



Following several months of campaigning by myself, City of York Council agreed to support the idea of creating a wood meadow on the stretch of land between the West Nooks housing estate and the River Foss in Haxby. The aim is to create an area which is more wildlife and pollinator friendly than is currently the case, but which is also enhanced as an amenity area for local residents

The area is about six hundred metres in length, of varying width and is accessed from Landing Lane. Along the river, the area is bordered by a variety of mature trees and there are several smaller trees on the West Nooks side where it has a distinctive ripple shape, giving it a softer feel of one being in the countryside. Currently, the whole area is grassed and cut regularly by CYC who own it.

In Spring 2021, the plan was to set aside certain areas where the grass would be left uncut until the end of July when it would be scarified and planted with wild

## Back to Nature



*Just imagine this covered with wildflowers hosting birds and pollinators.*

flowers. The idea was then to set aside progressively larger areas in the same way, but to still leave adequate areas regularly cut for people to walk, exercise dogs, play etc. The council have proposed to put in a couple of picnic benches and strategically plant about five small trees. Part of the plan is also to clear the rubbish which has accumulated in the ditch alongside the river as well as keeping down the Himalayan Balsam and installing some bird and bat boxes. To date there has been sadly little progress as the grass cutter has, for whatever reason, cut the area which was supposed to be set aside. This has happened on both cuts this year.

However, it is good to have the wholehearted support of CYC in principle and hopefully the teething problems so far encountered will be overcome in due course. We hope that this will then become a project in which the local community is supportive and actively involved.

*Alan Robertshaw*

## Cleaning Up

On Saturday 24 April, the River Foss Society carried out its first litter pick of the year. Prior to the event, I carried out a survey of the river and river banks from Foss Islands Road downstream to Blue Bridge and its junction with the River Ouse. This told me where the litter was most prevalent.

Ten members turned up on the day at the footbridge on Foss Islands Road, and three were allocated to work on the City of York Council boat/pontoon, skippered by their employee, Mark. The others in attendance were split into two groups, and they set off to cover the river banks downstream. We all met up two hours later at Castle Mills Lock. This enabled us to place all the litter onto the boat/pontoon; and included some 12 full green bin liners and some heavier items such as a bicycle and a large beer cask.

Already on the boat we had two very large builders' bags, which held everything that had been recovered off the river surface. The boat/pontoon then headed back to the start point and three RFS members and skipper Mark removed all the rubbish by lifting it over



the guard rails. This was placed on a parked CYC vehicle for disposal. It was a very successful morning, and I would personally like to thank those who participated on the day.

Two more identical litter picks, meeting up at 9.00 am on Foss islands Road, will take place on Saturday 17 July and Saturday 16 October. Once again, from a planning point of view, it's important that members can let me know if they are turning up on either date. Many thanks.

*Barry Thomas*



## Let's get going!

### JULY

**Thurs 15 Jul** 5.50 pm Meet in Askham Bryan village by the church. Askham Bryan via Bilbrough: 5 miles plus stiles. Contact: Anne Bednarski.

**Sat 17 Jul** 9.00 am. Meet at footbridge opposite Morrison's. Litter Pick. You must let Barry know if you are coming. Contact: Barry Thomas.

**Wed 21 Jul** 10.20 am Meet Nunnington Village Hall. Nunnington and Caulkley's Bank: circular walk of 6 miles. Contact: Derek Chivers.

### AUGUST

**Wed 11 Aug** 5.50 pm Meet at the Highwayman pub, Sheriff Hutton. Sheriff Hutton via Cornlands Manor: 5/6 miles. Contact: Anne Bednarski.

**Thurs 19 Aug** 10.20 am Meet at Castle Howard main car park. Circular walk of 5 miles. Contact: Derek Chivers.

### SEPTEMBER

**Mon 6 Sept** 5.50 pm Meet at the Crown and Cushion pub in Welburn. Circular walk of 4 miles via Castle Howard. Contact: Anne Bednarski.

### CONTACTS

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On Tuesday, 25 May 2021, an encouragingly large group of fourteen walkers (and three dogs) braved a particularly grim weather forecast to awake the RFS walking programme from its lockdown slumbers. Setting off from All Saints Church, Huntington, the route crossed fields and skirted Joseph Rowntree School to reach Haxby Road. From here the route took the (relatively) recent shared foot and cycle path beside the ring road, including crossing the railway on a very smart green bridge.

Having been warned in advance about wet conditions underfoot, the party coped well with the muddy paths beside the crops as we turned south parallel to the railway tracks, although

there were one or two wet feet due to 'hidden' standing water in the pastures that followed. Progress was good as we walked alongside the York to Scarborough railway line, heading towards York through a mixture of sheep grazing pasture and fields used for growing bio-mass fuel.

We were now on Bootham Stray (although nowhere near Bootham), and our route next crossed the Wiggington road and headed towards a wooded area known as Clifton Backies. This area, once used as an airfield in

## Walking Starts

WW2, is now managed for the community, and includes many woodland paths, as well as some artistic seats and wildlife ponds. Breaking out of the countryside into the urban fringe, we walked through the edge of Clifton, re-crossing the railway again on Crichton Avenue to join the disused railway that once served the Rowntree factory. Reaching Haxby Road we walked beside the old Rowntree factory buildings, currently being converted into flats, before taking the path by the side of Yearsley Baths.

Here we joined the Foss, which we followed, braving the mud, all the way back to Huntington Church to finish our just under 6 mile walk. A few members rounded off the walk with refreshments at the Hound Lounge café, on Sleeper's Path. Despite the forecast, the weather remained mostly dry.

You will find details of all the forthcoming walks on our website and on this page of the newsletter.

*Derek Chivers*



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



Having missed 2020's full Foss Walk due to lockdowns, the weather gods looked kindly on 2021 as we had a great weekend's weather for a great weekend of walking. At 10 o'clock on 12 June, Saturday's walkers met at Blue Bridge, before making their way through the busy streets of York to head to the nature reserve on Foss Islands Road. Rejoining the side of the Foss at the end of Monkgate, we spotted the miniature houses of the Foss fairy trail, a delight!

## Two days' walking



*Meeting at Blue Bridge*

As we passed out of York into Huntington and New Earswick we gained four more walkers, three of them four legged! There followed a lovely riverside walk from All Saints Church, Huntington, to Haxby, and another from Towthorpe bridge to Strensall, separated by a short road section caused by gaps in riverside rights of way in the area. Reaching Strensall at a good time for a break, we



*Reaching Old Humpy*

gave some custom to the Ship Inn, before eating our sandwiches in the grounds of Strensall Village Hall. With the foot- path along the Foss still closed due to bank collapse, we took the 'traditional' Foss walk through Strensall past Walbutts to cross the Foss again via a metal bridge. Tracks and minor roads then took us north towards Sheriff Hutton, before a sharp left turn actually took us near to Sheriff Hutton Bridge cricket club, where a match was on in the bright sunshine. The path on the Foss here was chest deep in nettles, so a brief road diversion was suggested by the (shorts wearing) leader, to rejoin the main path at Foss House.

From here farm tracks and paths lead to Black Collar Farm, outside Farlington, where the footpath (deliberately) crosses a very well-tended garden. Emerging into Farlington, we arrived just in time for a drink at the Blacksmith's Arms, whose landlord had kindly allowed us to park cars there, in order

to travel home. The drink was very refreshing, and six walkers (and a dog) stayed on for an excellent bar meal in the garden.

The next morning saw most of the walkers from the previous day return to Farlington, with the addition of four more, meaning that thirteen walkers and three dogs set off on another lovely sunny day. Passing through Marton-on-the-Forest on the way to Crayke, we began to rise gradually, gaining good views back to York, as well as towards our next stop, Pond Head



*Lunch at Pond Head*

reservoir. Pond Head made a lovely spot for lunch, and marked our departure from the Foss, although we did join the river Kyle just out of Oulston, where a delightful bench surrounding a shady tree gave much needed respite from the bright sunshine and cloudless sky.

We walked through agricultural and equestrian areas, before we traversed one final nettle-strewn path to reach the lane into Easingwold. After a photograph in the Market Place, several walkers re-hydrated in The George before using transport left in Easingwold to return to Farlington to collect cars. Considering the lack of foot traffic due to various lockdowns, the walk was surprisingly clear (apart from the nettles near Sheriff Hutton Bridge), the waymarking useful, and without too many obstacles from over-friendly livestock or thickly planted crops.



*A good pace ...*

*Journey's end at Easingwold*



*At Marton-on-the-Forest*



The statistics (thanks to Philip Mander) were: Day 1 Blue Bridge to Farlington 16.4 miles; Day 2 Farlington to Easingwold 12.6 miles.

It was encouraging to see such a good response to the walk this year. Thanks to all who made the journey.

*Derek Chivers*



## Tales of an Evening

Anne Bednarski shares her photos ...



Tiptoeing through the buttercups ...



... and spotting Garden Star-of-Bethlehem. Also known as 11 o'clock lady as it opens after noon.

On 8 June, eleven walkers set off from Dunnington on a beautiful sunny evening.



Philip made a new friend.



In front of the 18th century church at Holtby.



After 4 miles, back to Dunnington. Some of the walkers drove the short distance to the Black Bull, Hull Rd for a meal.

Member Tim Rane has done a lot of heavy litter picking from the Foss but his latest find was amazing. He found it in the river along Huntington Road. With help from others it was hauled out of the river, and he took it home for safekeeping. When the police were notified they reported that it had been stolen and they were in touch with the owner. The Environment Agency came out to check if any fuel had escaped and they were impressed that the RFS was involved. The bike has now been collected by its grateful owner.

## A sizeable catch



Yes, it's a big motorbike! A Foss first?



Tim's ready to haul the bike out of the river with the help of willing volunteers.



Safe at last!

Don't forget our website:  
[www.riverfossociety.co.uk](http://www.riverfossociety.co.uk)

### On the Foss

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