

What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association
Issue No 14 Autumn 2016



Welcome



What is this man doing?

Read on to find out the answer.

Mixed news for The Beane in this issue. After a very dry second half of the summer and an equally dry start to autumn, several years of continual flow on the upper Beane has come to an end. It has started to dry up in places between Aston End and Holdbrook Barn. Of course, the pumping station at Aston Ford probably doesn't help

but it is, none the less, very disappointing. Hopefully the massive reduction in abstraction at Whitehall Farm will help in 2018. However, the lower Beane is still flowing well as can be seen from the above picture. *What is that man doing?* Well, the man in question is Martin Ketcher, Water Vole Conservation and Non-Native Invasive Species Officer for Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. He is pictured at a training day, attended by RBRA volunteers, for surveying the river to assess its suitability for a future water vole release. Amazing what you discover when you survey the river. Yes, the good news is that Martin is pointing to where he discovered an otter spraint (*or poo to you and me, pictures on the right*). This was at Waterford and it ties in with an unconfirmed sighting of an otter playing on the bank at Watton at Stone. There have been only two previous records of otters on The Beane, one in 1976 and another in 1994, so this is very exciting and augers well for when the river is returned to health following 2018.

Along The Beane at Stapleford



The Countryside Management Service has teamed up with Stapleford Parish Council on a new circular walk in the Beane Valley. As part of the Year of Walking CMS are working with parishes to produce new leafleted walks to encourage residents and visitors to get out in the glorious Hertfordshire countryside and experience new areas.

This circular walk starts from St Mary's church, Stapleford, (*shown left*) and is just under three miles in length, taking less than an hour for an average walker. It follows a delightful section of the River Beane southwards, a route which is also part of the Hertfordshire Way. There is a gentle gradient in the middle section which climbs north east to the

top of Church Lane where there is a rewarding view into the Beane Valley and the village below. The trail ascends across farmland, into Woodhall Estate and reaches the river again above Stapleford to continue along a pleasant wooded area, back towards the starting point.

The walk will be available to download from the CMS website soon, via: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cms. The River Beane Restoration Association plans to walk the route later in the autumn, and will notify supporters about this in the near future.

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Himalayan Balsam

Why is this beautiful plant on an Environment Agency list of non native invasive species to be controlled? It was introduced by the Victorians because of its beauty, but look at the pods on the left of the picture. They explode, scattering seeds incredible distances. The bank is quickly covered and seeds float downstream to colonize new sites. Sadly, it is not a food source for any of our native creatures and it also degrades river banks causing erosion.

Why not join a working party to help control it? Contact Bob for details
antheaandbob@hotmail.com

Art Competition Winners



Our thanks and congratulations to everyone who entered this year's competition. There were a large number of entries and the standard was very high.

The first prize winners were:
(Left to right)
Rec. Y1 & 2 **Regie Gomm**
Aston St.Mary's, Aston
Y3 & 4 **Clara Thorp**
Mill Mead School, Hertford
Y5 & 6 **Isabelle Williams**
All Saints School,
Datchworth



Village Fetes

During the summer we attended village fetes to publicise our activities. Many of the paintings were displayed behind our stall and they were greatly appreciated. We have been to Stapleford, Watton at Stone, Aston, Waterford and Watton at Stone Methodist Church fete.

2017 Calendar

RBRA are producing a calendar for 2017 (see *photo of the sample*). They will be priced at £6 each excluding postage. The pictures were taken on the Beane throughout the year. They will be available from this November onward from the RBRA and will also be featured on our website and Facebook pages. The photographs shown on the right are not the final ones, these are still being selected, but I can assure you that the RBRA will not be following in the WI's footsteps. Any volunteers shown will be keeping their clothes on!

2018 Calendar Photographic Competition

We are already planning the 2018 calendar and this is advanced notice that we will be inviting you to send us photographs of scenes from along The Beane and the beautiful Beane Valley that will show the changing seasons throughout the year. So now is the time to get those autumn shots! The photographs will be collected next summer and everyone who has a photograph included will be credited. You don't have to be a keen photographer and have expensive equipment, sometimes you can get a great shot just on your phone, and if it's not quite right but has something about it, don't worry, we may well be able to edit it. It's worth having a go. Good luck, and happy snapping!



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