

# What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association  
Issue No 22· Winter 2019



## Welcome



The month of January has seen a few days of dramatic snowfall but apart from that not much rain at all. (*The picture to the left shows the bridge at Aston Ford.*) In fact when I received the email from our chairman, Dave, with text for the new newsletter I had just been looking at the news and a weather forecaster had been showing a map of the British Isles covered in different shades of brown to show well below average rainfall for the month. Apparently it has been the ninth driest since records began! Still, the snow melted and February came in with

a soaking, so fingers crossed. More on the state of the river later.

Most of the other photos in this issue were taken in January during a period of frosts and snow. They show The Beane Valley as it is seldom seen. We are always looking for new photographs of The Beane from anywhere along its length for possible inclusion in next year's calendar, so please send them in if you have any.

## Calendar sales

Many thanks to everyone involved with the calendars by either buying one or helping with sales of them. We had one hundred printed and at the time of writing we have one left. Many thanks are due to David Ashby for his layout and compilation activity which saved us quite a bit of cost. The end result was that we made a profit of £230 and this will enable us to pay our way through 2019.

Occasionally we hear of calendars being sent to surprising places. We have had a very nice letter from a former resident of Walkern who now lives in Staffordshire. She has fond memories of the river flowing well in the 1950's and as a child learnt to swim in the deeper parts of the river near Walkern church. She also remembers that tadpoles, minnows, water shrimps and sticklebacks were abundant then.



## Talk to Bennington and Walkern Gardening Club

In January our Chairman, Dave, gave a talk to the Bennington and Walkern Gardening Club. This was well received, and we benefitted by £60 as a result.

*The river as it flows between Aston Ford and Holdbrook*

## In this Issue

- The impact of another dry winter
- Excellent calendar sales
- Talk to Bennington and Walkern Gardening Club
- The position of Secretary
- The next meeting is also a Beane Catchment Partnership meeting



*The mill at Walkern. The river has been flowing consistently through Walkern throughout the winter and also last summer.*



*We will be receiving an update on the project to reintroduce water voles to the Beane at our next meeting in the Watton at Stone Methodist Church Hall on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March from 6.30 to 9.00pm.*

## Borehole dipping, river flow and rainfall

We continue with borehole dipping and the latest results for January show that levels have declined from December. This is not surprising as we have had very little rain. The ground water levels throughout 2018 were better than 2017, but the upper river still has no flow, or very little flow. The Environment Agency has reported that this area received 86% of average rainfall for the last six months of 2018 and 89% of average rainfall over the whole year. This shows that the early part of the year was wetter than the later part, and also shows that we are well down on rainfall. Unfortunately, our area has only received 48% of the long term average rainfall for January. So the year hasn't started too well, especially as January is a key month for aquifer recharge.



Affinity Water came to our last meeting and advised that they really hoped that 2019 would be a lot wetter than 2018. If not they might be forced to consider hosepipe bans etc. Still, just to give us a bit of hope, the melting snow was followed by a wet week at the beginning of February which saw the previously dry river south of Aston Ford look like the picture to the left. Of course, it is mostly run off, but with just a drop more rain .... who knows?



*The river as it approaches Holdbrook Barn. There has been water in this part of the river all winter as it has been fed by a spring running down from Aston. It disappeared again on its way to Whitehall.*

## Secretary

Our secretary, Philip, has advised us that he will not be able to continue as secretary after June this year. We thank him for the work he has done and now need to replace him. The post is not too time consuming. If you wish to know more about it please contact Dave Stimpson, Bob Thornton or Philip Hewitt for details.

## Next Meeting

The meeting will be in the Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Watton at Stone on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March from 6.30 to 9pm. This is being organised by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and will be a Beane Catchment Partnership meeting with participants from the Wildlife Trust, The Environment Agency and Affinity Water. It follows the previous event held in October. As before we expect this will be an interesting evening with updates about the various projects being carried out on the Beane which include progress on weir removals as well as next steps on the possible Water Vole reintroduction project.



*The pictures above and below show the river as it passes through Whitehall Farm during the dry January. The river remains dry here despite the healthy level of water in the aquifer as explained in the last news letter.*



*The picture to the left is south of the bridge at Holdbrook Barn.*



### **Date of the next meeting**

*Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 6.30 to 9.00pm in Watton at Stone  
Methodist Church Hall*

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