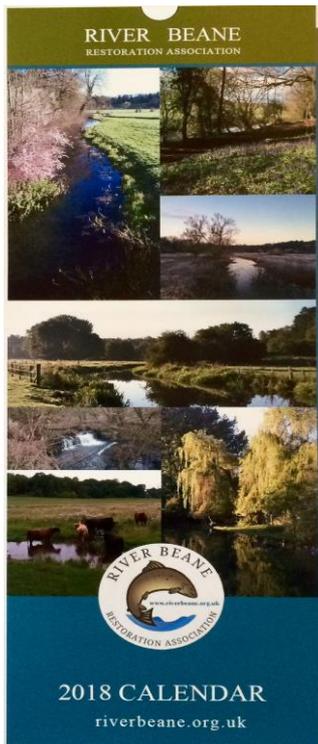


What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association
Issue No 18 • Winter 2017/8



Welcome



It's an early winter news letter this year to give you a chance to order your River Beane 2018 calendars. You can see the front cover to the left containing many lovely views of ... it has to be said, the lower river, as the upper river has, in the main, been dry all year. More about that later.

Congratulations to Neil Rickards who is the winner of the photographic competition. He sent two pictures of The Beane near Hertford and both have been used, one for January and one for December. He will be receiving a free copy of the calendar. If you would like one they will be available later this month and the price of £6 including hand delivery (local area only) is unchanged from last year. They can be ordered from the following people:

Walkern	Philip Hewitt	01438 861639
Aston	Dave Stimpson	01438 880394
Watton at Stone	Malcolm Hadley	01920 412179
Stapleford	George Sandell	01992 500422

Of course, all profits go towards the running of the RBRA.



Don't forget, Affinity Water's summer message is still just as important and a small amount of water still comes from The Beane.

In this Issue

- Our 2018 calendar
- Ground water continues to be at a very low level
- Work has started on Affinity Water's ambitious project to enhance the river!
- Date of the next Meeting



The dry river bed just south of Aston (Stoney) Ford in April. You can see it has become overgrown. It remained dry all summer.

Water is still not flowing in the upper Beane

We reported in our last issue that there was concern about the low rainfall over the past year. We reproduced an Affinity Water water resources update which contained graphs and diagrams showing the lack of rainfall and the way this impacts on the environment. The impact is particularly harsh in this area because traditionally we take most of our water directly from the ground. No new reservoirs have been built for over 50 years, and that is the only way to hold water back in times of plenty to take the pressure off in times of drought. We can't keep building more and more homes in the South East without addressing this problem.

Following the 90% reduction in abstraction at Whitehall last April the RBRA has continued to monitor the nine bore holes on the upper Beane with keen interest. Despite no more than average rainfall in any month (we need above average to replace the deficit) and only 39% of the long term average in October, most of the bore holes have continued to show a fall in ground water levels. The Environment Agency has confirmed that this is in line with the majority of bore holes across the region. However, the ones near to the pumping station have bucked the trend and are showing an increase. We are greatly encouraged by this even though it has not yet been sufficient to allow the river to flow. It will take time, possibly several years, but then we are hopeful that the river will be able to sustain itself. Affinity Water is also doing a great deal to improve the quality and ecology of the river. Read on for more information.



This is the river where it flows through the area that used to be the Broadwater lake. This drained following a bank collapse in 2016 filling much of the lower river with silt. There will be big changes here – see the article on the next page.

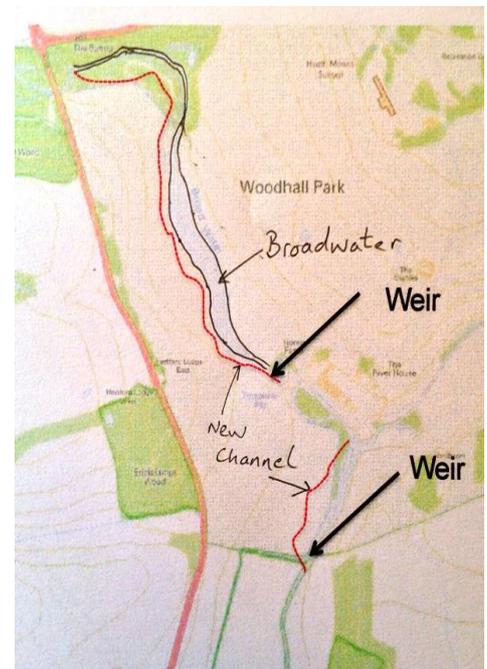
The work has started!



The picture shows the new channel at Woodhall Park. This is one of a number of projects Affinity Water is undertaking now that we are looking forward to an increase in the flow of water. Weirs impede the free movement of fish and their removal is essential to allow fish such as trout to move up and down the river. However, some, like the Horseshoe falls near Hertford and the weir on the Broadwater at Woodhall Park, are listed and cannot be removed, therefore they have to be bypassed.

The diagram on the right shows the route of the new channel in red. You can also see the Broadwater as it used to be. The Broadwater suffered a bank collapse in 2016 and the lake drained away leaving only the residual river flow. (see photo on the previous page) This is actually shown in our new calendar for June as well as here. There are plans to reinstate the Broadwater, but not as it was. The idea is to dig a bypass channel with a loop to the Broadwater. The river will top up the lake but not flow through it. The flow will run unchecked downstream so fish, water voles etc, when they re appear, can move along the river.

This is a major project, the channel being dug at the moment is around the weir. The channel to bypass the Broadwater will be dug next summer.



During the time the lake has been drained a lot of river bank plants have become established in the mud at the lakeside. Prior to flooding a rescue operation was mounted by Affinity Water and RBRA to remove the plants for future replanting elsewhere along the catchment. (See left)

Wondering what is happening with the water vole project? Don't worry – lots. We will report on it in future newsletters.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 13th February at 8.00pm in the Methodist Church Hall at Watton at Stone.



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