



Wild Trout Trust

Newsletter Autumn 2011

The Wild Trout Trust is dedicated to the conservation of wild trout in Britain and Ireland through protection and restoration of habitat

Over 100 guests attended this year's reception for the Wild Trout Trust & Orvis Conservation Awards at the Savile Club in Mayfair, which was again generously sponsored by Orvis. WTT Director, Shaun Leonard, and Richard Banbury of Orvis presented the awards to joint winners Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust who entered a chalk stream river restoration project on the River Itchen, and Luke Kozak from Woodland Water & Gardens and Dominic Longley from the Environment Agency for a project on the River Somer in Somerset; runner-up was the Environment Agency for Arborfield Weirs & Bypass Project on the River Loddon near Reading. Photos from the awards and the judges report can be found on pages 8 to 15 inside. Julia Holford presented a special award in memory of Michael Edwards – the WTT & Orvis Michael Edwards Commemorative Conservation Award – to Chester-le-Street & District Angling Club for their Cong Burn Fish Passage Improvement Project on the River Wear in County Durham.

Wild Trout Trust & Orvis Conservation Awards 2011

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Dennis Moss – latest WTT Vice-President

We are delighted to welcome onboard Dennis Moss as our latest Vice-President. Living as he does in the far-west of Ireland, Dennis and the Trust have decided that his best role might be that of V-P rather than Trustee. Dennis will promote the interests of the Trust in Ireland and help us to influence wild trout conservation across the island.

Survival Guide Update

We are nearing the end of an update to the widely-acclaimed WTT Wild Trout Survival Guide, edited by Vaughan Lewis. Again, watch the website for launch details.

Auction 2012

Work on the auction for 2012 is underway with the autumn gathering of lots. The auction is the major fundraising event for the WTT, and (we hope) is an important event in the fishing calendar, when many people book their special fishing trips for the coming season. The auction will be a little earlier this year – at the beginning of March rather than the end of March, and will take place on eBay and by post as usual. We already have some very interesting lots, including a Hugh Falkus prototype salmon rod with his handwritten label donated by Malcolm Greenhalgh, and an exquisite 6ft cane rod from Rawson & Perrin.

If you would like to donate anything to the auction, please contact Denise Ashton via dashton@wildtrout.org or 07802 454157. Fishing days, accompanied or unaccompanied, are very popular, but we also have tackle, flies, books and other lots to auction for a very wide range of prices. We do need all the lots in by Christmas!

Diary Date Snippets

19-20	November	2011	Irish Fly Fair, Galway – www.irishflyfair.com
13	December	2011	Ocean Silver – Atlantic Salmon Conference, London – www.atlanticsalmontrust.org
	Spring	2012	IFM/EA Small Streams Conference – www.ifm.org
19	April	2012	River Restoration Centre Conference, Nottingham – www.therrc.co.uk
2-3	June	2012	WTT Annual Get-Together, Tufton Arms, Appleby, Cumbria.

Calling all fly-tyers and entomologists!

Our stand at the CLA Game Fair this year added a new attraction: fly-tying for children. This proved to be very popular not only with children, but with adults who took the chance to learn how to tie some simple flies without feeling intimidated by the experts! The fly-tying was complemented by an extended 'bugs and grubs' display, complete with microscope, an example of the killer shrimp (dead, of course) and a 'Mayfly in the Classroom' set up.

If you tie flies and would like to share your knowledge with children and adults, please join us at the Game Fair next year and help out on the stand for a few hours or a few days. We also need volunteers to help with bugs and grubs so if you do the Anglers' Monitoring Initiative or have an interest in river flies, please come along. In depth expertise is not required. We can guarantee that you will have an interesting and enjoyable time as it is a very relaxed and sociable event for the WTT. And you will be encouraging people – young and old – to share a passion for rivers, flies and fishing.

The CLA Game Fair in 2012 will be held at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, July 20 – 22.

If you would like to join us, please contact Shaun via director@wildtrout.org or on 07974 861908.

PHOTO COMPETITION

Closes 30 November. Send high resolution photos on CD to the WTT office. Check the website for details or call Denise Ashton on 07802 454157.

New Conservation Officer

The Trust is delighted to welcome onboard a new Conservation Officer, Gareth Pedley, adding to the team of Paul Gaskell, Tim Jacklin and Andy Thomas. Gareth's role is the product of an exciting partnership with the Environment Agency and Eden Rivers Trust that sees Gareth employed for half his week by ERT to progress their River Eden Restoration Strategy, with the other half carrying out Advisory and Practical Visits across the North-West and North-East. Gareth is a prize catch for both WTT and ERT; for sure, he has wild trout running through his veins. See Gareth's introduction to us on page 4 of this newsletter.

Future WTT Get-Togethers

Following on from the huge success of the WTT Get-Together on the English-Welsh border in April 2011, we have nailed down dates for both 2012 and 2013 – nothing like forward planning. So, 2 & 3 June 2012 will see us gathering at the Tufton Arms in Appleby, Cumbria and on 8 & 9 June 2013 we're going to try a slightly different approach, taking over the Dartmoor Training Centre, Princetown. At both venues, we'll enjoy locally-flavoured talks, walk the rivers to see habitat works, exchange (tall?) stories over a pint and take the chance to sample some great trout fishing.

↓ Beautiful Eden will host the Annual Get-Together in June 2012.



Trout Habitat DVD

The filming for our trout habitat enhancement DVD has finished, so now editing and final preparation for production starts. The professionally-produced DVD, funded by the Environment Agency, will add to our library of information sources, complementing the habitat CDs and the Wild Trout Survival Guide. The DVD, hosted by and starring Jon Beer and our

Where Do We Go To (My Lovely)?

The WTT Conservation Officers have, as ever, been furiously busy with Advisory and Practical Visits across England, Wales and Northern Ireland in these last few months. Here's just a flavour of some of the events attended and contributed during this period:

June: Rivers Trusts/RAFTS Invasive Non-Native Species event; Meon Springs 3-Fly Fundraiser; Fisheries MPs Meeting; Eden Wild Trout Weekender; South Coast Sea Trout Action Plan Launch; Chilterns Chalkstream Forum; Tarrant Preservation Society; Arun & Rother Rivers Trust Launch; River Glaven Conservation Assoc Open Day.

July: Killyleagh Fly Fair; Bugs & Grubs Course; RRC Workshop; Game Fair; Avon & Tribes AA meeting; South Downs EA training day.

August: Meet with EA Chief Executive & Senior Management Team and Angling Trust, Rivers Trusts and Salmon & Trout Association; Meet with George Hollingbery MP and Angling Trust.

September: Rivers Trust Conference; Sportfish/Sage One Launch; Patagonia Store Opening; Meet Mid-Counties CoOp; Loddon Fisheries Workshop (Part 1).

October: Loddon Fisheries Workshop (Part 2); Fisheries & Angling Groups CEOs Meet; Conservation Awards; Meet Richard Benyon MP and Angling Trust, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Rivers

Trusts & Salmon & Trout Association; IFM Conference; Wilts Fisheries Assoc; training day for South Downs National Park staff.

team of Conservation Officers, takes the viewer through identification of good river habitat, issues affecting our rivers and possible methods to improve life, not only for trout but for the diversity of things in and around our rivers. The DVD will be available early in 2012; watch the website for news.

Gareth Pedley

Gareth Pedley is the latest recruit to the WTT's team.

I have recently taken on a Conservation Officer's post with the Wild Trout Trust, in an exciting collaboration with the Eden Rivers Trust. ERT is my main employer and I will be based in the ERT offices in Penrith, but half my week will be working on a project as WTT CO. Here's my story.

After my degree in Fishery Management at Sparsholt College, I spent a short season river-keeping on the Chatsworth Estate in Derbyshire. This funded nine months of travelling round the world, which in fact turned out to be a glorified, six-month trout fishing expedition to New Zealand.

When I came back, I was lucky enough to start as the River Wye keeper on the Haddon Estate. My personal goal there was to achieve a fully wild catch-and-release fishery which happened in 2003; the fishery still operates today as a thriving wild trout and grayling fishery.

After Haddon, I joined the Environment Agency as a Fisheries Technical Officer, managing projects and providing management advice in the North East. I enjoyed that role but now I'm back to my roots, conserving wild trout with WTT and delivering the excellent River Eden Restoration Strategy with ERT.

My personal goal for this new venture is to offer support and advice to fishery managers and clubs wanting to make the move from stocked to wild fisheries, while helping to focus their skills and enthusiasm for fishery management towards the key aspects that will really improve their wild fish stocks and fishing. I will be working not only in the Eden valley but across the N-W and N-E. If you would like to hear more from me or to arrange for me to come and see your water, call 07500 870583 or email via gpedley@wildtrout.org.



↑ New WTT Conservation Officer Gareth Pedley is flanked by Eden Rivers Trust Director, Simon Johnson (left) and WTT Director, Shaun Leonard (right).

South Coast Sea Trout Action Plan

In recognition of the importance and need for conservation of sea trout in the rivers on the south coast of England, WTT, together with the Environment Agency and the Atlantic Salmon Trust, has launched a South Coast Sea Trout Action Plan. The Action Plan aims to raise the profile and understanding of this special fish and to implement practical steps for the protection and enhancement of populations in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. A full version of the Action Plan is on the WTT website www.wildtrout.org.



WTT discounts

Fish4Flies

With this copy of the newsletter you will have received a discount card for Fish4Flies. This is an online fly retailer selling a huge range of flies, that has very kindly offered a 20% discount to WTT members. Keep the card as you need to quote the reference number on your order.

When you use your discount card, Fish4flies will donate 5% of the money you spend to the Wild Trout Trust.

Sportfish

Sportfish continues to support the WTT by giving a 5% discount to WTT members. Simply quote discount reference 'WTT' when ordering online, by phone or at the till in the shops. Sportfish will match the discount with a 5% donation to the WTT.

Membership available of small fly-fishing club in Staffordshire for 2012 season.

Small river fly-fishing for wild trout in the vicinity of Burton and Uttoxeter.

For further details contact Tim Jacklin 07876 525457.

The Bernard Venables Award 2011: John Williams

The Bernard Venables Award is presented annually by the Wild Trout Trust to commemorate the artist, conservationist, angler and creator of the inspirational angling cartoon, Mr. Crabtree. The Award recognises lifetime services to wild trout conservation, someone whose vital work, perhaps unusual, sometimes outstanding, often goes unrecognised.

Previous winners include some of the giants of wild trout conservation: messrs Mills, Butler, Twiddy, Frake, Hayes, Slocock, Jacklin, Pike, Crofts and Ash.

This year's recipient is described by his friends as a 'proper gentleman' whose 'heart and soul is in wild trout conservation'. He has been instrumental in bringing sustainable fishery management to a number of rivers and their fishing clubs in the south-west of England, including the By Brook, the Mole and Yeo and the Shreen. He has played a significant role in education, sitting on the Industrial Liaison Panel of Lackham College and organising WTT's Bugs & Grubs courses held at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Langford reserve. He has, on a totally voluntary basis, edited the WTT Newsletter for ten years and also for five years the Trust's highly regarded annual journal, *Salmo trutta*, and served on the Trust's Executive Committee for many years.

The Wild Trout Trust is delighted to present the 2011 Bernard Venables Award to John Williams.

Thames Water donation for habitat projects

Thames Water have given the WTT a grant of £10,000 to carry out habitat projects in the Thames Water area. Initial projects have been identified on the River Wey and River Kennet and we will be working with local fishing clubs and landowners to deliver the habitat improvement work during 2012. Thames Water has previously supported the WTT with a grant of £3000 for Trout in the Town. Thank you to Richard Aylard and Rupert Newby of Thames Water for their support and interest in the work of the WTT.

A few words...

A 75th birthday brings very few compensations. In my case I thought that it was goodbye to full days fishing a stream, tying size 24 flies, relinquishing editorial duties and hullo to 10pm bedtimes. I had reckoned without the WTT!

I was delighted to receive a bottle of very good whisky at the Conservation Awards event at the Savile Club and doubly delighted when I found that the Scotch was accompanied by a very good fishing rod. When Shaun appeared with the BV award I thought that I was being treated in a right royal fashion: the stuff that dreams are made of.

But the thing that brought a lump to my throat was the content of the envelope that I opened when I reached home – a voucher for a David Miller picture accompanied by a card signed by friends from the WTT. That will bring immensely pleasurable memories of fish, fishing and fisheries but most of all, of the people involved. Thank you all.

I was a little overwhelmed at the ceremony and, with my unreliable memory, I did not mention the immense amount of help I received from Christina Bryant, especially in the early years. I could not have managed without her guidance. Thanks Chrissy.

John Williams



CLA GAME FAIR

It was another successful year for the Wild Trout Trust at the CLA Game Fair which this year was at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. It was good to see the many WTT members who dropped in to say hello and along with new members and other visitors enjoyed a range of refreshments kindly sponsored by John D Wood & Co.

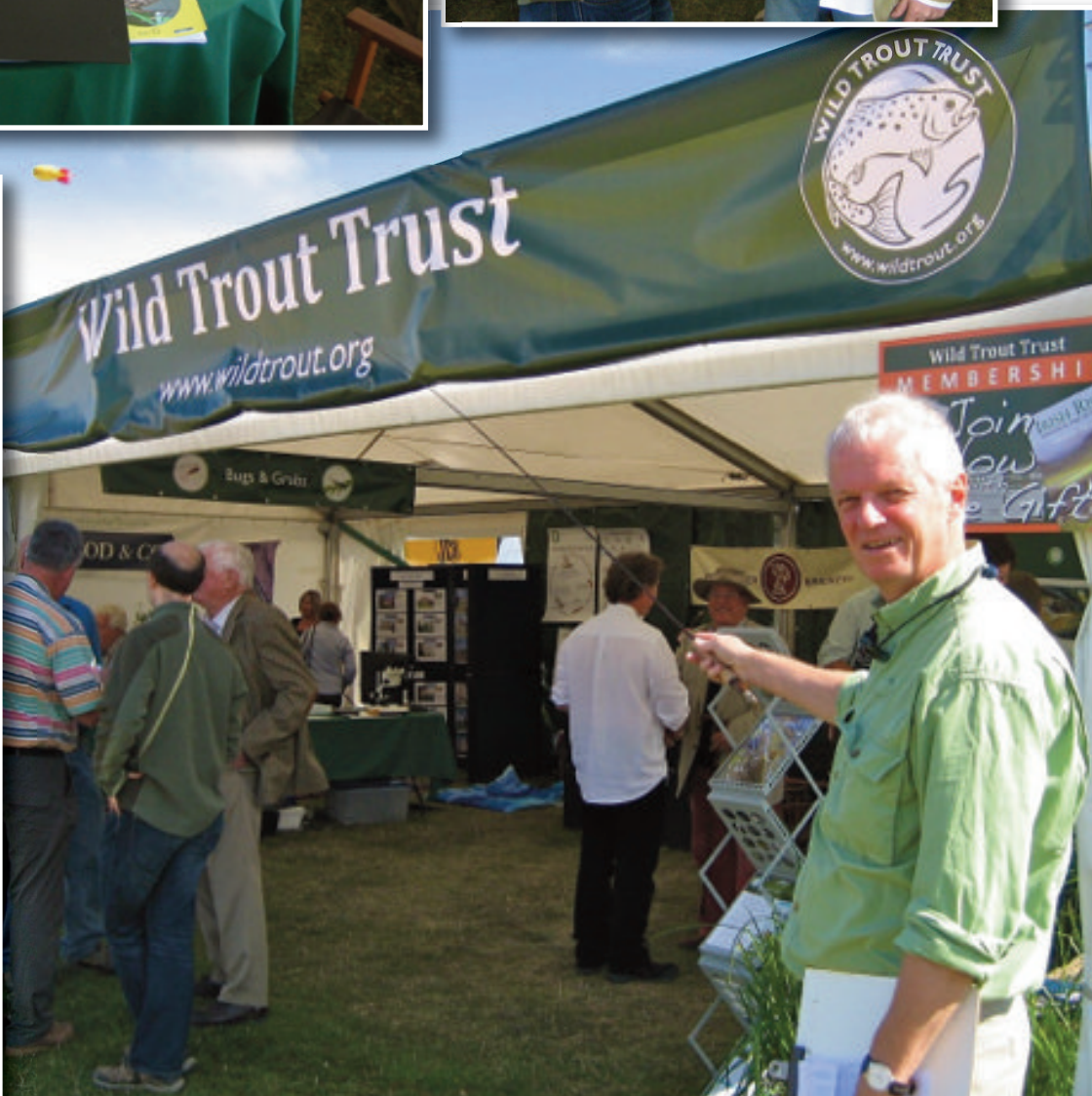
The stand was constantly busy and much interest was generated by the excellent living chalkstream exhibit created by Wessex Land & Water who kindly provided this free of charge.

As usual the WTT staff and conservation officers were on hand to answer questions and give advice, and we are indebted to our WTT volunteers who give so generously of their time and energy to man (and enliven) the stand including Don Burgess who kept the team well fed each evening from his BBQ.

During the three days of the Fair, 42 new members, including several life-members, joined the ranks of the WTT, 1429 raffle tickets were sold and sales of merchandise raised £670.



2011 - BLENHEIM



CONSERVATION AWARDS 2011 AWARDS CEREMONY



↑ Chairman of the judging panel Allan Frake summarising this year's competition.



↑ JOINT WINNER Martin de Retuerto (centre) receiving the Award from Danni Hicks and Richard Banbury of Orvis.



↑ RUNNER-UP Dominic Martyn (centre) receiving the Award from Richard Banbury and Danni Hicks of Orvis.



↑ RECIPIENT of the BERNARD VENABLES AWARD: John Williams (left) with WTT Director Shaun Leonard.





← JOINT WINNER Luke Kozak (centre) and Dominic Longley (right) receiving the Award from Danni Hicks of Orvis.

↓ WINNER of MICHAEL EDWARDS COMMEMORATIVE AWARD Andrew Veitch (left), David Lockley (centre-left) and Alan Elliott (right), receiving the Award from Julia Holford, on behalf of the Chester-Le-Street & District Angling Club.



BACKGROUND TO THE 2011 AWARDS

JUDGES REPORT

This annual event is the Wild Trout Trust's way of celebrating and acknowledging the efforts, ingenuity, imagination and achievements of those involved in trout habitat management. The competition is now in its 13th year and as it has run for such a long time and has involved a tremendously wide diversity of projects, it has the added advantage of giving the judges the opportunity to reflect on how things are changing and evolving in the wild trout habitat improvement scene. Allan Frake, Martin Janes (Managing Director) & Jenny Mant (Science & Technical Manager) from the UK River Restoration Centre at Cranfield were the adjudicators this year.

At this same event last year the judges commented that "gone are the days when individuals or single organisations submitted entries, nowadays it is partnerships, collaboration and working together that is the normal way of getting projects funded planned and completed." That remains definitely the case but just a few alarm bells are beginning to ring. The Big Society and encouraging the third sector, volunteers to carry out projects, is very laudable but not without some potential problems for the unwary.

There was evidence this year of an increasing problem of individuals involved in projects exhibiting 'heroic, if not passionate persistence in the face of adversity' associated with significant problems with the process of obtaining the plethora of permissions and procedures required.

Small scale amateur projects often involving a massive un-paid voluntary input need help and support from the various controlling authorities involved, not impediments, otherwise projects will not get completed. People understandably get put off and will not tolerate having to deal with the very significant hassle factor involved.

Last year comments were made to the effect that "people are being a little braver in what they do; a decade ago projects were a tad timid and restrained." These days it's much more of a 'let's go for it' attitude... people are more confident, better informed on good practice, which hopefully may in part be due to WTT Guidelines, CDs and booklets." A little concern was expressed this year in that what some would call 'old style' techniques still being used, perhaps a job for WTT to consider is reinforcing communication of new, more effective, sustainable techniques to the 'wet wellie' audience and project participants.

On a much more positive and happier note, it is good to see that across the board much more comprehensive and meaningful monitoring of projects is being done. Some form of project appraisal is essential to evaluate whether money and effort is being well spent, so that others can learn from success (and failure). It is appreciated that that is not easy within the constraints of tight budgets, and often limited resources.

Perhaps not surprisingly this year's entries are still addressing issues of the 'old enemies': obstructions to fish passage, diffuse pollution, excessive sediment, bank damage from farm stock, over-wide dredged channels, poor physical channel structure and lack of quality ecological habitats for the various life stages of fish and other river communities.

Despite this, the judges all agreed that the 2011 entries were notably unique in that they were all very different, ranging from some good examples of excellent, almost traditional in-channel habitat improvements, to fish passes and easements of varying complexity, catchment-scale initiatives involving a number of different communities, to urban river restoration in the centre of the town involving markedly different local communities and difficult challenges.

This makes judging quite a challenge, particularly this year, so it is worth reiterating what process the judges use to arrive at their decisions.

The judges assess each of the projects against a series of specific criteria including:

- ⇒ the impact on wild trout,
- ⇒ appropriateness of the scheme to the river,
- ⇒ techniques and materials used,
- ⇒ funding sources,
- ⇒ monitoring,
- ⇒ sustainability and after-care management,
- ⇒ value for money - and value to other wildlife, in addition to trout.

Inevitably, with such high quality, and very different project entries this year, the judges, as always, were on the lookout for just that little bit of extra 'buzz' or 'wow' and signs of innovative thinking and solutions to problems. For the first time in the 13-year history of the awards the judges decided that it was difficult to tease out an overall winner and it was appropriate in this instance to recognise joint winners of the award.

JOINT WINNERS

One of the joint winners was the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust who entered a chalkstream river restoration project on the River Itchen, just north of Winchester at the Winnal Moors Wildlife Reserve incorporating the more well known angling historical location of Abbots Barton. The main channel site is predominantly of low gradient, depositing habitat, canalised over-wide, historically dredged and influenced by artificial impoundments and historic over-zealous vegetation management. The project mantra was 'sustainability and cost effectiveness' with clear objectives involving river restoration, fisheries management with close liaison with the angling interests, and comprehensive monitoring. Clearly a lot of innovative thinking had gone into the design and construction as well as solving some serious logistical problems of improving and managing both watercourses and the surrounding flood plain meadows, including one of the few real examples of re-connecting the river with the floodplain and also managing stock so as to minimise the use of watercourse fencing. The

project also managed to head towards reinstating optimal channel widths and bed variation, bank re-profiling and wet margin creation, create and install riffles, pools and flow deflectors using as much site-won material as possible. The judges were particularly impressed with the predominant use of on-site material with very little extra material being brought on to site. The overall natural look of the finished project also was noteworthy, by effectively blending into the landscape; the positive attempt to reconnect river with floodplain also was commended.

↓ ← The River Itchen at Winnal Moors.



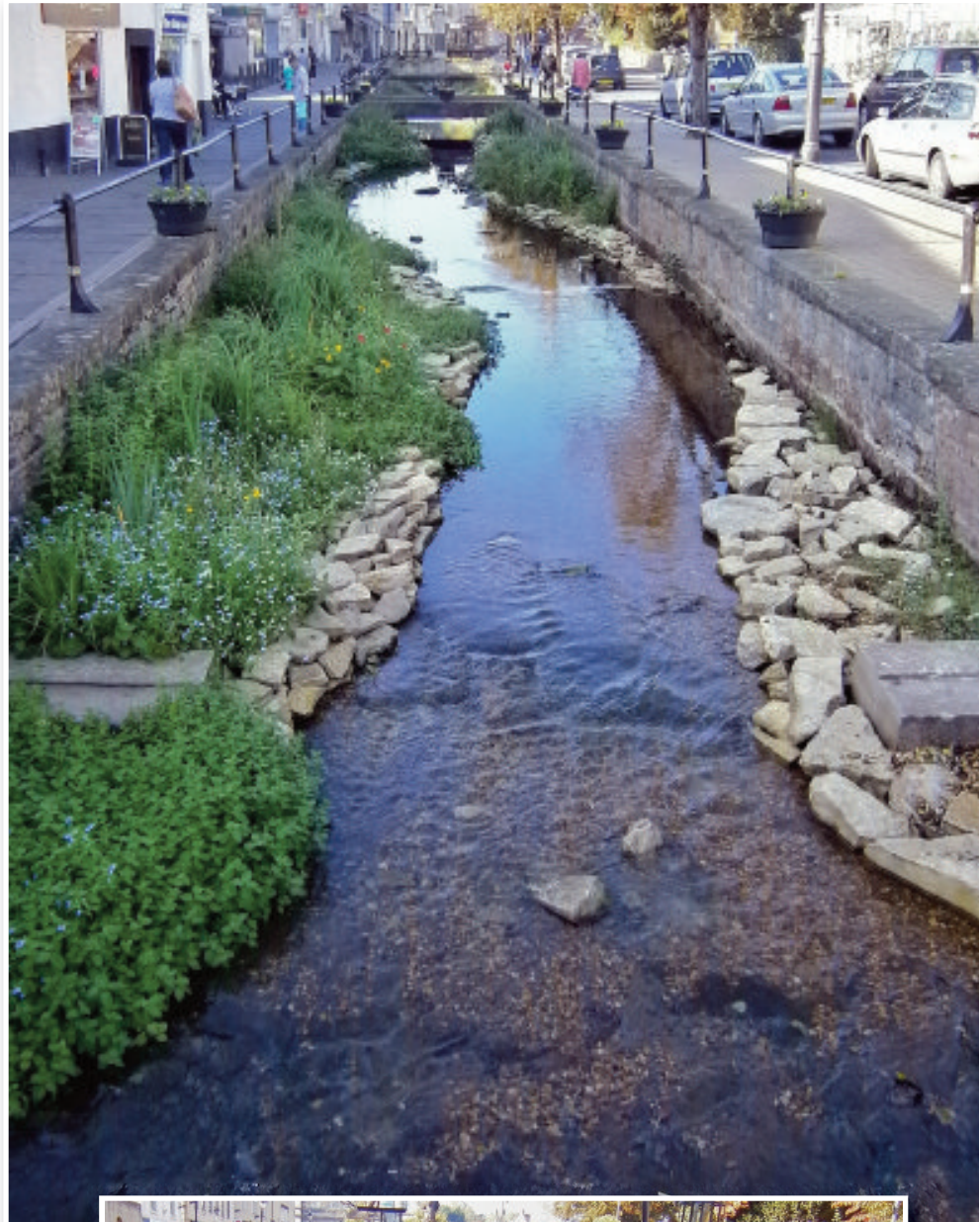
JOINT WINNERS

For the second joint winner, something completely different awaited the judges in the High Street at Midsomer Norton in Somerset where Luke Kozak from Woodland Water & Gardens and Dominic Longley from the EA showed the judges around a fascinating restoration project on an urban section of the River

Somer originating from the Mendips. Formerly impounded by three weirs, resulting in copious quantities of polluted silt, detritus aptly described as an 'olfactory nuisance', urban litter, zero vegetation and wildlife, the channel had been successfully transformed by removing the weirs and associated silt, constructing a meandering limestone berm to create complex flow patterns, introducing vegetated margins and gravel substrate to create both an aesthetically pleasing enhancement as well as a wildlife- and fish-friendly habitat.

Superficially appearing to be a simple project but, as with most urban projects, the 'devil was in the detail' and needless to say political and practical obstacles there were in abundance. The judges were impressed by the quality of the design and functioning of the enhancement, particularly the vegetation planting regime which would not have looked out of place at Chelsea! The attention to detail in getting it right for an urban setting was also commendable, as was the tenacity in overcoming the need for many permits. Clearly there was much support and enthusiasm from the local population who had recognised the success of the project.

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The River Somer running through the ↑ → High Street at Midsomer Norton.

RUNNER-UP

The runner-up this year had a tortuous 19-year gestation period from initial inception and project design to completion which is usually indicative of having endured a number of complications! The Environment Agency's Arborfield Weirs & Bypass Project on the River Loddon near Reading clearly had some challenging impoundments, weirs and flow control structures to overcome, with the purpose of not only facilitating free passage of coarse fish and salmonids but also to improve other key wildlife species and habitats. The key feature was an impressive 'semi-natural' bypass incorporating eight pools, spawning gravels and other fish habitats including woody debris, coupled with creating 200m of new river channel designed to create optimal

habitats containing riffles, pools, backwaters and also copious amounts of woody debris. An additional 4km of impounded river was also improved and 2.5ha of wet woodland, fen, swamp and marsh created. The judges were impressed by the technical problems that were overcome in creating not only better habitat all round, but managing to incorporate a very naturalised fish pass which blended well into the landscape and the creation of a wet woodland area was to be applauded. Again the journey from beginning to end was a long one with a lot of challenges along the way ably sorted out by a very determined project manager.



↑ The judges view the impressive bypass channel on the River Loddon near Reading.

MICHAEL EDWARDS COMMEMORATIVE AWARD

The winner of the WTT & Orvis Michael Edwards Commemorative Conservation Award went to a project on a tributary of the River Wear; the Cong Burn Fish Passage Improvement Project in County Durham being carried out by the Chester-le-Street & District Angling Club. The burn is one of only two major tributaries of the Wear system and is important for salmonids, as well as eel and lamprey. The project focused on three major obstacles, removal of a weir to extend and improve spawning and juvenile fish habitat; and to ease fish passage through 85m and 35m long culverts by installing baffles to increase depth and provide resting areas for migrating fish including sea trout. As well as the demonstrable project success in facilitating migration over hitherto formidable barriers, the overall project management aspect of this initiative caught the

judges' eye in terms of a very thorough and professional approach and hope that the particular success of the fish easement project is continued in the proposed future initiative of alleviating the water quality problems identified.

↓ Andrew Veitch (left), David Lockley (centre-left) and Alan Elliott (right), receiving the Award from Julia Holford, on behalf of the Chester-Le-Street & District Angling Club.



OTHER FINALISTS

Other finalists in this year's competition were as follows:

Southern chalk river restoration continues on the lovely but heavily pressurised River Darent just south of Dartford at Lullingstone Castle, where the enhancement works focussing on wild trout habitat is being carried out by the Kingfisher Angling & Preservation Society and the North West Kent Countryside Partnership. In-channel work to improve this very straight section of river involved creating a more sinuous flow, spawning areas, narrowing the channel and varying the flow characteristics using LWD and woody faggots, selective clearing of heavily shading trees and scrub, and the planting of marginal vegetation. Overall the project focussed on improved chalk stream habitat which in turn would lead to better fish population structure and greater angling potential and opportunities to develop the fishery further.

Two catchment-scale initiatives were submitted: the first from the Wye & Usk Foundation tackling the Rivers Lugg and Arrow in the vicinity of Leominster. Elements of delivery including the usual suspects of addressing point source and diffuse pol-

lution by targeting specific farms in the catchment and developing farm audits focussed on advising on all matters affecting water quality and offering grants for infrastructure improvements. Fencing to prevent bank-side damage by animal stock, removing barriers to fish migration and addressing poor habitat and fish recruitment issues were also carried out. A key element of this project was to develop a positive relationship with the Internal Drainage Board who inevitably have a highly significant influence on watercourse management in the area.

The second catchment-scale project was entered by the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and centred on Raydale incorporating the River Bain, a tributary of the River Ure in Upper Wensleydale. The project aimed to develop a model of community engagement and action to enhance biodiversity and water quality, public access and understanding of the river catchment. Although the catchment was small in terms of population size, communication and education by public meetings and newsletters were a key element in homing in on identifying priorities. In practical terms farm audits and nutrient management plans completed together with the



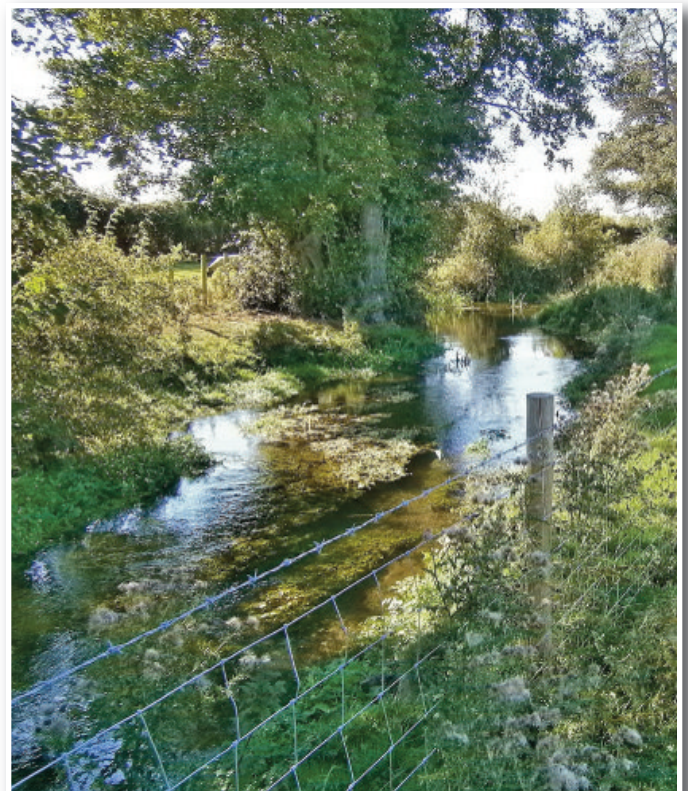
↑ The judges view work aimed at establishing marginal vegetation on the River Darent at Lullingstone Castle.

usual fencing out of stock, woodland planting and reinstating bankside public access. Water quality, fisheries and invertebrate monitoring were also incorporated with some early encouraging results. One innovation, perhaps unusually, was that a hydropower scheme had been incorporated to generate funds for future community-based projects.

In Snowdonia, the Prysor Angling Association, with help from the Environment Agency, is tackling a number of issues in the streams around Trawsfynydd, notably the Afon Pryor and the River Eden. Improving access for anglers is a priority, together with fisheries and habitat improvement involving a great deal of enthusiasm from club members again tackling the seemingly ubiquitous problem of siltation by fencing out stock, installing in-channel swing gates, drinking pumps and getting the balance of tree cover right by thinning and planting. As well as wild trout population improvements, an anticipated spin off benefit is to improve the endangered pearl mussel.

The judges would like to thank all the finalists for some excellent projects and taking the time to explain and show the judges around the projects. As mentioned in previous years, what never ceases to amaze is the continuing infectious enthusiasm exhibited by all the competition participants. Hopefully this will inspire others, through the WTT, to carry out similar habitat improvement initiatives long into the future.

↓ Fencing out livestock to prevent bank-side damage on the Rivers Lugg and Arrow.



Conservation update from the North and East

TIM JACKLIN

When I am writing this update I always look back to previous newsletters for inspiration and it is very pleasing to see that many of the Wild Trout Trust's Advisory Visits (AVs) and project proposals previously delivered have come to fruition and resulted in real, in-the-river habitat improvements. One in particular stood out this time and that was the work done on the River Leven in North Yorkshire (a tributary of the Tees) by Hutton Rudby Fly Fishing Club. They had an AV in April this year and have wasted no time in putting it into practice: managing woody debris, providing crucial over-wintering habitat for juvenile trout and creating an 'easement' to help trout migrating into a spawning tributary over a very tricky barrier. For the latter improvement you can see two short videos (before and after) on the YouTube website (search for Potto Beck).

A visit to the Irish International Fly Fair in Killyleagh, Co. Down, provided the opportunity for myself and Paul Gaskell to carry out an AV for Dromore Angling Club on the River Lagan and to prepare a project proposal for Gracehill and Galgorm AC on the River Maine, Co. Antrim. Again it was fantastic to see an improvement to fish passage at a weir on the Lagan installed within weeks of our visit, as a result of a short meeting with the landowner during the AV.

The Dibney River Conservation Trust organises the Fly Fair in Killyleagh and also campaigns tirelessly for the improvement of their eponymous river which is one of a number of spawning tributaries for the sea trout of Strangford Lough. The river has a number of problems, the legacy of land drainage schemes and a former tannery (heavy metal pollution). We are working with DRCT and have prepared a project proposal for habitat improvements and Hardy & Greys have generously provided a bursary of £1000 which will go towards this project.

AVs to rivers in the Yorkshire Dales (Ribble, Aire and Nidd) in recent weeks have provided a

reminder of the influence of the whole catchment on habitat quality in our rivers. Many of these rivers and their tributaries running off moorland areas suffer extremes of flow as a result of modern drainage schemes, climate change and even prehistoric deforestation by our Bronze Age ancestors! The result is large spates which run off quickly, down to very low levels in dry weather. The effects were neatly summed up by an experienced EA fisheries officer who attended one visit as "ripping the backside out of the river"! Channels can be devastated by these large flood events which wash out trout and salmon redds and leave channels over-wide, shallow and lacking finer gravels – extremely poor fish habitat. Tackling such problems is difficult for individual clubs and landowners and it emphasises the importance of supporting organisations such as your local rivers trust, government agencies, other interest groups and partnerships which are working in these areas. Moderating upland drainage has a host of benefits for society (less flooding, carbon sequestration), wildlife (such as ground-nesting birds) and fisheries so strong partnerships have to be the way forward.

In more lowland areas, the Anglian Sea Trout Project (funded through the Interreg Living North

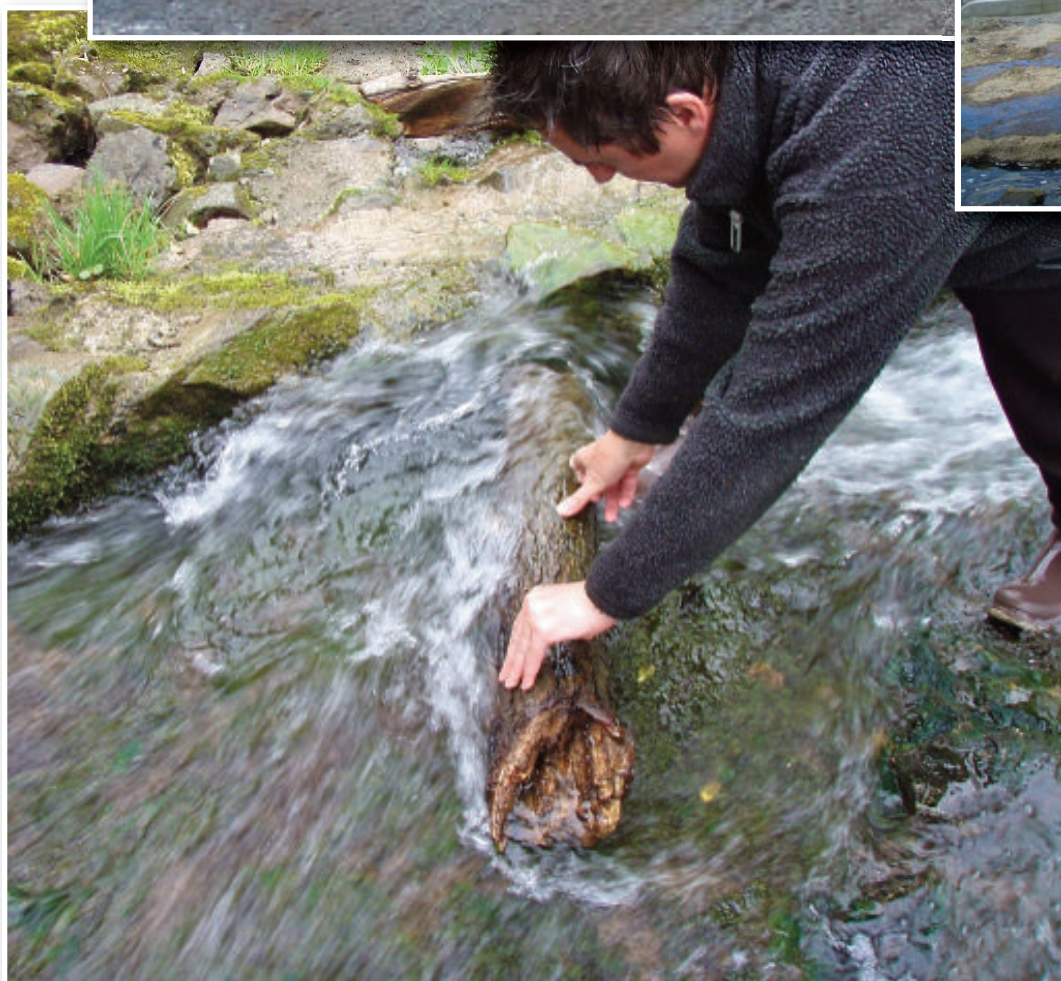
↓ Upper River Ribble – poor in-stream habitat typical of many moorland streams.



Seas Project and the EA) continues to make steady progress. The bottlenecks for sea trout populations (and other migratory species) are largely centred on obstacles to migration such as old mills, tidal sluices and weirs. There are often many interests involved at each of these sites and careful consultation and planning is required to make progress; this is ongoing at a number of sites on the Nar, Glaven and Burn. Work is also taking place on

the River Welland and its tributary the Gwash. The Welland has been identified as one of the ten pilot catchments in England and Wales for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive to achieve 'good ecological status' and the Wild Trout Trust is working with the Environment Agency and Welland Rivers Trust.

↓ Discussing fish pass options with a landowner on the River Lagan, Co. Down.



↑ The resulting 'baulk' fish easement constructed by the landowner (shown in the dry, with water diverted for construction). Photo: Michael Shanks.

↑ Experimenting with where to place baffles for easing fish passage at a weir on the Potto Beck, River Leven, North Yorkshire.

A novel approach to pool creation in chalkstreams

ANDY THOMAS

I know I know, you don't usually find pools in chalkstreams! The best you can generally hope for is some slight variation in depth, usually found below a bridge or sometimes caused when a tree has gone over in the winter and it has taken several months before a team has been organised to remove it. The tree usually goes and eventually so does the newly formed pool! Unfortunately even on some sections of chalkstream, where enlightened owners and keepers retain woody debris in the channel, you may have to wait for years before a really wet winter produces enough flow power to carve out these rare but exceptionally valuable habitats. The nearer the perennial source you go, the less likely it is that the stream can generate sufficient power to break through the hard bed crust. With no eroded bed gravels, this usually results in a flat bed topography with limited trout holding capacity and often few good spawning opportunities.

It was no surprise therefore, that on inspection a section of the Candover Brook in Hampshire showed there was precious little holding habitat for adult trout. The Candover is one of the three headwater streams that form the world famous River Itchen. The upper Itchen deserves its reputation as a premier chalkstream trout fishery

and many sections of the lower Candover provide a wide range of high quality trout habitat. The section I inspected above Abbotstone however was characterised by a wide and very shallow channel with very limited holding habitat available for resident or pre-spawning adult trout. Great for parr; but they have to be produced somewhere!

Having been contacted by the fishery owner I was delighted to find that the Environment Agency were also looking for opportunities to improve the Candover, not only for trout but also for native white clawed crayfish that still populate a few fragmented sections downstream. It was a very good time to produce a WTT Project Proposal.

An obvious solution to the lack of variation in the bed topography would have been to employ the very popular 'dig and dump' technique where a pool can be dug with a 360 excavator and the material removed from the bed. That material is then used to form side bars or cheeks to pinch the channel at the neck of the pool to promote a cleansing flow. There is no doubt this method is hugely effective at creating instant pools and providing good quality holding habitat for adult trout. One downside to the

↓ A typical section of the Candover above Abbotstone. A wide, shallow channel with poor holding potential for adult trout.



→
The WTT
Director
'blowing' out a
new pool off
the end of a
newly installed
sallow trunk.



technique is that, in digging the pool, it is extremely difficult to create the natural 'up-ramp' or tail that is usually thrown up when a pool is naturally carved out by a stream powering over, under or around a fallen tree. This type of feature is prime habitat as where they do exist they provide superb holding and spawning opportunities.

The challenge for me was to find a technique that would create a self cleansing pool where adult trout could sit safely and comfortably, and also to provide some good spawning habitat. I wanted a subtle feature in keeping with the chalkstream environment. It was then I thought that it would be worth trying to mimic a spate flow by using a large pump against an installed flow deflector.

The plan was to win some local live trees, dig the root wad into the bank and lay the trunk over the river to promote undershot scour. The next step was to scratch the river bed using the machine bucket to break up the hard surface crust and then use a large pump to blast the bed adjacent to the flow deflector, mimicking an exceptional flood flow

(rarely found in chalkstreams). It was hoped that the bed material would then naturally settle downstream of the pool to form a natural up-ramp or tail.

With the Land Drainage Consent in place and some funding generously provided by the Environment Agency, the project was successfully delivered in late September. Although not as cost effective as the dig and dump technique, four areas were significantly enhanced using the new method over a two-day period providing what appear to be wonderful holding areas but also new spawning opportunities as well.

Thanks are due to Richard Redsull and Dave Hunter from the local EA Fisheries Team and to Ben Rushbrook from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust for support and advice in making sure the project was also a success for native crayfish.

Trout in the Town – Summer 2011 update

PAUL GASKELL

2011 is turning out to be quite a tumultuous year so far following the great success of our urban conclave and Wandle Practical Visit early on. A 'changing of the guard' in the Sheffield Project as John Blewitt stepped down as chairman to pursue youth-angling coaching has led to a re-organisation at SPRITE (Sheffield Project for Rivers in Town Environments). We have now created several new posts that were previously components of the chairperson's role and have run some successful invasive plant removal events (both independently and in partnership with Winn Gardens Tenants and Residents Association (Winntara) and the Rivelin Valley Conservation Group: <http://www.rivelinvalley.org.uk/>).

SPRITE also has purchased some 'stem injection' kit for controlling Japanese knotweed infestations and we are in the process of obtaining the appropriate licence to use glyphosate weedkiller next to watercourses. The huge advantage of stem injection is the specific targeting of individual invasive plants – and a lack of overspray of weedkiller onto non-target native plants and the adjacent river. For a great example of this – and also to credit the EA flood-risk management teams for tackling invasive plants in areas where flood mitigation works are carried out – the section of the River Don adjacent to Club Mill Road in Sheffield has recently been treated with stem injection kit by teams under the instruction of Jonathan Moxon and his colleagues at the EA. This has come about through our ongoing dialogue with the EA through Jonathan as we work to improve the efficacy and environmental benefits of flood risk works. Mayfly in the Classroom (<http://www.mayflyintheclassroom.org>) training has been provided to establish the project in Basingstoke, as well as a special group-training day for four schools in the Milton Keynes area at George Eaton's excellent outdoor classroom facility that is part of the award winning Rectory Farm (<http://www.rectory-farm.org.uk/>). This event was scheduled to be run by myself but the onset of what transpired to be epilepsy in my 6-month old son meant that my colleague Tim Jacklin stepped in and saved the day (thanks Tim!).

Also we have been in negotiation with the relevant EA regulatory people over the habitat works that I designed for the River Erewash in Nottinghamshire. Following a degree of back and

forth since early this year over the proposed designs and the relevant site visits, it seems that we may be progressing towards being granted permission to do the habitat works installation (hopefully before autumn this year when the trout will start to think about spawning). This will be carried out as part of a WTT Practical Visit (PV) where staff from the Trust train local volunteers how to carry out the prescribed improvement works. PVs (staff time and materials) are sponsored by the WTT funding infrastructure and are free to recipients (up to a maximum value of £1800). In the meantime, Tim Jacklin has dropped in on the River Erewash Foundation (REF) to train them in the use of their new gravel cleaning machine – an adapted leaf blower that was bought following a funding donation from the Trout in the Town project to the REF (<http://www.rivererewashfoundation.co.uk/>).

A day spent surveying the River Irwell with the 'Action Irwell/Salford Friendly Anglers' (<http://actionirwell.blogspot.com/> and <http://www.salfordfriendlyanglers.co.uk/>) group was used to help identify potential sites to be incorporated in their planned Riverfly Partnership Anglers' Monitoring Initiative (http://www.riverflies.org/index/riverfly_monit.html). Subsequently the group received their invertebrate sampling and identification training and the monitoring plan is being put into action. In the interests of multi-tasking, I carried out the necessary investigations to compile an Advisory Visit report to identify potential habitat bottlenecks and any relevant ecological issues on the Irwell. The resultant report identified a series of recommendations that the Irwell group is finding very useful in presenting to potential project partners as well as to council and regulatory representatives. The report also makes direct links to the priorities identified in the relevant Water Framework Directive 'River Basin Management Plans' to show how the Irwell group can help the EA achieve the required ecological improvements. Wild Trout Trust members can sign into the members' area on the WTT website and read the report in full (www.wildtrout.org). The visit, including its follow-up report, was delivered free of charge using Trout in the Town funding provided by the EA and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

The Wandle Trust has been making good progress this year. Some of my previous blog posting has

covered the terrific urban conclave and the attendant WTT practical visit hosted by the Wandle Trust

(<http://urbantrout.blogspot.com/2011/03/return-of-urban-conclave-even-bigger.html>). The Wandle Trust and the Wild Trout Trust have a long shared history (long may it continue!) and I am very proud of the technical training input and habitat/wild trout population restoration strategy developed through the Trout in the Town project. I am equally in awe of the amazing way that the Wandle Trust has

implemented its habitat works programme and seamlessly integrated it at a whole river scale (with particularly large doses of kudos to Wandle Trust Director Bella Davies required!). Read the Wandle Trust Blog entries from 20 July 2011 (weir notching at Carshalton) up to the most recent entries to see how much work all of the Trust staff, trustees and volunteers are putting in (www.wandletrust.org).

Members who are following the activities of **Trout in the Town** can find regular updates on:
<http://urbantrout.blogspot.com/2011/08/summer-2011-updates.html>
<http://urbantrout.blogspot.com/2011/09/astounding-events-on-new-tintt.html>

Bugs & Grubs

The WTT's Bugs & Grubs days have changed subtly during the nine years since they were inaugurated.

In 2002 the course, (then run out of Lackham College of Agriculture now in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust) consisted of a comprehensive review of the little creatures living in local rivers and lakes and the conditions in which they would flourish or fail. Water quality, pollution, aquatic plants, agriculture and public works all featured as factors in the lives of the invertebrates living in our waters: samples were sought and found by the students under the expert guidance of the course leader, Richard Cripps.

These things remain fundamental to the course but, in 2011 with the addition of Shaun Leonard to the tutorial team, we found that the topics addressed in the first waterside-session encompassed a very wide range of fishery management matters. The tutors answered questions on matters as diverse as the management of whole catchments to the identification of the smallest bug in the water. These things have become a permanent part of the programme for the day.

The course will maintain the expanded programme in 2012 – with ample time for instream work!

In 2012 the course is to be held at Langford Lakes and the adjacent River Wylye (Hanging Langford near Salisbury) on 7 July. The classes are limited to 20 students. In the event of over-subscription for that date a second date will be arranged. Please register early if possible. The basic agenda for the one-day course is:

9:00 am	Meet for coffee.
9:30 am	Welcome by Richard Cripps for the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Shaun Leonard for the Wild Trout Trust.
9:45 am	Introduction to the factors that affect life in rivers and lakes, recognition of harmful and beneficial influences, means of collecting specimens, methods of identification, bankside and instream flora, questions of stream management.
10:45 am	Fieldwork on the nearby river Wylye (bring your own waders or gumboots).
12:45 pm	Lunch (bring your own picnic; coffee and tea provided).
2:00 pm	Fieldwork on the nearby Langford Lakes.
4:00 pm	Closing discussions (all times will be flexible).

The cost of a one-day course is £25. Applications, accompanied by full payment, should be sent to Christina Bryant, The Wild Trout Trust, PO Box 120, Waterlooville, PO8 OWZ. Tel 023 9257 0985, email: office@wildtrout.org.



What does the Water Framework Directive mean for us?

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a piece of European legislation which came into effect in the UK in 2003. So, it is nothing new, but it is now having a real effect on funding and priorities for river habitat improvement and is well worth understanding at a practical 'how can we take advantage of it' level. The legislation demands that waterbodies in the UK (that includes rivers, lakes, groundwater, coastal waters and estuaries) must meet 'good ecological status' by 2015, or have a good reason not to do so. Invertebrates and fish are key elements of good ecological status.

Like most European initiatives, WFD is complex and associated with large amounts of documentation and data, which can be hard to digest. The aim of this article is to show how WFD could benefit you if you are involved with river or lake or habitat projects. It is, therefore, a narrow view of a large topic and is focused on England and Wales, but the WFD also applies to Scotland. Much more detail is available on the EA and SEPA websites.

There are 11, detailed River Basin Management Plans covering England and Wales which are broken down to river catchments and defined reaches known as waterbodies. The plans are reviewed on a six-yearly basis to identify current 'pressures' (abstraction, diffuse pollution, nutrient enrichment etc) and the actions required to address those pressures and achieve 'good ecological status' by the next review (2015).

In terms of practical habitat improvement actions for a particular reach of a river, the key piece of information to find is the current status of the waterbody (see box).

In simple terms, if a waterbody is in bad, poor or (possibly) moderate status currently, then it is likely to be a priority for improvement project funding under WFD. It is worth talking to your local EA contact to find out what plans they have to deliver improvement themselves, or if they are willing to fund a project via a partner (you/us) to address the issues. Some of the public funding for achieving WFD objectives has been given to the Rivers Trusts to administer, so they are also worth contacting.

WFD funding is having a direct effect on some aspects of our (WTT's) habitat work. We are increasingly working with the EA and Rivers Trusts to deliver projects that will help rivers achieve 'good ecological status', and the information in the plans is helping us to focus our efforts in areas where we can make the most difference to wild trout. This is good news and very much in line with

our objectives. Funding for WFD work has also allowed us to enter a partnership with Eden Rivers Trust to employ another Conservation Officer – see the pieces on Gareth Pedley.

There are, of course, plenty of flaws, problems and frustrations to deal with. For example, rivers that are supposed to be in 'moderate' or 'good' status but which clearly are not, and a desire by Defra and the EA to focus on the easy, quick wins such as fish passes rather than the fundamental, but more intractable problems like abstraction and diffuse pollution. As ever, the WTT is taking a pragmatic approach. We are taking advantage of the funding to do good habitat work wherever we can, whilst working with organisations such as the Angling Trust to lobby the Government and the EA to be more ambitious in their plans and address the fundamental issues.

To find out the current status of a waterbody

The quickest route is via the 'what's in your backyard' section of the EA website:
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure



Go straight to the maps and select the topic called 'River Basin Management Plans – Rivers'. Search for a village or postcode and get a colour-coded map with the status of your river. Click on the river on the map to find a summary of the status. For more detail, open 'Annex B' of the River Basin Management Plan and use the search box to find the table relating to your river. Annex B starts with useful explanations of the tables and summary data for the river basin.

WILD TROUT TRUST SHOP

All WTT merchandise can be ordered via the Shop on our website at www.wildtrout.org; by sending an appropriate cheque to the WTT Office; or by debit/credit card over the phone – call the WTT Office on 023 9257 0985. All postage prices are for the UK, please enquire for overseas.



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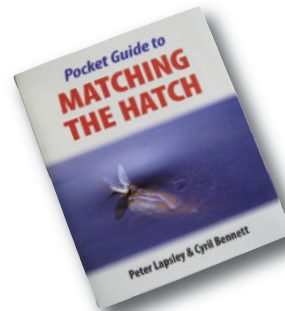
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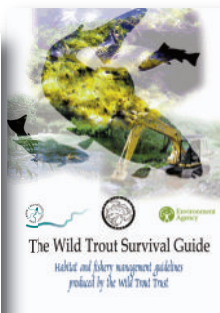
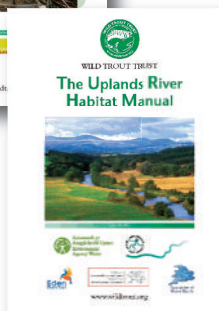
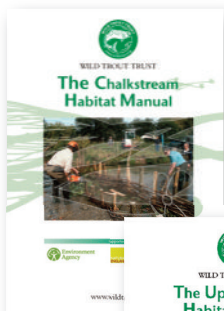
WTT GUIDES AND MANUALS

The Wild Trout Survival Guide (softback) – £10 + £1 p&p

The Uplands River Habitat Manual (CD) – £10 + £1 p&p

The Chalkstream Habitat Manual (CD) – £10 + £1 p&p

Urban Rivers Restoration Guidelines (CD) – £10 + £1 p&p



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Day Tickets on the River Wye plus one night's B&B and dinner for two
(double or twin) at The Peacock, Rowsley in high season or four Day Tickets
plus one night's B&B and dinner in low season.

2nd Prize

Kindly donated by Sage, worth £549.
A Sage TXL-F 7ft 10in, 3-weight, 4-piece fly rod.

3rd Prize

Kindly donated by Orvis, worth £425.
An Orvis Superfine Touch 9ft, 4-weight, 4-piece full flex fly rod.

4th Prize

Kindly donated by the Wild Trout Trust, worth £300.
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5th Prize

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