

News story: Brown trout found in restored River Medlock

An award-winning scheme which restored a stretch of the River Medlock has been further boosted after juvenile brown trout were found in the watercourse.

Previously known as the Red River, the Medlock underwent a £250,000 transformation at Clayton Vale which re-naturalised the waterway to encourage habitats for wildlife.

Juvenile brown trout, a key indicator species, were found in the river following a fish survey conducted in April 2018.

A large-scale project was undertaken in 2013 along a 300 metre section of the river in Clayton Vale, just upstream of Philips Park and the Etihad Stadium. The aim was to restore the river and re-naturalise it – the brick lining was removed, concrete foundations dug-up and the watercourse widened.

Two weirs were removed in the river which slowed the flow of the water; riffles and runs added to provide protection for fish and insects and deep pools created to help with water quality by reducing sediments.

The increased presence of fish is particularly encouraging as the Environment Agency and Manchester City Council are also installing baffles in the rivers culvert to further help fish move up and down the river.

The River Medlock was originally modified over a hundred years ago by lining the channel with concrete and bricks. This provided essential power and resource for local industry, but damaged natural habitats in the process.

It became known as the Red River as eight million bricks were used to channel the river following the Great Flood of 1872 when the Medlock burst its banks and washed away tombstones and bodies from Philips Park Cemetery.

The project was led by the Environment Agency and supported by Manchester City Council, Groundwork and Irwell Rivers Trust with lots of community engagement.

Oliver Southgate, the river restoration project manager from the Environment Agency, said:

Finding juvenile brown trout in the Medlock is a massive step forward as it shows we have created suitable spawning habitat in the river. These fish are a key indicator species, which means the overall ecology of the river – good water quality and habitats for fish – have markedly improved.

Our mission at the Environment Agency is to make this a better place for people and wildlife and I'm really proud of our work to bring this river back to life. Further work on the Medlock is planned and I really hope the local community come and enjoy this city oasis.

Manchester City Council's Executive Member for the Environment and Skills, Councillor Angeliki Stogia, said:

It's wonderful to know that our partnership work is paying off and that nature is responding so impressively to the restored habitat along the River Medlock.

This project has benefited both wildlife and local residents by enhancing a fantastic place for nature-lovers, walkers, families and anglers, within just a couple of miles of Manchester city centre.

Jo Fraser, Manchester's River Valley Coordinator from Groundwork said:

It is great news to see fish and other wildlife flourishing in what was long seen as a dead river. We hope this will encourage people to help keep it clean and get involved in future projects.

The Environment Agency is committed to protecting and enhancing our rivers. If you see a pollution please call the 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Press release: Rugeley flood scheme wins industry sustainability award

This award recognises the partnership way of working achieving multiple benefits to the town and the people of Rugeley.

Before the £5.2 million scheme was completed, the risk of flooding to the town hampered further development and regeneration. Now, development can go ahead, and planning applications which will see new jobs created have already been approved.

Other benefits include creating space for more sports pitches and making sure the flood defences were designed to allow HGVs bringing the popular Royal Charter Fair to the town could still access the site.

Environmental benefits are significant too. Measures were put in place to sustain and enhance a healthy population of endangered native white-claw crayfish and an eel pass has been installed to help eels populate the brook. A collapsed footbridge that is part of the Cannock Chase Heritage Trail has also been re-built reconnecting a popular footpath.

Will Groves, a flood risk specialist with the Environment Agency said:

It's wonderful to see the Rugeley scheme recognised by this prestigious award, this scheme really involved the local community and many partners. We're pleased to already see regeneration and growth coming to the town now it's better protected from the risk of flooding.

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership chairman David Frost CBE said:

I'm delighted that this impressive project is now an award winner. The Rising Brook scheme is very good news for Rugeley, protecting town centre homes and businesses from flooding and making the town a better place to live, work and visit.

It means that businesses will have a secure foundation when they make plans to expand, without the risk of their hard work literally being washed away. It is also creating an attractive green space for local people to enjoy.

Vij Randeniya, Chairman of the Trent Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC), said:

This is great testimony to everyone involved in the Rugeley scheme, an accolade much deserved for collective effort and commitment. Credit also to the Trent RFCC which continues to focus on the importance of protecting homes and ultimately people and their livelihoods from flood risk.

Cllr Gordon Alcott, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader for Cannock Chase Council said:

We are delighted that the Rugeley flood scheme has won this prestigious award. It recognises the importance of partnership working to deliver a much needed scheme which will protect homes and businesses for many years to come. The scheme also unlocks potential development opportunities which were previously constrained by the flood risk to be brought forward in Rugeley.

The scheme was delivered by the Environment Agency in partnership with Cannock Chase District Council, the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Rugeley Town Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Trent Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.

Press release: Companies pay nearly £30,000 to charity after pollution incident

Two companies have agreed to pay nearly £30,000 to a Norfolk charity after admitting their respective roles in a river pollution incident.

The pollution stemmed from rotting potatoes being stored in a warehouse rented by Lamb Weston/Meijer UK Ltd on land owned by Ralph Harrison & Co Ltd at Little Snoring Airfield, Norfolk.

As the potatoes decomposed they released liquid that entered the surface water drains at the site and subsequently passed into a tributary of the River Stiffkey at Little Snoring, near Fakenham, Norfolk.

The incident was reported to the Environment Agency in November 2015 and investigations were undertaken.

Environment Agency officers found that the liquid from the decomposing potatoes contained nutrients which affected a tributary of the River Stiffkey, reducing the dissolved oxygen in the water. This resulted in the death of fish and invertebrates in a 1km stretch of water.

It was found that Ralph Harrison & Co Ltd's negligence had led to the pollution.

No written lease agreement was in place between the parties and no risk assessment had been prepared to set out what action would be taken to prevent the escape of polluting liquid.

Having taken into account the circumstances of the case, in particular the localised nature of the environmental harm, the action taken to prevent any further occurrences and the companies' lack of previous convictions, the Environment Agency decided that in this instance, it would be appropriate to deal with the matter through Enforcement Undertakings (EU's).

Lamb Weston offered to donate £23,100 to the Norfolk Rivers Trust for use in its projects around the River Stiffkey, while Ralph Harrison Co Ltd offered to donate £5,000 to the same charity.

Both companies agreed to take action to prevent such an incident happening again.

Lamb Weston employed a consultant to carry out an ecological survey, created a template emergency action plan, improved staff training and employed a new storage manager to be responsible for environmental management. It also improved potato storage processes and temperature systems and reimbursed Ralph Harrison & Co Ltd's clean-up costs of £26,476.

Ralph Harrison & Co Ltd dredged the watercourse to remove remaining pollution and installed new valve and pump systems at the site to prevent any future incidents.

The companies now also have a written lease agreement, which had not previously been in place.

Marcus Sibley, Norfolk Environment Manager said:

Enforcement undertakings allow those who commit offences to restore the environment and to take steps to prevent a recurrence.

When appropriate, they allow a quicker resolution than a prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to put things right voluntarily working with their local communities.

The EU was offered in relation to an offence of pollution under Regulation 38 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

The EU was completed in February.

[Press release: Take care when buying your fishing licence online](#)

The Environment Agency has received reports from anglers who have used third party websites and been charged up to double the price for a licence. There have also been instances of anglers being charged a fee but not receiving a licence as quickly as they would expect.

These websites are not endorsed by the Environment Agency and anyone wanting to buy a fishing licence should go direct to the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Please make sure you have the right website if you use a search engine to find GOV.UK. On the GOV.UK website you can buy a 12 month fishing licence from £30. Junior licences are free for 13-16 year olds at GOV.UK.

It's quick and easy – just go to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can call us on 0344 800 5386 or visit your local Post Office branch.

The GOV.UK site is the best way to give customers peace of mind knowing that whenever you go out fishing on waters that are open for angling you'll be doing it legally. All fisheries licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, Environment Agency said:

For complete peace of mind, make sure you visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) to buy your fishing licence.

Money from fishing licences is used when we respond to fish kills, improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers; plus fish restocking, invasive species eradication and working with partners to encourage people to take up fishing for the first time.

When customers purchase from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) they'll receive a reference number allowing them to go fishing immediately.

Customers who use third party sites may not get this number immediately and will be considered to be fishing illegally if they go without a valid reference number or licence.

Press release: Boaters warned to register your vessel or face court action

Boat owners are being urged to make sure their vessels are properly registered – or face paying thousands of pounds in penalties.

The call comes after 6 boaters were ordered to forfeit more than £7,200 between them – all for failing to register their craft for use on the River Nene.

It is a legal requirement for boat owners to register any vessel they keep, use or let for hire on Environment Agency waterways, and to clearly display a valid registration plate. None of the guilty 6 had done so.

Mark Bennett of Meadow View in Great Addington, Jim Brown of Station Road in

Ringstead, David Campion of Oxford Street in Finedon, Andrew James MacGilliuray of Kestrel Lane in Wellingborough, Stewart Richardson of Ringstead Road in Ringstead, and Robert William Whiteside of Beloe Crescent in King's Lynn have each been given 14 days to pay up.

Their cases were heard at Northampton Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 1 May 2018. Mr Bennett was ordered to pay a total of £944.99, Mr Brown £1,393.29, Mr Campion £944.99, Mr MacGilliuray – who owned 3 of the unregistered vessels – had to pay £2655.95, Mr Richardson £503.98, and Mr Whiteside £843.98.

It brings the total amount of avoided registration charges that have been recovered by the Environment Agency this year to almost £120,000. The cash is reinvested into maintaining, improving and protecting waterways.

Nathan Arnold, Waterways Partnerships and Development Team Leader, said:

Our historic and precious waterways are an important part of our nation's heritage and are enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people every year,

Those who don't contribute as they should are threatening the future of our waterways – and we won't hesitate to take action against them.

As well as not contributing to the upkeep of waterways, unregistered boats can be unsafe, hazardous to other river users, and a pollution risk to the local environment and its wildlife.

The Environment Agency looks after 353 miles of navigable waterways in the Anglian network, which includes the Ancholme, Black Sluice, Glen, Welland, Nene, Great Ouse and Stour, as well as associated locks and navigation facilities like moorings, showers and toilets.

More information about boating and waterways, including registering vessels, is available from the [Environment Agency](#). If you suspect a boat is illegal, please contact them on 03708 506 506 or email waterways.enforcementanglian@environment-agency.gov.uk