



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 26 April 2011

After a particularly long cold winter, spring has at last arrived and the Moor is coming alive again. Unfortunately there have been no skylarks yet and we hope that the measures to be taken this summer (see below) will not be too late, so that this iconic bird returns to us. There has been a countrywide decline in skylark numbers but there have also been issues particular to the Moor such as increased usage and thistle encroachment which has affected their nesting sites.

To everyone's surprise, 48 cows (Pedigree black Aberdeen Angus) appeared on March 9th - probably the earliest ever - and still wearing their winter coats. They are all very young (between 9 and 18 months) and were obviously overjoyed when they were first let out onto the Moor, running round it before they settled down to grazing. There are more of them now, around 60, all very gentle, the new ones very inquisitive, but once used to their new home not taking much notice of people or dogs. Numbers may rise as high as 72 over the summer and cattle will be moved on and off depending on the rate at which the grass grows. This is part of the Stewardship Scheme - see the details below.

Natural England Stewardship Scheme

The 10 year Stewardship scheme covering Hob Moor, Little Hob Moor and the Knavesmire started on 1st November and should be protected from recently announced DEFRA budget cuts. The immediate differences that this will make to the Moor are as follows:

- Grazing will be more tightly controlled and the cattle will be kept off North Lane Field. A new footbridge onto North Lane Field will be installed at the end of April to the west of the existing gate so that the field gate can be locked to allow the cattle controlled access only. For most of the summer the cattle will be kept off the field and the grass will be cut several times. This cropping will keep the nutrient levels going into the field low and will maximise a wild flower habitat in what is one of the most undisturbed areas of the Moor.
- Grazing dates and numbers of cattle will be carefully controlled to regulate the height of the sward to favour skylark nesting and thistle clearing. This year, the grass needs to be grazed very short through the Spring (hence the large numbers of cattle and their early arrival) so that the thistles will be well above the grass when they grow and so can be dealt with more easily.
- The thistles will be weed wiped probably twice over the summer once they have grown proud of the grass, but users of the Moor will be given plenty of notice and dogs and other pets won't be affected as the treatment will be of very specific areas and with a minimal risk weed killer.
- Some of the trees away from the edges of the Moor will be felled to remove nesting and perching sites for magpies and crows which prey on the skylarks and meadow pipits.
- More gorse and wild flowers will be planted.
- Hedgerows will be cut back where they are overgrown, gaps in them will be filled and new hedges planted; fencing will be repaired.
- An extra footbridge will be installed on to the Triangle to enable the easy removal of grass cuttings.
- The football pitches have been moved and will not be reinstated.
- In the longer term there will be new information panels and leaflets.

News From The Edges

A piece of the Open Space which adjoins Little Hob Moor at the end of Hob Moor Terrace is under threat from developers. A fence has been erected around the plot and FoHM are in contact with the local residents' association and the council. The issue is a complicated one which we will continue to monitor.

Jenny Cairns, the Council Ranger, has contacted some residents whose gardens border Hob Moor about their encroachment onto the Moor and/or the type of hedging used as a boundary. Leylandii hedging in particular has been a problem with clippings being left on the Moor. Some residents have been granted a 'garden licence' (but not full ownership rights) of the extra bit of garden and others will have to remove their 'new' boundaries.

Dogs

The FoHM have purchased a new larger dog waste bin to be sited at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to the Moor. With the current cutbacks, the Council will not increase the number of trips made to empty the bins, so this was seen as the best solution to the problem of overflowing bins. It is very welcome that the bins have been so well used, as it shows that more dog owners are aware of the environmental issues around dog fouling and are scooping the poop. The location of the bins will also be changed so that they are further away from the notice board. More bins should be provided under the Stewardship Scheme.

Children, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Hob Moor

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is starting a new Wildlife Watch Group in York which will meet every 3rd Saturday of the month from Saturday May 21st between 10am and 12noon, based at Dringhouses School. The aim is to introduce children aged 8-13 years to the wonders of the natural world around them and membership is open to anyone, not just YWT members. Activities include making and fixing bird/bat boxes, tree walks to observe and identify trees including collecting leaves and bark rubbing, pond dipping, bat watching, tree planting, wildflower planting, photography competitions, mini-beast homes, apple day with apple bobbing and food for free. Hob Moor will be one of the resource areas used. Contact Anne Leggett on 443344 or anne_leggett@yahoo.com

In Brief

- ❖ 12 new trees have been planted around the Lidl site. A new field gate allowing vehicular access to the Moor will be erected probably next year.
- ❖ New square wooden signposts have been installed on the cycle track at access points to the Moor. After it was pointed out by FoHM that these were higher than agreed, they were sawn down to the correct height.
- ❖ A summary of Martin Hammond's Survey of the Moor is now available on the FoHM website. If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy please contact us (details below).
- ❖ The trees on the inside of the fence around Our Lady's Catholic School should be safe when the site is developed. Preservation of the boundary trees can be made a condition of planning permission.
- ❖ On Sunday March 27th to mark the start of the Britain In Bloom campaign, the Friends Of Hob Moor teamed up with the City of York Council and York Tree Wardens to plant new hedgerows in the city. New hawthorn hedging has also been planted next to the fence by Hob Moor School and in North Lane Field.
- ❖ Also as part of York In Bloom, wild flower plugs have been planted in North Lane Field.

- ❖ If you were inspired by Nancy's talk on bats at the AGM and would like to be involved in bat detection, please get in touch. York Bat Group are in need of volunteers for Hob Moor. (Contact details below.)
- ❖ There were fungi and mushrooms of all kinds on the Moor in the Autumn. We need a member with a knowledge of them to help with identification. Again, please get in touch, details below.
- ❖ Members have asked about the restoration of the pond on The Triangle but unfortunately this is not possible as the pond is on private land.
- ❖ The new benches erected by FoHM and the council are well used and the area around the popular bench by the Green Lane entrance has been restored.
- ❖ Birds recently seen on the Moor or in gardens around it include snipe, siskin, redpoll, kingfisher, sparrowhawk and heron. Please let us know of any more unusual sightings.

Obituary: Frank Oates 1915-2011

Frank greatly valued his Honorary membership of the Friends of Hob Moor and was very pleased when Hob Moor was designated a local nature reserve. When she was writing her book on Hob Moor (published in 2004 and now put of print) Liz Smith was able to use Frank's reminiscences of fishing days on Kelsey's Pond and his photographs taken in 1944. Frank spent his working life as a joiner for the M.OD. but was a keen ornithologist and adept at writing and illustrating books about his birding adventures. I am pleased to have copies of them and they are available to borrow from me. Frank married his wife Lillian in 1939 at Acaster Malbis and they are both now buried in the churchyard there. Margaret Weeden tel 791477.

We would love to hear of any stories about the Moor or pictures to put on the website and we always welcome any members to the work of the Committee. As part of the normal retirement of committee members as their term of tenure comes to an end, we will be looking for a new Secretary in October and Treasurer and Chair in 2012. You are welcome to come to any of our meetings if you are at all interested, and you can be co-opted onto the committee: contact David or Gwen on 788018.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

To report damage etc. urgently on Hob Moor (24 hours)	625751
To report motor cyclists on Hob Moor, contact Police	0845 6060247
For removal of fly-tipped debris, litter, graffiti etc. York Pride	551551
Contact us with your comments and suggestions about Hob Moor and the Friends	784616
email: friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com	
website: www.friendsofhobmoor.org.uk or www.fohm.org.uk	

EVENTS ON HOB MOOR

SPRING CLEAN THE MOOR

Sunday 17th April 11am Hob Moor Drive Entrance

There are always plenty of bottles, plastic bags and rubbish on the Moor, but after the recent high winds the edges of the Moor are particularly litter strewn. Join FoHM for a spring clean of the Moor and a litter blitz. Litter pickers and bags provided but gardening gloves or similar are advised.

HOB MOOR

NATURE RESERVE DAY

A great afternoon out, with lots of activities for all the family: falconry display, fun dog show, willow weaving, face painting, story telling, bouncy castle, climbing frame, refreshments, stalls and more.

Saturday 28th May
1-3.00pm

Held behind Lidl Supermarket

YOU CAN ALSO MEET FoHM AT

West Bank Park Summer Fair

Sunday 26th June

1.00-3.30pm

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Acomb Green Fair
Saturday 27th August

1.00-3.30pm

Walks on Hob Moor Spring & Summer 2011

Saturday 14th May

4.00am – 6.00am

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Dawn Chorus Walk on Hob Moor with Bob Missin

Set your alarm clock, prime yourself with a strong tea or coffee and delight in dawn birdsong on and around the Moor.

Tuesday 7th June

7.00pm – 8.30pm

Meet at the Hob Stone on Little Hob Moor

History of Hob Moor Revisited with Elizabeth Smith

Join the author of the definitive book on the history of Hob Moor to find out what has happened on the Moor in the past.

Sunday 19th June

2.00pm – 4.00pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Bugs, Butterflies & Blossoms with Mark Tyszka

Join this always fascinating walk with Mark. Find the familiar; discover the new. Ask questions and be surprised. Walk with us and meet the creatures and flowers of hedges and pastures. Count butterflies and admire the trees. Bring a camera and a notebook. Children welcome.

Wednesday 6th July

7.00pm-9.00pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

The Stewardship Scheme and Hob Moor with Bob Missin

Find out from the man who's organised it how this scheme will affect Hob Moor over the next 10 years.

Saturday 30th July

2.00pm-4.00pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Butterfly Walk with Tony Fairburn

Hope for a still, dry and sunny day so that we can see the many butterflies that live on and around the moor.

Late August - date to be announced

Bat Night on the Moor

Discover the secrets of the moor at dusk! Come and spot the bats that come out just when you thought there was nothing to see on the moor. You'll need a torch, suitable footwear and warm clothes.

For details please email Jenny Cairns at jennifer.cairns@york.gov.uk or call her on 07833 436 832

Children are welcome on all the walks.

Please note that walks will not take place if it is raining heavily. For details of extra school holiday activities please see parks events leaflet at www.york.gov.uk/parks