



July 2008

# News from St Nicks

## York in Transition

at Friends of St Nicholas Fields AGM

Thur. 31st July at York Environment Centre

**Transition initiatives are springing up all over the country and all over the world. From Whitstable to Wolverhampton, from Boulder (Colorado) to Bellingen (New South Wales) and even, as Radio 4 listeners will know, in Ambridge... Transition is the word.**

**Locally, York in Transition has just been launched as part of this growing grassroots response to the combined effects of climate change and energy uncertainty. Come hear what it is all about and how you can get involved.**

**7:15pm – Refreshments**

**7:30pm – York in Transition presentation with Barry Graham & Edward Harland**

**8:30pm – Annual General Meeting with a review of the year's activities and events and the election of the management committee and officers. New members welcome!**

For a copy of the full agenda ring (0904) 411821 or email [info@stnicksfields.org.uk](mailto:info@stnicksfields.org.uk)

## 7th June was Big Recycle Day

This year's annual recycling extravaganza attracted over **300 people** for an afternoon of junk swapping, junk juggling, junk sculpture making, recycled art and other waste-free fun. **Thanks to** funding from **Hull Road Ward Committee** and everyone who turned up, it was bigger and better than ever. Hundreds of people have given homes and found a use for stuff that other people were throwing out. Jo Pullar from Space 109 joined by many helpers made an impressive **junk sculpture** of a foxy 'Bag Lady' (the one with the frilly plastic bag dress in the photo) who has now taken up residence inside the Centre and attracts lots of admirers.

Don't forget that you can junk swap all year round on **York Freecycle** (see [www.yorkrecycling.net](http://www.yorkrecycling.net) for more details).



### Friends of St Nicholas Fields

♻️ national 2007 Biffa Climate Conscious Award winner

♻️ registered charity (no. 1068909)

♻️ supported by the City of York Council

York Environment Centre, Rawdon Av, York YO10 3ST

tel./ fax: (01904) 411821 ♻️ [www.stnicksfields.org.uk](http://www.stnicksfields.org.uk)

general enquiries: [info@stnicksfields.org.uk](mailto:info@stnicksfields.org.uk)

composting advice: [rotters@stnicksfields.org.uk](mailto:rotters@stnicksfields.org.uk)



## Nature Reserve Update

The **new path** providing wheelchair access from the back of the Dragon Stones up to the bund is now complete, thanks to funding from the Big Lottery. The path leading northwards along the top of the bund and through the woodland area has also been resurfaced and much improved. Further path improvements are planned for later in the summer.



A new **tree trail** has also been created with funding from the Big Lottery. A leaflet and map is available from the Environment Centre with information about the trees at St Nicks. Do call in and pick one up next time you are passing.

On a less positive note, the wooden **entrance way** to the nature reserve on Melrosegate had to be taken down when we discovered that it was unsafe due to rot (action shot on the left). We are now seeking ideas for the design of a new entrance way and funding to create it.

## Volunteer Co-ordinator Calling

Over the last couple of months we've developed some exciting **new volunteering opportunities** including: events and publicity volunteer, centre volunteer, maintenance volunteer, environmental education volunteer and volunteer park ranger. We've also started a new gardening club on Tuesdays (1–4:30pm) to work on the design and maintenance of the Centre garden. No green fingers required!

If you would like to get involved or want any more information please feel free to pop in for a chat with Michelle Hawthorne or get in touch: Tel. 411821 or email <[volunteer@stnicksfields.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@stnicksfields.org.uk)>. We really couldn't keep St Nicks going and growing without such amazing volunteers!

### VOLUNTEER APPEAL

**Saturday Volunteers needed** – To open and staff the centre on Saturdays (usually once a month) from 10am–2pm. This mainly involves chatting to visitors about St Nicks, supervising the shop and offering advice. All training will be given.

**Distributors** – Would you be happy to distribute St Nicks posters and leaflets around the area you live? If you are happy to be contacted when we need some help please let us know.

**Wildlife Watch Volunteer** – Jane, our bird expert, has been exploring the nature reserve each week recording her bird sightings for the last seven months. She is off to Birmingham in September, so we would like say a huge thank you for the time and expertise she has shared with us, and wish her all the best of luck in the future. Please get in contact if you would like to be a wildlife watch volunteer for birds, insects, butterflies, trees, pond dwellers or wildflowers.



**Drenched Himalayan Balsam bashers with their kill.** There were huge piles of Balsam left at the end of the soggy Eco-Active Day on 5th July but this was one of the most impressive plants. Most of the plants towered above our heads and some, like this specimen, had stems thicker than an arm.



## Environment Centre Update

The garden is looking lovely with the help of our new **Gardening Club** and **Jean's Square Garden** has been producing loads of salad and other veg. Keeping slugs and birds off it has been a bit of a struggle but beer traps (our slugs only get the finest beer rescued from our recycling round) and wire cages seem to have done the trick.



TEE Venture's woodworking team and the lovely blue shop counters they have made for us.

For the run up to our **guided Butterfly Walk** at the end of July, Jesika Bone has kindly donated to us some of her **amazing butterfly photos** which are currently on display in the main hall. Proceeds of their sale will go towards the maintenance of the Butterfly Walk in the nature reserve. Pop in and have a browse.



Jean is proudly showing off her new spuds.

Some of you may have been here when Kate Lock was researching her book on green shopping through a well-attended tasting session last summer. **'Confessions of an Eco-Shopper'** is coming out in August and we will be stocking it in our shop. We are also hoping to organise a book reading evening some time in September, so watch out for details.



## York Rotters Update

Since the last newsletter York Rotters have been very busy with Compost Awareness Week and attending roadshows. We have been awarded a grant to set up a 'Little Rotters' group aimed at children age 9–15. If you would like your child to get involved or want to know more about the project please contact us. One of the things which Little Rotters may do is learning Anneliese Emmans Dean's **Compost – the Mini Musical**. This was performed by pupils at Archbishop of York's C of E Junior School during Compost Awareness Week. It was recorded and aired by Radio York.

York Rotters are holding two **Free Compost Training courses** covering both the basics and more advanced techniques such as dealing with cooked food waste. There will also be a session for anyone wanting to know more about becoming a 'Rotter'. See overleaf for the details.

The demonstration composting area at the Environment Centre has had a makeover. A working display compost bin has been set up and banners about what, why and how to compost will be put up shortly.

For anyone interested in composting their cooked food waste, we are currently selling **Junior Wormeries** (pictured right along with a kitchen caddy and bokashi composter) for £16—half their recommended retail price—thanks to a grant from Community Composting Network. Come and get one while stocks last!

We are always on the look out for more **volunteers** to help spread the word about composting, so if you are interested in becoming a 'Rotter' then let Catherine Bamford know on (01904) 412861 or <rotters@stnickfields.org.uk>. No previous experience of composting is needed as full training will be given.



## St Nick's Events July - October

Meet at the York Environment Centre unless stated otherwise. Check our website or call us on 01904 411821 for bookings, more information and more events. Please help us spread the word.

### REGULAR EVENTS

#### Eco-Active Days

Fancy a bit of exercise whilst doing something useful outdoors, followed by a free lunch? Join us on:

- ♻️ Wed. 16th July, 11-4pm - meadow mowing
- ♻️ Sat. 2nd August, 10-1pm - Dragon Stones
- ♻️ Wed. 13th August, 11am-4pm - footpath TLC
- ♻️ Sat. 6th September, 10-1pm - deadhedging
- ♻️ Wed. 17th Sept., 11-4pm - entrance autumn clean
- ♻️ Sat. 4th October, 10-1pm - insect homing
- ♻️ Wed. 15th October., 11-4pm - tbc

#### Camera Club

Meets every first Saturday of the month 2-4pm (except in August when we're not meeting). New members welcome. Charge £5/£3 per session, first one free.

### OTHER EVENTS



#### Composting Training Sessions

Sat. 19th July & Sat. 20th September

10am–12.30 a Free 'How to Compost' training  
12.45–2pm 'Train to be a York Rotter volunteer'

Be amazed at the wide variety of waste which you can turn into fantastic compost – and you don't even need a garden to do it. Come to the morning or both sessions and become a master composter.

#### Butterfly Walk Sat. 26th July, starts 11am

See how many of the more than 20 species of butterflies recorded on St Nicks you can spot on a walk with a local expert Tony Fairburn. Please book ahead.

#### St Nicks AGM Thursday 31st July

See details on front page.

#### Spider Workshop Sat. 27th Sept., 10am-3pm

Learn how to collect spiders on a walk through the nature reserve with Geoff Oxford, an expert from the University of York. You will then take your finds to a laboratory at the Biology Department on campus to identify them and take a closer look through microscopes. Please book ahead. Charge £10 per adult/ £6 concession/ £3 per child.

#### Apple Day Saturday 11th October, 1-4pm

Dig out your favourite apple pudding recipe and join in our regular celebration of everything apple: juicing, juggling, printing, stewing...

#### EVENTS IN THE PIPELINE

'Confessions of an Eco Shopper' book reading with Kate Lock (September), Fungi Foray with Findlay Cook (October)

## The Big Green Week! for 7-11 year olds Monday 4th - Friday 8th August, 10am-3pm

Join us for the whole week or pick the day you want to take part:

Mon: **Exploration Day** – a treasure hunt in the nature reserve

Tue: **Photography Day** – taking wildlife pictures and making cards

Wed: **Woodwork Day** – making a wooden box to display your nature finds

Thu: **Habitat Day** – exploring different habitats of the nature reserve and a live multimedia Buzzing! show followed by a minibeast hunt

Fri: **Craft Day** – making woodcut animals and decorating cotton bags

**Please book ahead. Cost: £12 per day (£10 with a York card)**