



# NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 29 September 2012

After the drought of the latter part of last summer, the grazier was reluctant to put too many cattle on the Moor in case they had to be taken off early, as they were last year. He need not have feared! This has been one of the wettest of summers and the Moor has never completely dried out. Even during the sunniest patch of weather, large puddles and muddy paths have remained. When at the end of August it was still raining, the ground was so saturated that any rainfall was taking days to soak away and in many places was not disappearing at all. In the middle of May there were puddles so large on the Moor they looked like small ponds and a pair of disorientated ducks could be seen swimming on one of them for a time. By mid June, after particularly heavy rainfall, the water had so dissolved the cowpats that the main part of the Moor became a great field of slurry, to the chagrin of dog walkers who had to hose down their pooches after their walks. Walkers and cyclists sensibly kept to the cycle track.

The Moor was cut at the very end of August to remove the windlestraw (dried stalks of grass flowers) which prevents the cows from getting at the green grass and this cut down the thistles as well. The cut has left the Moor looking more open and particularly beautiful. The cut was high enough to not shear the new grass so has left the previously hidden bottles and cans hidden undamaged so they can be picked up.

## **Cattle**

There has been a variety of cattle on the Moor this year, a total of 53 bullocks and heifers. They were 13 months old when they arrived in the spring. The majority were Aberdeen Angus with 2 Hereford Crosses, 1 Belgian Blue and more recently 6 Blonde d'Aquitaine. Their diet of Hob Moor grass has been supplemented by mineral blocks containing natural rock salt. Their variegated colouring has looked very attractive on the Moor.

## **Thistles**

There has been no action on the thistles this year. Again the plan was for the grass to be chewed short by the cows so the thistles would stand proud and could be easily treated. However the cows were no match for the rapid growth of the grass in the wet and at the appropriate time for treating them, the thistles were not much higher than the grass.

## **Dogs**

No news on the dog front: there continues to be a dreadful amount of dog waste on the Moor and a great deal on the paths too.

## **Litter**

With the bad weather deterring outdoor revelry, there have not been quite as many bottles and cans left from carousals on the Moor this summer. A green wheelie bin mysteriously appeared at the Hob Moor entrance one day, which has been well used as a depository for all kinds of rubbish, although it says 'plastic bottles' on the side. No-one has claimed responsibility for its arrival but the council empty it, so there are no complaints.

## News in Brief

- ❖ The rabbit population on The Triangle has increased enormously.
- ❖ Residents with gates onto the Moor are reminded to keep them shut at all times to prevent the cattle getting between the Moor fencing and garden fences.
- ❖ Stewardship money for notice boards will mostly be used on the Knavesmire as Hob Moor's boards are already adequate but some money will be spent on their refurbishment.
- ❖ The new bridge on the Triangle will be built in September.
- ❖ The wildflower meadow on Little Hob Moor near the railway line will not be extended until next year but more wildflower plugs will be planted in North Lane Field in the autumn. New hawthorn hedging on the southwest side of the Moor will be planted next year and the fencing renewed there afterwards.
- ❖ From the Moor you can see the Minster, the Wheel, Holgate Windmill - and Lidl.
- ❖ Hob Moor is a geo-cache site - a modern form of treasure hunting using mobile phones. You can find out more from the Friends of Hob Moor website.

## Birds on Hob Moor

We are always pleased to receive news of birds seen on Hob Moor. There was a very brief visit from a skylark in the spring and some possible sightings since but not a note of its glorious song. If you have any unusual sightings do let us know, either directly or via the website. You may have seen others, if so let us know! So far this year one member who lives overlooking the Moor has seen the following: 43 and counting...

... Blackbird, Blackcap, Black Headed Gull, Blue Tit, Brambling, Bullfinch, Carrion Crow, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Collared Dove, Common Gull, Dunnock, Fieldfare, Great Tit, Greenfinch, Greylag Goose, Herring Gull, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Kingfisher, Linnets, Long Tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Mistle Thrush, Mute Swan, Pheasant, Redpoll, Redwing, Robin, Rook, Siskin, Song Thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted Woodpecker, Starling, Stock Dove, Swallow, Swift, Tawny Owl, Woodpigeon and Wren.

## The Becks

At the beginning of August, Marston Moor Internal Drainage Board, who is responsible for the flow of water in the becks, cut back the vegetation along the banks and dredged the stream bed to ensure that the water flows freely and that flooding is prevented. The silt and rubbish that was removed was dumped either on the sides of the beck or just inside the fence on the Moor. It is not allowed to take the silt away from the area so this has to be left close to the beck and when it has dried out the litter in it will be removed. Although it looked a mess for a while, it is already grassing over and the wild flowers growing through again on the bank. It is because of this work that the banks have been mown early; usually this would not happen until the end of August. And a kingfisher has been seen on the beck since the work was done. Along the path at the Green Lane entrance trees overhanging the beck have been cut back, all the shrubs and vegetation have been removed and the area between the path and the bank of the beck flattened and sown with grass seed.

While this was happening there was a digger parked on the edge of the north side of the Moor. The metal fencing around it was soon pushed aside by cows full of curiosity about it and also apparently licking salt stuck in the treads of the machine's tracks.

## **This Summer's Events**

**Dawn Chorus Walk** 5 stalwart members met Bob Missin at 4am to hear the birds begin their morning song on a cold May morning with frost on the grass. As the full moon sank as an enormous golden globe, we heard the first blackbirds, followed by robins, thrushes, wrens, tits, dunnock, chiff-chaffs and of course the ubiquitous doves and pigeons.

**Hob Moor Day** This year's fair was one of the busiest with more people attending than ever before. It didn't rain (!) but it was very windy and the Friends were kept on their toes retrieving scattered pictures and leaflets. We hope that next year the gazebo will be in a better site as we were tucked away at the end and didn't have many visitors.

**Stewardship Walk** Considering the weather has spoilt so many events this year we were lucky to have a fine warm evening for the Stewardship walk with Bob Missin, Countryside Officer for the City of York. About 17 people turned out as we headed for The Triangle where Bob explained why there are different grasses in this area from the rest of the Moor. He then pointed out where the new bridge will be built to make the removal of the harvested grass easier from The Triangle and the parts of Little Hob Moor where the new wild flower areas will be planted. Back on the main Moor, he briefly discussed the new fencing which is not yet complete as there are hedging trees still to be planted. The inevitable development of Our Lady's School site, the future of its perimeter trees and thistles were also talked about.

**Butterfly Walk** Tony Fairburn, ably assisted by his son Nathan, led a very successful butterfly walk at the end of July. They were joined by an enthusiastic group of 12 adults, 16 children and 4 dogs who learnt that patience, stealth and speed are needed to spot and safely net butterflies before they can be accurately identified. Tony supplied us with identification sheets so we could record our findings and submit them to the big butterfly count organised by Butterfly Conservation. Despite butterfly numbers suffering after the wet spring and early summer, we saw quite a number and variety. The wildflower area on Little Hob Moor was a particularly good location – especially as the sun came out just as we got there. Over a hundred butterflies and day-flying moths from eight species were found. The most common by far was the Meadow Brown followed by the Ringlet. The award for the most dramatic appearance must go to the Burnet moth (black with 6 bright red spots) and the Comma wins best disguise, its wings with frayed edges making it barely distinguishable from a dead leaf when folded. For youngest to oldest this was an extremely popular and informative activity and the Moor surprised us yet again.

**Mark Tyszka's Walk** Once again this unhappily clashed with Fathers' Day so numbers attending (about a dozen) were smaller than Mark deserves for his always entertaining and informative walk. We will make sure next year we schedule this walk better.

**West Bank Park** The Fair was as busy as usual and the Friends' gazebo attracted a lot of visitors; we acquired two new members and sold a lot of cards of pictures of the Moor. It was very soggy underfoot - but it didn't rain!

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## **Coming Soon ...**

### **Haunted Hob Moor - Thursday November 1<sup>st</sup> - 6-7.15pm**

Adrian Spendlow is back with another spooky walk across the moor for families and adults with tales of ghosts, hobbs and old folk lore. This was very popular last year and booking is essential.

Contact Jenny Cairns: 07833 436832 or [jennifer.cairns@york.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.cairns@york.gov.uk)

## The Friends Need Help!

We are still looking for someone interested in maintaining our website and dealing with Friends' emails. We have an excellent website and it would be a great pity if it were not maintained. There are 3 aspects to this which could be looked after as separate items by three different people or of course by one person. You would not need to join the committee (if you didn't want to) as any information you might need could be emailed to you. The roles are:

- 1) Maintaining the website - keeping the software up-to-date, dealing with technical problems, renewing domain names, etc.
- 2) Updating the website - adding photos, news, events details, newsletters, etc.
- 3) Sending out emails to members - about 6 times a year.

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We always welcome any members to the work of the Committee. We would love some new committee members as the constitution requires members to retire after several years. If there are any issues connected with Hob Moor you would like to be discussed by the committee and/or with the Council please let us know.

Contact Simon on 784616 or email [friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com)

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We have a new stock of our Hob Moor Leaflet - let us know if you would like some for distribution.

## FRIENDS OF HOB MOOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7.30pm**  
**West Thorpe Methodist Church, West Thorpe.**  
(Parking available)

Before the business part of the meeting there will be a talk on the trees of Hob Moor

### 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 comments and suggestions about Hob Moor and the Friends:

phone: 784616  
email: [friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com)  
website: [www.friendsofhobmoor.org.uk](http://www.friendsofhobmoor.org.uk) or [www.fohm.org.uk](http://www.fohm.org.uk)