



**Wessex
Chalk Stream
& Rivers Trust**

Newsletter - Winter 2014

Chairman's Introduction:

The nine months since Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust's last newsletter have been very busy and productive for us. In my last introduction I mentioned Dr Nick Giles, who has been appointed as our Programme Development Officer, funded by the Environment Agency. Nick has launched himself with tremendous energy into a wide range of projects across many of the rivers of Wessex. His report is inside, but suffice to say that we have completed more than 20 habitat improvement projects on the Hampshire Avon, Wylde, Nadder, Test, Dun, Allen and Meon rivers.

There are less than 200 chalk streams and rivers in the world and about 180 are in the UK. Many which have catchments in the Wessex region are in serious decline from over abstraction, pollution and other pressures. These include several world famous names, among them the Test, Itchen and Hampshire Avon. Inevitably, this has had adverse effects on birds, mammals, fish and invertebrates whose homes are in the

rivers or along their banks. Our projects are a step in the long walk to putting things right.



In the autumn the Environment Agency announced that Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust has been appointed to coordinate for DEFRA the preparation of environmental plans for two catchments: Test & Itchen and Hampshire Avon. This is part of a larger programme being set up by DEFRA across all the catchments of England and Wales. On the Test &

Itchen catchment we are working closely with The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and on the Avon we will carry out the work alone.

Our first task is to build inclusive catchment partnerships to make sure we receive representative views of what the environmental priorities are. We see our appointment in these two important catchments as a great opportunity to consolidate the many plans for them which are already in place and then move forward to help to implement the new catchment plans. Please see more about this in the article inside by our Director, Tom Davis.

Our supporter base continues to grow steadily, and though fund raising remains a challenge, we have made headway in securing charitable grants. Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is covering our core management and administrative costs. So please continue to support us in any way you can.

George Seligman
Chairman



I am pleased to say that we have made good progress on all four of the priorities I wrote about in the last newsletter.

On the communications side, thanks to hard work by Zam Baring and others, our website has been thoroughly revamped. We hope that you will find it more informative, up to date and useful to those interested in the work of the Trust. A web-based mechanism for becoming a supporter has been added which is quicker and slicker than the conventional way. (Now there is even talk about twitter and tweeting and strange things like that!) We have also run a number of social events, including river walks for Founders and interested land owners: to appraise them of the work of the Trust and update them on how their contributions are being spent.

Our advocacy work has focused on three key areas of concern: 1) the use of water resources and the effects of abstraction on river habitat; 2) water quality; and 3) Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plans.

We played an active part in the consultations associated with the revision of the water companies' Water Resource Management Plans. These plans look at water provision over the next 25 years, and are revised every five years. We made robust responses focused on reducing and providing alternatives to abstractions which are impacting on sensitive river ecosystems. We also pressed for more widespread metering of customers and leakage reduction, especially where water is exported out of catchment, and for earlier measures to reduce water usage under drought conditions.

The proposed increase in abstraction at Testwood on the lower Test to meet the Habitats Directive driven reductions on the Itchen remains a key concern for us.. We view this very much as a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul, just because Paul (in this case the Itchen) is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the Test only a SSSI; rather than addressing the underlying issue. Portsmouth Water's proposed Havant Thicket Reservoir

could have a key role to play here, if only the matter could be viewed on a strategic and regional basis. It would also contribute to a much needed step change in the security of water supply, reducing the insidious and gradually increasing pressure on our sensitive chalk stream habitats. Meanwhile we remain concerned about the impact the Chitterne abstraction has on the Wylfe in particular where, despite the record groundwater levels at the end of 2012, flows rapidly fell below long term average in 2013, in stark contrast to all other chalk rivers in the region. On a positive note it was good to see proposed reductions in abstraction in the Mere area and in the Tarrant valley.

On the issue of water quality, phosphorus continues to concern us and is the focus for our work with Southampton University looking at headwater catchments. Meanwhile, consultations are currently under way on the introduction of new regulations for discharges from cress and fish farms, including phosphate, ammonia and BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand). We have looked carefully at the proposals and while we welcome regulation at last, we are not entirely happy with the approach.

Project delivery work has progressed well under the direction of Nick Giles. Top of the list has been the Severals Project which was completed in October on the River Avon just downstream of Ringwood. By careful design and planning this project delivered benefits for both habitat and flood alleviation. Earlier in the year work was carried out on the Wylfe and Nadder to improve nursery habitat and cover for salmon and trout parr. Meanwhile, work has begun on the Dun catchment improvement project, with advisory visits, outline proposals and habitat restoration work in partnership with the EA and the Wild Trout Trust. This is part of a broader scheme to improve habitat, address diffuse pollution and open up access for spawning sea trout. For more detail on these projects see separate articles.

The establishment of the new Catchment Partnerships (see article on the Catchment Based Approach) represents a significant opportunity for land owners, riparian owners and those who enjoy the benefits of

good river habitat to influence the planning and prioritisation of river improvements. Our geographic region includes four catchment partnerships: East Hampshire which extends from the Meon eastwards; the Test & Itchen; the Hampshire Avon; and Dorset which includes the Stour, Frome, Piddle and rivers to the west. Our appointment as lead partner for the Hampshire Avon and co-lead for the Test & Itchen with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust is also a great opportunity for us. We are engaged as partners in the Stour Catchment Partnership and we hope to do the same in the East Hampshire Catchment.

Jon Bass has continued his valuable work on river water temperature, which will be of increasing value as the effects of climate change kick in. He reports on this separately. We have a very interesting proposal for a pilot project using invertebrate assemblages to map water quality which we would very much like to get off the ground, if we can obtain sufficient funding. We feel that this could be an enormously powerful tool to help us prioritise work to address diffuse pollution. More detail on this is given later in the newsletter.

Plans are afoot for another round of Trout In Schools projects this winter, all of which were successful last year. Our Mayfly in the Classroom scheme run in partnership with the Wild Trout Trust was rolled out at ten locations in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. All succeeded in hatching mayflies. Some hatched several batches and others had success with stoneflies and caddis. All schools visited their local river or stream in the course of the project either to catch or release the mayflies. The plan is to expand this in 2014.

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed Denise Ashton onto our board of trustees. Having spent most of her working career with IBM, Denise now works part-time for the Wild Trout Trust, and is well known in the river conservation field. She is a keen fly fisher and has a personal interest in the River Meon.

Rupert Kelton joined us in October as part time Catchment Officer for the Test & Itchen Catchment Partnership. Rupert, who grew up on the banks of the Test, has a land/estate management background and has recently worked for BASC and the Westcountry Rivers Trust. Jacob Dew will be joining us from the 6th March as full-time Catchment Officer for the Hampshire Avon Catchment Partnership. A warm welcome to both.

We were much saddened by news of the death of our former chairman, Brian Marshall, in November. Brian dedicated much of his later life to the conservation of the River Avon and its fragile salmon population and played a key role in the establishment of this trust. Our sympathies go out to his wife Pat and their family. An appreciation of Brian appears later in this newsletter.

Tom Davis

RIVER DUN HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

On October 10th 2013 WCSRT's Nick Giles combined forces with Andy Thomas of the Wild Trout Trust and a band of volunteers from the National Westminster Bank fishing syndicate to improve trout and grayling habitats on the River Dun at Lockerley.



V-structure to promote bed scouring

The riparian owner, Bill McClintock, kindly provided a pile of suitable logs and transported them to the river bank for us. The work, consented by the EA, entailed a training day for our enthusiastic volunteers who learnt how to construct a series of differing current deflectors designed to create better trout lies, scoured into the bed of the river and woody debris cover for fish of all sizes. We were lucky to have fine weather and a willing work force which produced, over the course of the day, a left bank log 'kicker', an upstream 'V' pool/riffle scourer, a right bank cover log, an attractor flow diverter to encourage spawning trout to access a suitable side stream and the provision of large woody debris within the side stream to provide safe cover for wild trout fry. This fishery has much potential for further work, which we hope to help with in future.



Log deflector to accelerate the flow

TRUST PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN LOCAL CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIPS



Many of the problems facing our rivers have their root causes not in the river channel itself, but in the catchment that feeds the river. These include diffuse pollution from fertilisers and

pesticides coming from farmland, high levels of silt from roads and fields, and lack of flow exacerbated by abstraction of ground water. These are big issues and need co-operation between farmers, water companies, government agencies and 'third sector' groups like the Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust to resolve. The Government has recognised that a 'Catchment Based Approach' is the best way to tackle these problems, and that local catchment partnerships of the relevant parties, rather than central Government, is the best way forward.

In mid 2013 the countrywide Catchment Partnership scheme was launched with the intention of securing greater involvement of non-government organisations, land owners, private sector businesses and other river interest groups in prioritising and implementing river improvements.

Following a formal bidding process, the Trust was appointed by the EA as the lead organisation for the Hampshire Avon catchment, and joint lead with the Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust for the Test and Itchen catchment. We have appointed Rupert Kelton as part-time Catchment Officer working alongside Ali Morse of the Wildlife Trust. A full-time officer for the Avon Catchment, Jacob Dew, will be starting in early March.

The scheme has the full support of the Environment Agency who will work closely with the Trust and its partners providing access to technical expertise and data needed to prioritise and deliver improvements.

While the main targets for improvement are the river channels and corridors, the focus of attention will be very much across the river basin as a whole, since drainage from the land and waste water discharged from man's activities have a significant influence on river water quality and the health of the rivers.

Appointment of the lead role comes with a small amount of start-up funding to work with the many stakeholders to establish a catchment action plan. This is not about

reinventing the wheel, getting buried in a mass of data, and talking endlessly about plans. It is about getting a clear view of all the good initiatives that are already underway by the Trust and by others (Catchment Sensitive Farming, for example) and filling in the gaps where there are issues but not actions. We are told that the Catchment Partnerships will be one of the key vehicles for future direction of funding of river improvements.



Some farming activities may cause damaging silt inputs to the rivers if not well managed

This a very important development for the Trust and we will be working hard to ensure we continue to nurture the good relationships we already have (for example with the fisheries associations) and to build new partnerships with the Water Companies, farmers and other industries which have an impact on the catchment and the river. The role of Catchment Lead will be challenging, not least because it comes with very little funding, so raising money as well as delivering effective action on the ground will be a priority.

If you are interested in participating in either of these catchment partnerships we are keen to talk to you. Please contact either Rupert Kelton (Rupert.Kelton@wcsrt.org.uk) or Tom Davis (Director@wcsrt.org.uk).

CREATING BETTER HABITATS FOR HAMPSHIRE AVON SALMONIDS

During the spring of 2013, Nick Giles of WCSRT and Chris Gardner of the EA surveyed juvenile salmon habitat quality in a series of locations on the upper Hampshire Avon system along the Rivers Wylde and Nadder. Most Avon system salmon are thought to spawn in these rivers, upstream of Salisbury. This work was prompted by information from the Dorset River Frome where chalk stream salmon populations are suffering a period of particularly low abundance and urgently need help. It is thought that this situation is likely to exist on other chalk streams, including the Avon

which is an SAC river designated (amongst other species) for Atlantic salmon.

The habitat surveys revealed seriously silted spawning gravels and a lack of physical cover for emerging salmon fry and growing parr. Silted spawning gravels can be rehabilitated with carefully-targeted high pressure jet-washing in early autumn and a lack of physical cover can be addressed by the provision of additional large woody debris and large flints or cobbles. This low-cost project addressed physical cover; gravel-jetting is to be considered in future when funding is available.

Young salmon and trout are aggressively territorial and the numbers of fish which a stream can support can be boosted in areas of relatively bare gravel bed by creating a complex of cover within which parr can hide and defend small feeding areas. This cover may be especially important in winter when weed cover has died back, leaving fish exposed over open stream beds. It is known that in spatey upland rivers, salmon parr hide within cobble cover during the winter.

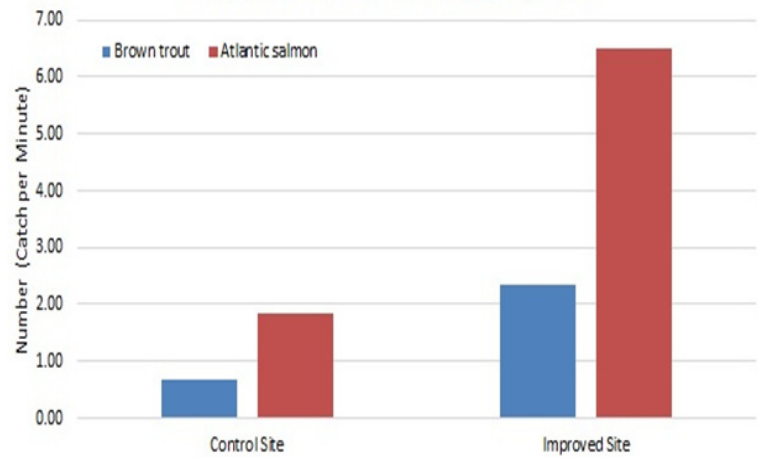
With riparian owner support and EA and NE consent, we developed a series of study sites where small greensand cobbles could be introduced to the River Nadder and large flints to the River Wylfe. Several tonnes of rocks and flints were then manually introduced to each river. The greensand was kindly donated by the Hurdcott Estate from their quarry.



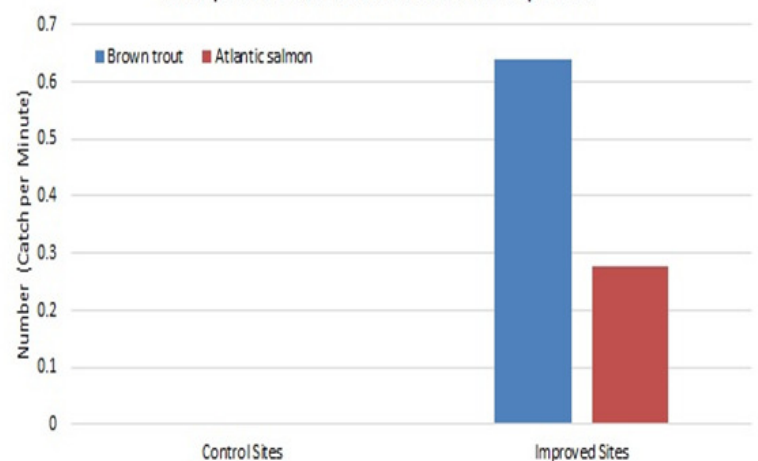
Newly introduced large flints provide additional cover for parr, increasing the population in the improved zone.

Each of the nine study sites included an improved area and an otherwise similar control stretch where no stony cover was distributed. At the end of the summer, two sites were electric-fished by Chris Gardner to monitor results. These were Hurdcott Middle Bridge on the Nadder and Wilton Fly Fishers Cottage Beat on the Wylfe. The results are shown below.

Catch per unit effort electrofishing results for improved and unimproved habitats River Wylfe Sept '13.



Catch per unit effort electrofishing results for improved and unimproved habitats River Nadder Sept '13.



It is clear that, on both rivers, juvenile salmon and trout parr densities were higher in the improved areas than in the controls. On the Nadder, there were no salmon or trout parr living in the control section!

We believe that there is great scope for further habitat improvement on Wessex rivers which will make a significant difference to wild salmon and trout stocks, including the de-silting of spawning gravels, provision of better physical cover habitats, and better access to suitable habitat via new fish passes or weir removals. The Trust is working hard to achieve these objectives.

Nick Giles.

KEEPING THE INVADERS AT BAY

Members will no doubt be aware of some of the potential problems that non-native invasive species can cause if they get a grip in a riverine environment. The general threats to biodiversity are extremely serious, and some of the effects of loss of biodiversity are hard to predict, but invariably undesirable!

We have made excellent progress in recent years by involving local anglers in attacking the Himalayan Balsam outbreaks in the Fordingbridge, Bickton, Ringwood and Sopley areas of the Hampshire Avon.

Raising awareness was just as important as organizing balsam-pulling parties, and the follow-up work after a bigish outbreak has been dealt with is crucial. Once an individual learns to recognise the stuff, and becomes keen to deal with it wherever it is spotted, early infestations can be firmly nipped in the bud. Total eradication is entirely possible with determined, consistent and co-ordinated efforts, and the spread of balsam in particular can be controlled in the local catchments if we all work together.

We removed lots of nasty outbreaks, and ensured that revisiting within a few weeks as well as the following year kept the regrowth down. The work parties also spotted other invasive species, and brought the sightings to the attention of the project workers on the New Forest Non Native Plants Project, an initiative funded by Hampshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed are the other key invaders that are of high priority, but there are other species waiting in the wings. There are reports that the very pretty Orange Balsam, a North American import, is starting to flourish where the Himalayan invader has been removed! The Signal Crayfish is starting to show itself more regularly in the Avon and Stour too, and we must at least try to monitor this invader. Fortunately otters adore them, and crunch them in preference to fish, I am told.

Reports of signal crayfish, or indeed other species of crayfish, should be made to the Environment Agency at rachelkinsey@environment-agency.gov.uk with a date and site/grid ref. if possible.



Signal crayfish (photo EA)

The local Wildlife Trusts and their partners have also been active and very successful in attacking both Himalayan Balsam and the other main invasive plant. The new Source to Sea project, funded by the EA in partnership with the Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset Wildlife Trusts, is a fantastic opportunity to gain firm control and eventual eradication of the invading plants.

The WCSRT supports these projects in any way it can, and will also be continuing with our own good work involving the angling clubs on the Lower Avon. We also hope to support or initiate further work on invasive species in the Stour catchment, and aim to keep the Wessex region a no-go zone for them all! We expect to have a substantial information section on our website shortly to both educate on invasives issues, and direct people to sites where advice and information can be found.

The option of ignoring these horrible plants and creatures is not acceptable. We all have a responsibility to deal with them if we see them, or provide those with the knowledge and resources available to do so.

Anglers in particular can help by reporting sightings of invasive species, and by checking their clothing and equipment between visits, cleaning boots etc thoroughly, and drying tackle properly. Check, clean dry!

We will be working from now on with Natural England, the Environment Agency, local authorities and local Wildlife Trusts as a member of the steering group of the Hampshire Avon Non Native Invasive Species Forum, to help the spread of information about invasives issues on the rivers. Meetings and other activities will be advertised regularly on our website and elsewhere.

All our local organisations need support from individuals in order to keep our river catchments clear. I would ask that WCSRT members offer as much support as they can, to both our Trust and the others in beating back the invaders!

sourcetosea@wiltshirewildlife.org;
www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry;
www.crayfish.org.uk

Pete Reading

IMPORTANT NOTICE
HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Himalayan Balsam is a non-native, extremely invasive plant that will, if left, choke our river banks. It is becoming a serious threat to this river catchment as it spreads.

IF YOU SEE IT, PULL IT UP



Flowering Time: June - October.
Flower: Purplish / Pink; occasionally white.
Seed Pods: Eruptive August / October; releasing up to 2500 seeds per plant.
Leaves: Long dark lance-shaped leaves with toothed edges.
Stem: Reddish in colour.
Height: 1 - 2 metres.


It often looks in winter and summer, smooth lush meadows. Native vegetation is lost and sediment runs into the river creating serious problems for wildlife, fish and aquatic plant species.

The non-native Orange Balsam must also be removed.

The plant is harmless to us, so simply grab it by the stem and pull to de-root it.

Please just take a few minutes each time you visit the river to look around and pull up any plants you see.

Thank YOU FOR YOUR HELP!
It is extremely important we stop this plant.



TRUST DELIVERS SUCCESSFUL RIVER AVON HABITAT AND FLOOD ALLEVIATION PROJECT

The Hampshire Avon Severals Fishery, owned by Derek Goulding of Westover Farm, Ashley, Ringwood, is a famous salmon fishing stretch and a popular coarse fishery, leased by Ringwood & District Angling Association and still producing large barbel, chub and other species. In recent years, however, the Avon salmon stock has declined and many stretches of the river, including the Severals Fishery, appear to have reduced stocks of coarse fish.

The reasons for these declines are complex, but we hope that improvements can be generated via carefully designed habitat improvement projects. Walk-over surveys of the Severals Fishery indicated that the river channel generally lacks sheltered habitat for young fish and cover for adult fish, especially in winter, when weed growth has died back.

A project was therefore designed to improve these short-comings. A partnership including Derek Goulding, the Environment Agency, Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust, Ringwood & District Angling Association, The Barbel Society and the Avon Roach Project pooled resources. Consents were obtained from the EA and the contract was awarded to Five Rivers Environmental Contracting Ltd.



Newly created backwater fry bay

The project involved the construction of 21 new river pools scoured by large log current deflectors and 6 large fish fry shelter bays to improve habitat for a range of native fish. In addition two pairs of flood culverts under the Castlemain Trailway were cleared, and vegetation blocking the lower Bickerley Stream was removed to improve the drainage of flood water. Works were successfully completed by late October, with last

minute gales and torrential rain making things interesting!

Ringwood Mayor Steve Rippon-Swain visited the completed project, commenting on how good it was to see a wide-ranging partnership producing valuable outcomes for the town, fisheries, local ecology and people using the Castlemain Trail and Avon Valley Path. The farmer, Mr Goulding, who provided much practical help and support during the project, expressed great pleasure in seeing his farm and fishery improved and in alleviating flood risk to nearby riverside residents in Ringwood.

Andy Gill of the EA explained how this project provides a good example of integrated flood defence, river restoration, fisheries and conservation objectives, making cost-effective use of precious partnership funding.



Nick Giles of WCSRT discusses the scouring effect of one of the 21 log deflectors with Jo Miles of Five Rivers Environmental Contracting.

The Avon Roach Project is further supporting the project by providing young roach for re-stocking the fry bays in the spring of 2014.

This project is the largest undertaken so far by the Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust. Our Director, Tom Davis, commented "WCSRT has just been given the lead role by DEFRA in the Hampshire Avon Catchment Partnership, and this is a perfect example of the sort of collaborative river improvement work we look forward to delivering much more of in the future".

RIVER TEMPERATURE MONITORING

Background: our Spring 2013 Newsletter ('In Hot Water?') reported expansion of water temperature logging in collaboration with the Environment Agency, Wessex Water, Southampton University and Forest Research. This year interest has been expressed by Queen Mary University (London) and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, with generous financial support for purchasing additional WCSRT loggers provided by one of our members. We are also developing 'partnership' arrangements to run extra loggers at new sites on our rivers.

Why do it? A range of organisations are considering climate change implications for our chalk rivers and how impacts may be countered. WCSRT has the capacity to provide 'reality checks' on related proposals and advise our members



A water temperature logger

Update: eighteen WCSRT loggers were deployed across our rivers this summer (May-October). Loggers are now recovered, down-loaded and re-checked. All maintain their stability and accuracy (within 0.1°C). We can therefore be confident that comparisons between sites continue to give realistic water temperature results. Predictably, there were relatively high contrasts between sites through the warm spells in July.

2013 highlights: our rivers remained relatively warm overnight during hot weather periods, particularly in July. This can be seen in a 'league table' of average monthly river temperatures at WCSRT logging sites. Not surprisingly, the good summer generated higher river temperatures in 2013 than 2012.

Applications: overnight cooling in tributaries and headwaters limits heat wave impacts. These reaches are also most amenable to actions that reduce climate-warming stress for vulnerable river wildlife. Current initiatives to increase bankside tree shade (EA: Keeping Rivers Cool) are under consideration. These must target planting where shading will be most effective whilst

leaving unshaded the best zones for flourishing water-crowfoot habitat with its associated high invertebrate abundance and good protective cover for fish.

Future plans: Using our expanding river temperature evidence base, WCSRT will inform debates and opinions to deliver effective river management applied at the river reach-scale. The prime target is to ensure the river and its inhabitants (not necessarily people!) get the best deal.

Jon Bass

Location	July 2013	August 2013
R Avon, Ringwood	20.31°C	18.26°C
R Avon, Ibsley	20.07°C	18.06°C
R Allen, Walford	17.52°C	16.54°C
R Test, Kimbridge	17.67°C	16.22°C
R Test, Leckford	16.45°C	15.27°C
R Anton, Fullerton	16.62°C	15.55°C
Dun Mottisfont	14.51°C	13.82°C
R Itchen, Twyford	16.93°C	16.62°C
R Itchen, Durngate	16.46°C	15.16°C
R Itchen, Itchenstoke	14.13°C	13.22°C
R Meon, Mayles Lane	17.59°C	16.69°C
R Meon, Mislingford	16.80°C	16.10°C

League Table: selection of average monthly river temperatures recorded in 2013



*Trees can provide effective shade to cool water but may be detrimental in high gradient zones where *Ranunculus* would otherwise flourish*

ADDRESSING WATER QUALITY: THE CATCHMENT INVERTEBRATE FINGERPRINTING SCHEME

Deterioration of water quality is a major concern for the rivers of our region. Understanding the causes and addressing them is a key priority for the Trust, and one which we intend to focus on in our work with the new Catchment Partnerships.

The initial challenge is to understand where and what impacts have been occurring. River bed invertebrate communities react characteristically to pollution and must endure water quality fluctuations throughout the year. They are, therefore, excellent natural monitors of historic and current polluting impacts of various types. For this reason we have decided to use invertebrate fingerprinting to map these impacts catchment-wide. We have developed a detailed project proposal and we are actively seeking funding to support it.



Kick sampling for invertebrates on the River Wylfe

The first phase of the work will centre on agreed river reaches in the Test, Itchen and Hampshire Avon Catchments where there is evidence of damaging impacts on river habitat quality, fly life, fisheries and other wildlife through various pressures on water quality and quantity. The work will then move on to include the Rivers Stour and Meon.

The basis of the analysis is a suite of unique computer programmes which constitute The Pollution Diagnostic System (Aquascience Consultancy Ltd) which can

detect environmental stressors such as PSI (fine sediment inputs), Saprobic pollution (organic enrichment – ammonia, oxygen demand), flow velocity (LIFE) and Total Reactive Phosphorous Index (TRPI; inorganic enrichment). Analyses can be run on existing EA data sets and newly-collected data, and over both time and space to analyse historic and geographic environmental impacts.

A high proportion of water quality deteriorations detected recently using these techniques across the range of UK rivers (upland-lowland) are sediment, organic enrichment and/or nutrient enrichment-related. It is already recognised that successful outcomes will require an understanding of these impacts on river catchments.

Once impacts have been ascertained and mapped, root causes will be addressed and, wherever possible, corrected via the rolling-out of the new river Catchment Action Plans.

Nick Giles

BRIAN GEORGE MARSHALL

1938—2013

Last year, in November, a man who has done more to highlight the plight and protect the Rivers of Wessex than any other person in the last thirty years, very sadly passed away. Brian Marshall was unique in his commitment and determination to promote the interests of his beloved rivers, in particular that of the Hampshire Avon.

Immersed in farming and agriculture from an early age, having trained in the Somerset levels, his interest and understanding of the rural scene was boundless. The intervening years, with wife Pat at his side and the distractions of a young family, Brian's love of the rivers and countryside remained constant. A later career that involved considerable travelling meant he first made the acquaintance of the Hampshire Avon in the early 60's. His travels had brought him to Downton and an overnight stop at the Bull Hotel, the centre of the Avon angling world at the time, a fated path. At the Bull he met regular Tom Williams, water bailiff on the famous Longford fishery and became a member of that august syndicate. For the next two decades Brian enjoyed the Avon coarse and salmon fishing at its height and sadly its subsequent decline. Such a grounding ensured he had first-hand experience of what the Avon was capable and more importantly what was missing. It was the

decline of the fishing and the failure of the authorities to firstly recognise and secondly implement measures to stem or reverse the situation that brought about Brian's involvement in the world of fishery politics.

The formation and more importantly the continuance of the Wessex Salmon Association came about through his efforts. Fund raiser, publisher, educationalist, project manager, all under the guise of his role of chairman, whatever was required he ensured it happened. He became the representative voice that carried the concerns of the owners, managers and fishermen to those charged by government with protecting our rivers. A formidable opponent, should you have been across the table from him, his reasoned and detailed argument was redoubtable. Ever professional, never allowing personal issues to influence debate, many one-time adversaries becoming close friends. The Association grew into the Wessex Salmon and Rivers Trust with its charitable status determining the path subsequent riverine trusts the length and breadth of the land would follow.

Brian came up with the idea of using EU legislation to force the Irish Government into recognising the unacceptable damage the drift net fishery was doing; intercepting salmon destined for our and other SAC rivers. Finding time to travel all over Europe to promote the cause and gain allies from FISSTA in Ireland through our close neighbours in the South West, where Brian was a council member of the SWRA, to the Rhine Commissioners on the continent. Working closely with Orri Vigfusson and the NASF international team he gave

a presentation to the EU Parliamentary Fisheries Committee in Brussels to refute the Irish government counter argument. After a four year struggle the persistence and determination so characteristic of him won the day and the Irish Government closed the drift net fishery.

Whilst many will know of Brian through his efforts over the drift nets we have a great deal more than the Irish issue for which to thank him. His legacy is the very nature of riverine representation that is now beyond its first faltering footsteps and becoming the route recognised by all in the field. The WSRT gave rise to the current format, in the guise of the Wessex Chalk Streams and River Trust, now with full time employees and leading the catchment based management strategy on the Avon. For those of us that profess to have the interests of the rivers at heart Brian has set the bar at a very high level, he has provided the example, we now need to rise to the challenge.

Having spoken of Brian's example as a guardian of our rivers perhaps one other attribute and possibly his greatest strength was that of being a true humanitarian, he believed in people. He understood the importance of our rivers to society and never lost sight of ensuring future generations understood that importance. The rivers have lost a great champion and the angling world a good friend. The void of his passing will be a very difficult one to fill.

John Levell



Brian receiving his CLA Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2008 Game Fair



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SUPPORTER FORM

Full Name including title		Post Code:	
Address:			
Tel: (H)		(M)	
Email Address:			
I would like to support the Trust as:			
Supporter ()	Annual	Minimum Donation	Amount Enclosed
Life Supporter ()	One-off	£20.00	
Founder ()	One-off	£200.00	
Associated Organisation (Club/Society etc) ()	Annual	£500.00	
Formal Partner - ie Government Agency/Company ()	Please contact us for further details		
Other donation ()		£150.00	
I would like to volunteer to help with the activities of the Trust (). Please contact us to discuss.			
<p>Gift Aid Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today <input type="checkbox"/> in the past 4 years <input type="checkbox"/> in the future <input type="checkbox"/> (Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.)</p> <p>I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of the tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.</p> <p>Please notify Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust if you i) want to cancel this declaration, ii) change your name or home address, iii) no longer pay sufficient tax on your income or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.</p>			
Signed:	 / / 20.....	

Please return the completed forms to the address above

Standing Order Mandate

To:Bank Plc,
Address:

Sort code: (- - - - -)

Please pay Lloyds TSB - Salisbury Branch (30 - 97 - 41) for the credit of Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust account no: 30028468

the sum of £..... commencing now and thereafter annually on 1st July until you receive further notice quoting reference 'WCSRT supporter donation' and debit my/our account. Please cancel any previous instructions in favour of the beneficiary named above, under this reference.

Name of account to be debited:

Account no:

Signature: Date:

Signature: Date:



The Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust is a charity, dedicated to the guardianship, protection, enhancement and maintenance of healthy, functioning ecosystems within the river corridors and catchments of the Wessex Region.

OUR VISION is of healthy rivers which are valued and nurtured by the community and which exhibit:

- Sustainable and naturally abundant wildlife
- High water quality and sustained natural flows
- Fully functioning ecosystems which link the rivers with their valleys
- Resilience to climate change and future stresses associated with social and economic development

CHALLENGES such as pressure from agricultural, aquaculture, transport and housing development in the region have placed significant strain on the river environment over the last half-century or so. River channels have become degraded through dredging for agricultural 'improvement' and engineering for flood management. Flows have been impacted by abstraction for public water supply. Water quality continues to be impacted by agricultural run-off, pesticides, discharges from watercress beds, fish farms, sewerage systems, and septic tanks. Spawning gravels continue to be affected by siltation. Aquatic fly life has seriously declined. The numbers of salmon running to spawn are gravely depleted. Native Crayfish have been virtually wiped out and non-native species are threatening the integrity of the habitat.

HELPING US - If you are as concerned as we are about the rivers of our region and you would like to assist us either financially, by volunteering to help or simply by becoming a Supporter of the Trust, please get in contact with us.



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