



NEWSLETTER
Issue No. 28 April 2012

If the ancient Chinese curse 'May you live in interesting times' has anything to it, then this winter has indeed been a fortunate time for Hob Moor as very little has occurred! Happily, there have been no extremes of weather and there have been no incidents on the Moor. It is wonderful to see the grass growing again and the Moor looking beautiful and green. Work connected with the Stewardship Scheme goes ahead to plan (see below). Unfortunately there has been neither sound nor sight of a skylark on the Moor this spring, even with the warm weather at the end of March, and it seems unlikely that there will be even one breeding pair this summer. There are a couple of pairs on Bootham Stray, but the greater numbers of people using the Moor and the general nationwide decline in skylark numbers do not favour them nesting here. Hopefully the reduction in thistle coverage over the next couple of years will give them more potential nesting areas and we will see them return. The Moor isn't the same without them.

Natural England Stewardship Scheme

Fencing and hedging work was started on the Moor in the middle of February and all the fencing that needed replacing around the perimeter of the Moor has been renewed, paid for by the Stewardship scheme. There is now a very sturdy and neat fence of four strands of barbed wire attached to posts, a type of fencing which is cheaper and easier to repair. The stretch next to the Railway Institute land will have rails as well as barbed wire, so hopefully it won't get repeatedly damaged by kids using it as a means of getting between the Moor and the sports ground. There is no work planned for North Lane Field as the fencing there is already adequate and it will be kept cattle-free for the time being.

Over the winter the hedges on the side of the Moor near Orchard Way have been pruned and tidied and gaps filled with hawthorn; further coppicing of the hedges is planned. At the time of writing this still hadn't been finished so the new fencing hasn't been erected there yet.

Work will start soon on a new bridge across the beck to The Triangle.

New gates have been installed between the main part of the Moor and North Lane Field. These will remain locked while the cattle are on the Moor, to keep them off North Lane Field so that hay can be cropped there in the summer. This is a particularly ancient part of the Moor and cropping the hay will keep nutrient levels down as much as is possible, preserving the ancient pasture. Walkers can still access both parts of the Moor through the pedestrian part of the new gate and by the new wooden bridge over the beck to the west of the gate.

There will be another thistle wipe this summer to try to rid the Moor of more of its thistles. Last summer's blitz wasn't very effective, partly because early summer was dry and the thistles didn't grow very tall.

1000 wild flower plants are to be planted on Hob Moor.

News of the perennial issues on the Moor:

Litter

Litter on the Moor seems to have been bad over the winter, with high winds blowing it over from the west side and men on bikes throwing their drink cans away as they cycle across. (Women rarely seem to drink and cycle at the same time; it would seem that this is a multi-tasking ability peculiar to young men). There are also often broken bottles on or near the cycle track and an especial thank-you goes to whoever clears up the glass, as this is a real danger to people and animals. Thanks also, as ever, to those who pick up bottles, cans and litter generally as they walk over the Moor. If you do pick up litter and leave it in a plastic bag by a dog bin, the council will take it away when they empty the bin.

Cattle

The cows were taken off the Moor early last summer. They had been on the Moor in large numbers all summer to keep the grass short for thistle management, but because of a lack of rain the grass didn't grow enough to provide food for them at the end of the season. This has meant that there were fewer cow pats over the winter to breed the insects on which the crows, rooks and magpies feed, so there have been fewer of them around the Moor this winter, which in turn is good news for skylarks.

The plan is for the cows to be brought onto the Moor early again, to keep the grass short so that the thistles will stand up out of it ready for the weed wipe. A new cattle trough has been installed near Lidl so that the stock have somewhere to drink. At the time of writing the hedging and fencing on the south side of the Moor has still not been finished, so the cattle aren't on yet.

Dogs

The new dog bin provided by the Friends has still not been installed at the Hob Moor Drive entrance. Work was held up first of all by a change of staff responsible for organising it, then the dog bin went missing (!) but one has been re-ordered and we are promised it will be installed soon. Dog fouling continues to be a problem without an apparent solution and there seems to have been a lot of poop on the Moor this winter particularly near and on the paths, on the cycle track and even near the bins. Dog fouling of the cycle track is particularly bad for all the mums and dads with buggies and children on foot and with scooters; a lot of young children use the cycle path to get to school.

Trees

Two trees were lost on the banks of the beck on the north side of the Moor in the high winds of October: one ash tree blew down and another close by was taken down after being declared unsafe. Also on the north side, the stump of a willow which had been cut down about 10 years ago, and which had sprouted a lot of branches over the decade, split and fell across the beck in November and had to be removed.

The pile of tree trunks on the north side of the Moor came from a willow on the edge of the beck which blew down in the summer. The wood has been left to rot (with the council's permission) to provide a home for wildlife.

The stand of sycamore trees near the north east corner of the Moor has been reprieved from felling and the place of these trees in the ecology of the Moor will be re-evaluated in a few years.

In Brief

There have been few sightings of wildlife reported over the winter on the Moor, but a tree creeper was reported on the Friends website and a pheasant was seen looking very out of place on Little Hob Moor in February and again recently behind Hob Moor School.

After requests from the Friends, the Council have added the cycle track and the spur to the Hob Moor Drive entrance to the gritting route in bad weather.

January saw three men from the Environment Agency clearing the beck on the east and north sides of the Moor. There was a lot of rubbish in the beck; as well as the usual branches and twigs, the debris included large pieces of timber, a plastic garden chair and the inevitable traffic cone, all of which was impeding the flow of water as well as being unsightly. Most of the rubbish was taken away from the Moor but a couple of piles taken from the water are still on the banks.

The view of the Minster looking eastward across the Moor has been altered (for better or worse depending on your point of view, no pun intended) by the installation of the Wheel at the Station Hotel. Unfortunately there is no view from the main part of the Moor of the newly restored Holgate Windmill, which is obscured by the trees of West Bank Park, although it can be seen across the Moor from the train and the top of the sails glimpsed from The Triangle.

We are delighted that Jenny Cairns remains as our Ranger but, with a reduced Ranger team, she will be stretched thinly over the areas she has to cover.

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. 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.

We are also still in need of someone to manage the website and deal with emails, neither of which is particularly time consuming, but needs to be done.

Contact Simon Palmour on 784616 or email friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com

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 26th May

1pm-3.30pm

Held behind Lidl Supermarket



West Bank Park Summer Fair

Sunday 24th June

1.00pm-3.30pm



USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

To report damage etc. urgently on Hob Moor (24 hours)	625751
To report non-emergencies, inc motor cyclists on Hob Moor, contact Police	101
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

Walks on Hob Moor Spring & Summer 2012

Thursday 12th April

7.45pm-9.15pm

Meet at the Hob Stone, Hob Laine on Little Hob Moor (Tadcaster Rd access)

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. Booking essential.

Email Jenny Cairns at jennifer.cairns@york.gov.uk or call her on 07833 436 832

Saturday 5th May

4.00am-6.00am

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Dawn Chorus Walk on Hob Moor

Following the success of last year's Dawn Chorus walk, we are pleased that Bob Missin is willing to lead another this year, so set your alarm clock, prime yourself with a strong tea or coffee and come to delight in dawn birdsong on and around the Moor.

Sunday 17th June

2.00pm-4.00pm

Meet at the North Lane entrance to Hob Moor (near Chase Side Court)

“June is Bursting Out All Over”

Join this always fascinating walk with Mark Tyszka. Come with us to explore the Moor: to look, to see and to marvel. First the children can stroke a beetle, feed a bumble bee, tickle a flowering grass. Then we can count the petals on Buttercups to work out how old they are, admire the trees, remember a poem or quote a folklore myth and much, much more. Bring a notebook to make a 2 minute sketch and bring a camera to take back memories. Walk about 1mile in 2 hours.

Wednesday 18th July

7.00pm-9.00pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Stewardship Scheme

Find out from the man who's organised it - Bob Missin - how this scheme is working out in its second year.

Saturday 28th July

1.00pm-3pm

Meet at the Hob Moor Drive entrance to Hob Moor

Butterfly Walk

Join Tony Fairburn and hope for a still, sunny day so that we can see the many butterflies that live in and around the Moor.

Please note that walks will not take place if it is raining heavily.

Children are welcome on all the walks. Additional school holiday activities will be advertised on the noticeboards and in Shine.