 1st AUGUST 2019

Photographs to be taken:

- ✓ In the 12 months prior to August 2019
- ✓ Along the Foss Walk, or within 100m of the river or its tributaries
- ✓ By current members or their families

**Competition will be judged by
RFS President Alastair Fitter**

TO ENTER:

Post A4 prints to:
RFS Events Organiser
22 Drakes Close
York YO32 9GN

Full competition
details available on
River Foss Society
website



Walk 3 of 2019

On 16 April a group of nine walkers set out from Sheriff Hutton in sunny dry weather. Our walk headed east through the village onto the Ebor Way. After a short distance a right turn then took us onto the Centenary Way. We followed this into Stittenham Wood and took the path to Stittenham village.

Walkers passing the Brush and Boots B&B are welcome to rest in the garden. We rejoined the Centenary Way to Low Mowthorpe Farm and up to Mowthorpe Lane. At Towthorpe Lane we headed to Sorwood Thorns, full of bluebells, and then rejoined the Ebor Way back to Sheriff Hutton.

Bob Jowett

Sixteen members met in the sunny courtyard of The Masons Arms, above Castle Mills Lock, on 14 May, to hear childhood memories from Robin Clough about boating and the last lock-keeper – Mr Smith.

A cold January morning in the late 1940s saw Robin on the Yorkshire Ouse River Board's Tug "Aid" above Castle Mills



Bridge about to experience his first locking. The tug's Engineer had gone ahead to help lock keeper Mr. Smith prepare the lock.

Happy days on the Foss

The Skipper brought "Aid" into the lock, then Mr. Smith and the Engineer operated the gates and sluices and the tug descended. They travelled five miles downstream through Naburn lock to the tidal Ouse, on through Selby with its trickily navigated toll bridge and so to Ocean Lock, the biggest on the Ouse, and into the port of Goole forty miles downstream. This was the start of a

long association and many trips on "Aid", built by Richard Dunston of Thorne and powered by a two stroke semi diesel.

Robin illustrated the 1950s traffic through Castle Mills Lock with a photograph showing F.W. Wood's steam tug "Ouse" heading upstream towing lighters almost certainly bound for the former Leatham's Mill Warehouse, owned by chocolate makers Rowntrees, and located on the River Foss. The lock's other traffic several trips a week was by builders merchants Walker's sand dredging barge "Reklaw" ('Walker' backwards) and "Aid" which loaded a barge with sandstone and then towed it to sections of bank that required repair.

Robin showed another photograph of "Ouse" upstream of Skeldergate Bridge on the River Ouse with only one dumb barge in tow. Usually she would have seven dumb barges in tow – had the other six been cast off to go up the River Foss? If so how did they move them? Poling (quanting)?

A photograph of Robin's boat's engine room, with him in typical thoughtful pose (!), showed a semi diesel similar to "Aid's". He learned to operate such engines from "Aid". Their simplicity – no valve gear-coupled with low revs - his boat cruised at 342 r.p.m. ("Aid at 400 r.p.m.) - made them extremely reliable and ideal for marine use.

Robin's mother knew Mr Smith's wife well, having visited her to collect war savings! He had never seen Mr. Smith, an authority figure, until that first trip on "Aid". Their lock-keeper's house is still by the steps up to Castle Mills Bridge.

Having enjoyed Robin's talk and its lighter moments, the audience, some of whom had viewed the Lock area, retired to The Masons Arms for Lunch.

Peter Hopwood, with thanks to Robin

Walking through the ages of York

On a warm sunny evening that threatened rain, twenty-two members attended a walk in the city centre led by Toby Kendall, a Project Officer with York Archaeological Trust. Our first stop was at the site of an excavation prior to the building of a new hotel on Piccadilly, which backs onto the Foss. The excavation for the foundations is in the order of eight metres in depth. At this depth different layers of soil and parts of former settlements including ancient timber piles are exposed.



We then moved on to Saint Deny's Church, where the high level of the burial ground was compared to the adjacent road. This rise in level illustrates that the local populace dumped their spoils, rubbish and clinker. Over the centuries this has raised the levels.

Our next stop was Fossgate, looking at building styles from different periods and the effect of alterations and subsidence on the building structure. Toby explained that part of his work was to examine the likelihood of archaeological interest before any civil ground work commences on new buildings; this ensures that any new or unearthed archaeological finds can be noted.



Toby was an excellent guide through York's history

From Fossgate we walked through Lady Peckett's Yard and finally finished in Parliament Street. Toby's enthusiasm and knowledge of all aspects of the archaeology of our city made for a very interesting and informative evening thoroughly enjoyed by the members.

John Millett

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

Following a very wet day, 12 RFS members arrived at Frodingham Wharf, near Driffield, on 26 June in some trepidation. The day was much drier but cool and sunless for our trip on the Driffield Navigation Trust's (DNT) "Lady Jayne", a converted North Sea lifeboat with high prow but otherwise good viewing.

Travelling southwest along Frodingham Beck, the waterway is joined by the three mile long Driffield Canal, then continues southwards to join the River Hull. Having seen many swans, some members saw one fly into overhead power lines and flutter down to earth. Skipper John decided to turn almost 180° up into the River Hull/West Beck, under an impressive footbridge, to see if the swan could be found. Answer: no, so we turned southwards again and then passed many and various moored boats as we approached Bethell Swing Bridge. With a strong wind and reasonable flow, "Lady Jayne", with only 2'6" draught, was expertly and patiently handled by the skipper to put the mate ashore and await him opening the bridge.

Carrying on along what was now the straight River Hull New Cut we arrived and moored at Hemphole Lock – last visited by the RFS from the south on Beverley Barge Preservation Society's "Sun" on 30 May 2015. Then, the tide only allowed an hour to visit the adjacent Tophill Low Nature Reserve, originally Hull City's Waterworks, now still a Waterworks and believed to be Yorkshire Water's only Nature Reserve.

Boating from Driffield



Passengers had lots to look at on "Lady Jayne"

After most had visited the new £1m river control works, with the 'dry' (unfinished ?) fish pass, adjacent to the almost 250-year-old built Lock there was no time to visit the nature reserve.

After enjoying an excellent buffet on board, we headed back upstream, with easier navigating for the crew. Better still, the bridge was opened for us. Although this is a river/beck waterway it is more like a canal as the banks are not high and the surrounding countryside can be seen from "Lady Jayne".

As can easily happen, the trip lasted almost three hours – an hour longer than expected – because of the interest created by skipper John (also Chairman of the DNT) and mate Paul.

A vote of thanks was given by RFS Chairman Michael. Thanks are also due to the organising contact (another!) John.

On the way home some members stopped at Riverhead (canal head) at Driffield to view the extensive warehousing, cranes and interpretation boards - a lovely area. The DNT recently helped to raise two bridges. Unfortunately a swing bridge at Wansford was replaced by a fixed bridge when the canal was thought to be derelict, but as there is a legal obligation for boat passage to be maintained for Hull to Driffield, the DNT hopes the swing bridge, or equivalent, can soon be reinstated.

Peter Hopwood



We turned right at the road, walked through the wood, past the Dutch House Gardens with its beautiful wild flowers, then up to the church, glimpsing the now derelict castle, and back to the pub. We enjoyed an excellent meal and were pleased not to have been deterred by the weather.

Anne Bednarski

An evening stroll

Six intrepid walkers set off from Crayke's Durham Ox pub on June 12 - a dreary and chilly evening. Spirits high in spite of the weather, we walked through the village turning right past the houses, looking out for the landmark mosaic on the wall. Just by the sewage works we met a local resident who was delighted to show off the many tractors he had renovated. His captive audience were very impressed while he talked about his many years of hard work.



We were shown an impressive collection of tractors

Visiting Fylingdales Moor



Above: climbing out of steep Jugger Howe

Right: Seven walkers walked through heavy rain

On 8 May seven walkers met in heavy rain at the Flask Inn north of Scarborough. During morning coffee Tanya of Fylingdales Moor Environmental Stewardship

Scheme gave a very interesting talk about the moor and its wildlife illustrated with excellent photos of the many plants and animals of the moor. These include



adders, lizards, and many birds of prey. (More information is available on fylingdaleseducation@gmail.com)

After driving to the start of the walk, we set out. Sadly the weather was not good for seeing wildlife although we saw some interesting plants including a carnivorous one. We followed Tanya towards Jugger Howe. This leads to a very steep descent on a slippery rock path. Three walkers chose to stay at this point on the ridge. Those who carried on went down to Jugger Howe Beck and followed the valley for a short distance east before climbing the ridge.

Our return to the starting point was in very heavy rain.

We were grateful to remove our wet boots and waterproofs before enjoying an excellent meal back at the Flask Inn.

Bob Jowett

A stroll around Sheriff Hutton



Thirteen people turned up on the morning of April 11 for our stroll around Sheriff Hutton on a mainly cloudy morning with some sunshine along the way. We walked down the lane opposite the Highwayman pub round to the left of the castle, across the top of the green and into the churchyard.

The church was open so we spent some time in there looking at the small exhibition about the local history of the castle. At this point we decided not to return via Main Street

but to lengthen the walk and go south to the right of Sheriff Hutton Park. We returned to the village via the Coach Road and fields where we talked to some friendly, very woolly sheep.



The impressive Sheriff Hutton Castle

After walking ten of us stopped off at Quarmby's coffee shop for a delicious light lunch.

Anne Bednarski