

# What's Beane Happening?

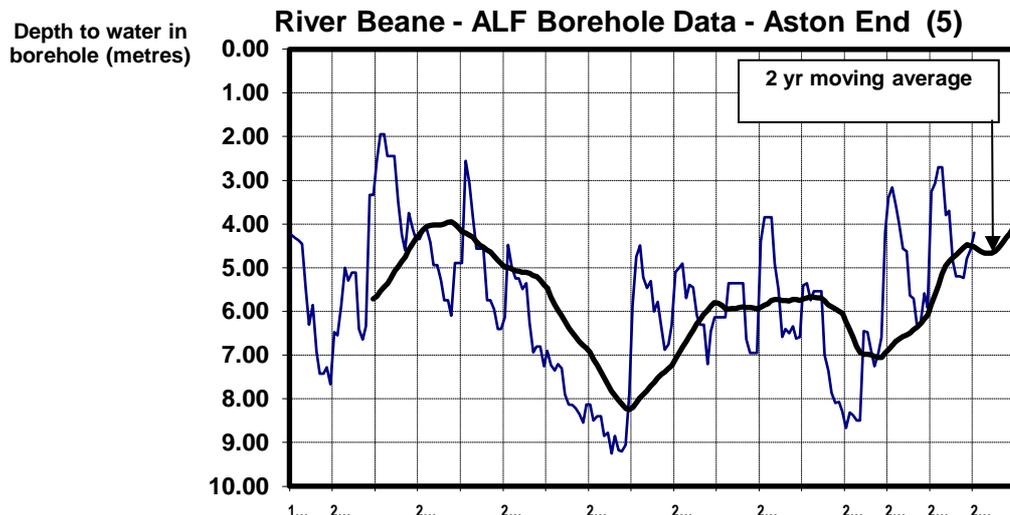
The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association  
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## Welcome

In winter we expect adverse weather conditions, however, I have been afflicted by adverse computer conditions. A team of technical wizards have spent three and a half weeks scratching their heads and trying various things which has now resulted in the machine working again. They tell me they wish they knew how...! My apologies for this newsletter being a month late.

The Beane has continued to benefit from winter rainfall and it has been two years since the upper reaches were dry. An example of one of the bore hole charts below shows that the moving average for the level of water in the aquifer has now matched its previous highest recorded level which was in 2002.



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Monitoring has shown that a variety of invertebrates have moved back into the stretch between Walkern and Holdbrook, including three of our target species, Olives Baetidae, Gammarus (fresh water shrimp) and the rarer Stonefly. While the warden report has recorded moorhens, minnows and rafts of frog spawn. All of this is very encouraging as we look forward to the flow of water being improved on a permanent basis.

## A sad goodbye and many thanks to Charlie Bell

After 3 years as our Living Rivers Officer Charlie is moving to a new job in Shrewsbury. Here she is shown receiving a bottle of her favorite whisky from our chairman, Dave Stimpson, and a voucher for an outdoor activity store purchased with donations from RBRA members. Charlie has been inspirational in her role and has achieved a great deal, not least her format for the river basin catchment management plan which could become a national model.

We wish her every success and happiness in the future. She will be missed.





Left we see the river using its natural flood plain. This was scene from 2014. One of the effects of having a continual flow of water, or an improved flow of water, is that silt gradually gets scoured away. This is already starting to happen on stretches of the upper Beane. A new, narrower, meandering channel has been cut in places where the river had previously been artificially widened and straightened. It has happened naturally, just by having water in the river, and it has once more revealed a gravelly bottom. This is not only better for wildlife but it also enables the river to carry excess water away more quickly reducing the incidence of flooding.

## More ways to find out what's Beane happening.

The RBRA has joined the 21<sup>st</sup> century and embraced social media. You don't have to be on Facebook to view our Facebook page. Simply go to [www.facebook.com/RiverBeane](http://www.facebook.com/RiverBeane) (or ctrl click on this link) to view far more information than can be included in a news letter. There are also links to related stories and organizations that will be of interest.

If you are on Twitter then the Twitter feed is [www.twitter.com/riverbeane/media](http://www.twitter.com/riverbeane/media) or try <https://twitter.com/RiverBeane>

And, of course, there is our excellent web site [www.riverbeane.org.uk/](http://www.riverbeane.org.uk/)

Thanks go to Rachel Hancock of Pyscle for sponsoring the website and Neil Youngman for producing the Facebook and Twitter sites.

## 2015

2014 has been a momentous year in the history of the RBRA. We have seen a commitment to reduce abstraction by 90% in 2018 with a small reduction starting this year. We have already started to move from being a campaigning organization to one engaging in practical conservation, and we have been recognized by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England for our work in highlighting the plight of The Beane through our film.

At a recent conference we attended WWF made the following points:

- *Water voles have declined by more than 90% since the 1980's*
- *Three quarters of rivers in England and Wales are officially considered to be unhealthy*
- *57% of freshwater and wetland species have declined*
- *We take 3 billion more litres of water each day than the environment can cope with*
- *Atlantic salmon have declined by 40% in England since the 1970's*

So there is still much to do. We will be doing our bit by ensuring that promises made are honoured, and by encouraging and supporting other tributaries of the Lea to set up similar organisations. One is just starting for The Ash and we wish them well.

## Merchandise

Show your support for The Beane by purchasing our new RBRA car sticker (our logo + web address). It can go where your tax disc used to be. £1.50 including postage available through the web site.



Some people have inquired about purchasing the title song from our film 'On the Banks of the Beane'. This is now available on an album together with 9 other songs released by 'Blue Harbour' (Phil and Jim). It costs just £6 including postage and is available from our web site. All proceeds are being donated to the Herts and Middlesex and the Essex Wildlife Trusts. A reminder that the DVDs are also still available through the website.

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