



NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 31 September 2013

After a very wet winter and spring which saw the Moor turned to mud and huge puddles, once again Hob Moor has been magnificent over the summer. It began with the best display of buttercups anyone could remember and with the sunshine and good weather, progressed into long waving green grass in places the cattle couldn't get to. Even the biggest of the puddles eventually dried up and the Moor has been a delight to walk over and round all summer. The sorrel gave the Moor a lovely russet tinge in July and in August it became a golden yellow as the grass which had flowered, dried. Anyone out on the Moor early morning or in the evening had the full benefit of low sunshine enhancing the tawny colours. The warm sunny weather has also contributed to a great increase in the numbers and variety of butterflies and moths on the Moor.

There are several changes afoot at the moment which affect the Moor. One in particular, the development of Our Lady's School site, will have quite an impact on the Moor, and the other is the council's decision not to run another summer fair on the Moor. Both of these are discussed below. The first thing that users of the Moor will notice, however, is the disruption caused by cable laying in the autumn.

Laying of new electricity cables

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, new electricity cables have to be laid under the Moor. There has been a site meeting to discuss how this will be done with countryside & wildlife, archaeology, environment, conservation, and tree organisations. Northern Powergrid has sent out an initial contact letter to all residents and businesses along the route and updates will be sent out when they are working in their vicinity but this will affect residents around the Moor only minimally.

The work near Hob Moor School should be completed before the school reopens after the summer. Track will have to be laid near the school but it is hoped that even after the heavy rain in the second half of August, the ground should still be firm enough for the machinery not to cause too much damage. The boundary fence and hedge around the school do not need to be touched. The plans involve the track being moved over the 3 weeks it is on the Moor to allow light to the grass.

The main work on the Moor should start on October 5th and will take 4-5 weeks. Heras metal fencing will be used around the areas the contractors are working on to protect the public and animals. When the soil is removed, it will be separated it into topsoil and subsoil and this will be used this to fill the area in again when the work is complete. Around a third will need be taken away. The ground will be reseeded in April with wildflower seeds provided by CYC (so the mix is right) but paid for by the contractors and any ridge and furrows disturbed will be reinstated. The cycle track will have to be closed at times and diversions will be signed.

The work on Little Hob Moor is scheduled to start on November 16th and will take 2 weeks. The contractors are aware of the Hob Stone and are routing the cables to avoid damaging the trees along Tadcaster Road as the cable will have to pass between or under them and under the road. Again, as with the main part of the Moor, the land that has been disturbed will be reseeded in the spring.

When the site was inspected, it was noted that one of the chestnuts has bleeding canker, a disease which is increasingly affecting horse chestnuts and can be fatal, so the tree will have to be monitored.

It is hoped that there will be no need to close the tunnel under the railway and the work here will be carried out on a Saturday evening/Sunday morning and to the side of the bridge not in the tunnel.

Future of Our Lady's School Site

At the time of writing, a formal planning application had not been submitted to CYC but Yorkshire Housing has released plans to build 56 new houses on the site. The consultation meeting was badly publicised and the Friends was not told about it. Three committee members managed to be there (it was held on an afternoon as well, making it more difficult for people to attend), and there was no time to inform members. We have written to Yorkshire Housing about the impact of the proposed development on Hob Moor, and pointed out the fact, of which they seemed ignorant, that they will be building in a nature reserve and have made no allowances for this in their planning. We feel that the current plans are for an unacceptable density of buildings, cars and people, as the original plans for the site were for only 29 houses. We will send out more information when the next stage of planning is reached, including whom you should contact to voice your views on the new plans. We hope to have more information at the AGM.

New Bridge

The new bridge between The Triangle and the main part of the Moor was finally built at the end of July by TCV and was used within a week to take the first crop of hay from The Triangle. This is part of the scheme to keep the soil fertility low in that area to promote the growth of wild flowers (rabbits permitting!) There is a gate on the Moor side with a spring to keep it shut.

Cattle

The cattle on the Moor this year have been mainly Aberdeen Angus, some Limousins (a French breed) and 2 distinctive Belgian Blues. The 50 cattle were kept on the main Moor until the grass in North Lane pasture was harvested in early July when they were given access to that as well. With the grass now growing more slowly, their number has been reduced to around 26 who will stay until late October.

Dogs

Lots of dogs on the Moor as always and unfortunately some concern has been raised with the Friends via our website about bad behaviour by some dogs with their owners. We were pleased to be contacted but unable to help and suggested the Dog Warden.

Both of the dog waste bins at the Hob Moor entrance have been vandalised by fire and are currently lidless.

Thistles

There is no news about thistles! The main part of the Moor is relatively thistle free and there was no need to take any anti-thistle action this year. There are still enough thistles growing all along the northern edge of the Moor to keep the goldfinches happy, though.

Summer Events

- ❖ A dozen people turned up for the evening bird walk on Tuesday 14th May. One of our members, Margaret Weeden, stepped into the breach at very short notice when the original walk leader was taken ill on the day. Although the weather was not ideal for the birds, Margaret helped identify several species by sound, mainly in the Triangle and the wooded area of Little Hob Moor.
- ❖ The sun beat down on the crowds who attended the annual Hob Moor Day at the end of May. Attractions included the birds of prey, the dog show, face painting and story telling for the children. The cattle were particularly curious about the stalls this year. Friends of

Hob Moor held our first ever photo competition, and attracted some very good entries for the adult and under-16 categories. The worthy winners can be seen on our website and Facebook page.

- ❖ On the 5th June Elizabeth Smith gave another excellent "Walk & History Talk " about the Moor. 20 people met on Little Hob Moor at the Hob Stone on Hob Lane on a nice summer evening. Elizabeth told us about the Hob Stone & Plague Stone before we walked over to the ancient hedge-row and the old orchard. We then walked through the tunnel onto the main Moor to learn about the ridge & furrow ploughing which is still visible.
- ❖ This year we tried something a bit different with 2 events on June 21st. On a glorious evening on Friday 21st June, Mark Tyszka led a group of eighteen including five children around the Moor on another of his fascinating nature walks. The Moor was looking particularly beautiful with the buttercups, even though they were just past their best. As usual there was a good smattering of folklore and riddles around the things we saw which led very well into our summer solstice celebrations. The walk started on North Lane, moved across the Moor and onto Little Hob Moor then round the north end of the Moor finally ending up at the hawthorn tree in the middle of the Moor.
- ❖ After the Mark Tyszka walk finished, we went straight into the Summer Solstice event. A table had been set up in the middle of the Moor and all the people who turned up brought food and drink to share. 18 people attended and 1 or 2 passing dog-walkers joined in (the 2 meter table wasn't big enough). A man turned up with a drum and he was able to give a drum-roll to introduce Stephen Sayers who gave us a excellent talk about the meaning of the solstice. He really looked the part as he walked across the Moor with a top-hat decorated in greenery and carrying a carved staff.

We will hold another solstice event on Saturday the 21st December with lanterns & candles. All are welcome, so wrap up warm and join us.

- ❖ Bob Missin led a group of eight on Tuesday 9th July around the Moor to discover and discuss what was being done with the Stewardship scheme over the last three years and the plans for the future. Inevitably the discussions ended up with talking about what was likely to happen to Our Lady's School site.
- ❖ On their butterfly hunt in the first week of August, the children with Ranger Jenny Cairns spotted Large White, Small White, Small Copper, Peacock and Ringlet butterflies. There seemed to be good numbers and more species than just the ones caught (and released) by the children. Another visitor to the Moor recorded on our Facebook page that in addition to these he had also spotted Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Small Tortoiseshell, Small Skipper and a lovely Comma.

Hob Moor Summer Fair 2014

Next year the council will not run the Hob Moor Summer Fair and so the committee met for a special meeting in early August to consider the feasibility of the FoHM organising and running a Summer Fair on Hob Moor next year. The committee decided after careful consideration to recommend to the Friends not to run one for the following reasons:

1. It is likely to cost at least £1,000 per year, even after including any income, if run in the same way as the council has done in the past. Costs could be reduced if some paid for events, such as the birds of prey, were excluded but then the fair would most certainly be much less attractive to the public.
2. It would require a great deal of organisation from January onwards and the committee is already very stretched; it should be noted that there were very few offers of interest or help and the offers were mainly for the day of the fair. There are other concerns such as Health & Safety and insurance issues.

3. It does not benefit the Friends of Hob Moor, or Hob Moor itself, very much and should there be any spare time and money they might be better spent on promoting the Moor in other ways such as having an occasional stall at Lidl, setting up an information table on the Moor or indeed getting involved in the proposed West Bank Park Visitor Centre.

The committee expressed its great disappointment and concern that the council does not feel it is able to run the fairs in the future because they have always been an important and excellent community event and well supported by the public and various stall holders. The committee is aware that running a joint fair with others such as West Bank Park and Acomb Green is being proposed; if so the committee said it would like to be involved in discussions.

AGM

This will take place on Wednesday 30th October at 7.30pm at the Methodist Church on West Thorpe as usual. Dave Meigh, the once head of Parks and Open Spaces and now rebranded Operations Manager for CYC, will be with us to discuss the impact of changes to funding on Hob Moor and give us some background to the reasons behind council cutbacks.

We will also be discussing the urgent need for new committee members. The committee is currently very small, only 7 members, at least two of whom, including the chair, will have to retire in a year's time. The committee member dealing with memberships and the newsletter is one of those who will have to step down, so there is a desperate need for people to join the committee and eventually take over these roles. Please make yourself known to someone on the committee before or during the AGM if you would like to just come to a meeting without commitment to see if you would like to join us.

Membership Renewals

Membership renewals are due on November 1st. You can renew your membership at the AGM if you have an annual one. If you have a six year or life membership or pay by standing order, you do not have to do anything. Reminders and renewal forms will be sent out after the AGM to those who do need to renew.

FRIENDS OF HOB MOOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 30th October 2013 at 7.30pm
West Thorpe Methodist Church, West Thorpe.
(Parking available)

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: 634512
email: friendsofhobmoor@yahoo.com
website: www.friendsofhobmoor.org.uk or www.fohm.org.uk