



# Ver Valley Society

## NEWSLETTER

*Published quarterly for members of the Ver Valley Society*

Number 119 - October 2013

[www.riverver.co.uk](http://www.riverver.co.uk)

President: Peter Fox, MBE

### **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Ver Valley Society  
will be held on:**

**TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

**at St. Michael's Parish Centre, St. Albans, 7.30 pm**

(Parking nearby or use Museum car park)

### **AGM and Committee Elections**

Our Chairman, Andy Webb has decided that after 10 years in the role, the time has come for him to stand down as from this year's AGM. The VVS owes him a considerable debt for his hard work and commitment over that time, not least being in large part the driving force behind the completion of the Walks Project, which will be one legacy of his time in office. However I am pleased to say that Andy has indicated that he is willing to stand for election to the Committee at the AGM, so his knowledge and expertise will not be lost to us.

In these circumstances we need to ask if anyone is willing to stand for election as Chairman and for any nominations to reach the Secretary, John Fisher, before 22nd October.

The existing Committee are all willing to stand again for election and two of our Bailiffs, John Bell and Martin Frearson have also come forward for election to serve on the Committee. Any one else who might wish to join us should ensure their nomination reaches the Secretary before 22nd October. Committee roles will be decided at the first Committee meeting after the AGM.

**Jane Gardiner (Vice-chair)**

After the interval and refreshments, you will be pleased to know that our good friend from Affinity Water, Rob Sage, will be returning (with colleague Matt Ascott) to talk about the draft Water Resources Management Plan, focussing on the implications of sustainability reductions to benefit river flows - of special relevance to the Ver Valley. Matt will present the latest outputs from the investigations that underly this work, including evidence provided by us, the VVS.

Rob has been with Affinity and its predecessors as an asset specialist for over 14 years, whereas Matt is a hydrogeologist and project manager of the Ver scheme.

***River Ver Archive: St Albans Central Library (Local History Reference Section)  
Over 1,000 pages of information***

## Chairman's Report

Andy Webb

In the middle of June I happened to drive along Hicks Road in Markyate, from the bypass A5183 to the High Street, and where the River Ver has been culverted for approx. half a mile for over fifty years to the north/south. It came as a surprise to see that demolition of the old derelict industrial units was well underway and, indeed, that groundwork had commenced for new housing. Although Jane Gardiner, myself and a resident Bob Norish had attended an initial consultative evening two or three years ago, that was the last we had heard of the matter. We also knew that de-culverting the river was on the Environment Agencies long term wish list when the opportunity arose.

Anyway, it transpires that Weston Homes PLC have gained planning permission from Dacorum BC for a mixed use development of 58 houses, 17 flats, retail and industrial units, along with a 'pocket park', and with the sanction of Environment Agencies planning (Sustainable Places) department in Hatfield, a new, open channel for the Ver to the north and south of Hicks Road. The river will re-enter a culvert beside the bypass embankment for a short distance under an adjacent industrial building to the south.

We understand that final plans for the de-culverting have yet to be agreed between Weston Homes/Dacorum BC and EA Biodiversity team. The 'working title' of the housing part of the development is Silverbrook, as advertised on the 4th September in the Review newspaper and at <http://www.weston-homes.com/>. ".....Luxury specification throughout, Beautiful winding Brook, through the development".

We can only trust that the river route and gradient profile is adequate to carry any future flow of water, bearing in mind that the Ver rarely flows this far up its valley at the moment - what we hear at our AGM may signal long term change to this.

Also in July, we learnt that Thames Water had applied to Herts County Council and Dacorum Borough Council for planning consent to construct a 9.5ha reed filter bed on land adjacent to Hollybush Lane (opposite Holiday Inn and Conference Centre.). The reed bed would provide tertiary treatment by filtering solids from effluent before being discharged in the River Ver. We know that in recent years Markyate STW has lacked the capacity to meet increasing input eg. from housing schemes in the vicinity such as the one above, and that some waste has to be removed by tankers daily.

The reed bed will be 143m x 83m wide, consist of seven individual beds and constructed from a excavated void lined with geotextile membrane and filled with gravel, sand and soil. Vehicular access is via the current STW. At the time of writing we have no further news.

Finally, a third reprint of our River Ver Trail/Ver Valley Walk leaflets has been agreed at a cost of £3,036 (Trail 1,2,3 x 500 and 4,5,6,7,8 x 2000) funded solely from VVS funds; we may need to explore other ways of funding to sustain this in the future.

## Riverfly Monitoring

Sue Frearson (co-ordinator)

From the monthly sampling results along the river, sent in by Ernie Leahy, Clive Pickering and Martin Frearson, which I submit to Nina Mayes EA, the river has had healthy samples of mayflies, plus *Gammarus* and several reports of bullheads, chubb and even barbel.

Bruce Banfield Taylor and Martin Frearson have attended the Riverfly Training Course, run by Charlie Bell HMWT and Paul Foster will attend in the future. We are just waiting for confirmation of their monitoring stations.

## Verulamium Park

John Cadisch

Not a great deal to report. The cycle paths are complete, east/west and north/south, and being used. Coloured vinyl maps of the Park have been reinstated on the lectern-style notice boards. The Inn on the Park is now fully licensed and looking out for "party" business in the run-up to Christmas. The opened-up Roman Wall (now unfenced) is tending to become a childrens' play area to the detriment of what remains of this precious survival from another era.

At the end of our financial year and with the AGM coming up it seems a good time to thank the Bailiffs for all they do for our river. As well as their regular monitoring along 'their stretch' many of them also help with the Action Group run by Sue Frearson, who bailiffs with husband Martin. Several bailiffs are now trained as river-fly monitors, or waiting to be so, and Sue also organises that, so particular thanks are due to her.

After the long, cold spring I think everyone appreciated the lovely summer weather and despite the lack of rain the aquifer continued to benefit from last years very wet summer and autumn. Even in September the groundwater level was above normal, as you can see, and now we seem to be having plenty of rainy days so flows should start to pick up from recent lows. The head of the river is still north of Redbourn and the River Red is also running well. Hanstead Brook near the confluence with the Colne has not been flowing recently.

| Month 2013 | Groundwater level at Ballingdon Farm in metres<br>[Long-term average]<br>(figures from EA) | Rainfall in millimetres<br>[± average]<br>(figures from Chris Hall at Rothamsted) |
|------------|--|---|
| June       | 136.61 [133.32]  | 24.6 [-28.7]  |
| July       | 135.43 [133.21]  | 47.4 [-2.47]  |
| August     | 134.06 [132.54]  | 57.5 [-6.23]  |
| September  | 132.62 130.87]   | [Not yet available]   |

Over the summer as flows reduced there has been considerable vegetation growth beside the river and in the channel. We and others have made efforts to hold back Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed in some areas but much more needs to be done next year. The nettle growth on many walking routes is now beginning to die back somewhat. Some plants still flowering in or beside the river in September are water crowfoot, meadow sweet, water forget-me-not, hemp agrimony and purple loosestrife, but the abundance of all sorts of berries is very noticeable this year with good crops of blackberries, elderberries, hips, haws and sloes decorating the hedges in our valley.

The lovely summer weather brought out really good numbers of butterflies, among them common blues, ringlets, commas, gatekeepers, small tortoiseshells and peacocks among many others. There have also been large numbers of bees later in the summer, mainly buff-tailed bumbles, and some dragonflies but fewer of these than usual.

Birds are fairly unobtrusive at this time of year but some nice reports include quail, corn buntings, little owls, a few kingfishers, grey and yellow wagtails, the occasional egret and flocks of long-tailed tits fluting from the hedgerows with other small birds (see John Fisher's bird notes for much more on birds).

Apart from rabbits and squirrels the few mammal reports I've had recently include pipistrelle bats, a muntjac and a gamekeeper believes either a polecat or mink may have killed young pheasants. Fish reports are of brown trout, minnows, bullheads, chubb and one barbel.



Top: Pyramidal orchid and (above left) marbled white both on Harpenden Hill.  
[John Fisher]  
Bottom: Comma

Left: Hawthorn haws.

[Jane Gardiner]



In my previous notes I mentioned that the Ver Valley barn owls were failing to breed this year and I am afraid to say that as it is now mid September it is unlikely that any will breed this year. This will be the first year we have failed to have at least one active nest box since the first pair bred in 2006. I think it is just that there is a dire shortage of voles this year. Voles are the staple diet of barn owls and kestrels but kestrels are a bit more versatile in their diet and they will take small birds and insects such as beetles. So far kestrels have not used any of the VVS kestrel boxes but a pair have raised five young from a box in an open sided barn on the Rothamsted Estate. I am now monitoring the boxes on Rothamsted and it was quite a shock for me as this was the first time I had been present at a young kestrel ringing. Being so used to young barn and little owls who are so quiet and docile when taken from the box, I was surprised to see how really noisy and boisterous the young kestrels were. They were all very healthy and would have flown from the box within a week or two of the ringing.

The two pairs of little owls and their youngsters have done very well and are regularly seen at Shafford and Verlam End. Gary Hare took this picture of the little owl at Verlam End.



*Little owl [Gary Hare]*

The quails seemed to be around right up to the time the cereals were harvested in August. Although they were first heard near Hill Farm to the west of the A5183 they seemed to be heard for much longer in the field to the north of Beesonend Lane and it is likely that they bred there. I was actually walking in the area when the farmer was combining the field and I just wondered if a quail might fly out as at the huge machine worked its way across the field. So to sum up, I heard quails in two different places probably on about six different days spread between mid and mid August and sometimes they were within 3 or 4 metres. I have still never seen one..

Beesonend Lane, which is the lane that runs east from the East Ford at Redbournbury back towards Harpenden, was quite a birding hot spot this summer. Apart from the quail, corn buntings were seen regularly, usually perched on the overhead wires singing their plaintive song which has been likened to a jangling bunch of keys. They are a rare bird in Hertfordshire and they have been seen more this year than I can ever remember. Howard Roberts of the nearby Hammondsend Farm now farms 100% organically, which means there are plenty of weeds on his land, which are a real benefit to birds like corn buntings



*Five kestrels in a nest box. [John Fisher]*



and I am sure this was a big factor in their successful return. Howard is our guest speaker at our January meeting in Redbourn and he

will be telling us all about organic farming in the Ver Valley. You may have seen Howard and Justin James of Redbournbury Mill star in the Paul Hollywood TV programme about bread making

I saw a hobby a couple of times flying in this area and there were numerous reports by others so it is possible they bred as well. Hobbies are notoriously secretive at their nest sites which are normally high in big trees. They do take birds like swallows and martins but more often they feed on any flying insects which they catch with their feet.

This summer has also been good for butterflies but Jane will cover these in her Bailiff's report.

*Young kestrel just after ringing. [John Fisher]*

# ***VER VALLEY SOCIETY***

Web Site: [www.riverver.co.uk](http://www.riverver.co.uk)

## **VER VALLEY SOCIETY**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**St Michaels – Tuesday 23 October 2012 at 7.30 pm.**

- 1. Signing in:-** 36 members signed in.
- 2. Apologies:-** none.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting:-** were agreed as a true record.
- 4. Matters Arising:-** all on the agenda.
- 5. Chairman's Report:-**
  - 5.1 The Ver had recovered well since the record rainfall in April.
  - 5.2 Affinity Water was proceeding with their 5 year Asset Management Plan and the VVS would be consulted.
  - 6.3 The EC Water Framework would be the criteria for the Colne Catchment Management Plan.
  - 6.4 Reprints of the Ver Walk Project leaflets were being reprinted with the funding coming from the Project budget.
  - 6.4 The Views of the Ver Valley Walk leaflet were also being reprinted with a contribution to the costs coming from Redbournbury Mill.
  - 6.5 Three VVS members had attended the Riverfly Monitoring Training course and it was hoped that other members would be trained in the next 12 months. Monthly Riverfly at various points along the Ver was commencing and undertaken jointly by the VVS and Redbourn Fishery.
  - 6.6 Thanks to Tom Savory there is now a VVS Facebook page.
- 6. Treasurer's Report:-**
  - 6.1 The balance was £58,737.58
  - 6.2 This includes £18,993.67 of HLF monies held by VVS for the Ver Walk Project.
  - 6.3 David Jinks had audited the accounts.
  - 6.4 The accounts were accepted unanimously.
  - 6.5 Membership was holding up pretty well although slightly down on last year,
  - 6.6 Friends of Verulam Park were winding up and the VVS were to hold their residual funds of about £6000 until if and when a similar group was formed.
- 7. Bailiff Coordinator's Report:-**
  - 7.1 Generally as the October 2012 newsletter.
  - 7.2 Head of the river was now south of Redbourn.
  - 7.3 Year to date rainfall was over 40% above average.
  - 7.4 Groundwater was 0.4 metres above average for October after about 2 years of being below average.
- 8. Election of Chairman:-** Andy Webb was re-elected unanimously for a further year.
- 9. Election of Committee:-** Jane Gardiner, John Cadisch, Peter Fox, John Fisher, Ernie Leahy, Sue Frearson and Rachel Young were unanimously re-elected en bloc to serve on the committee for a further year. The other officers apart from the chairman would be selected at the first committee meeting in November 2012.
- 10. VVS Action Group:-**
  - 10.1 The average number of volunteers at sessions was about 7 with 15 different people attending.
  - 10.2 CMS were loaning tools.
  - 10.3 Tree removal at the Water Cress NR was being arranged by Allen Beechey of the Chilterns Board.
- 11. Future Open Meetings:-**
  - Monday 28 January 2013 – Redbourn Village Hall – Jonathan Forgham –

After refreshments members were given a presentation by John Tylor – "Wetland Wildlife".

## **VER VALLEY SOCIETY - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA**

**Tuesday 22 October 2013 at 7.30 pm.**

1. Signing in.
2. Chairman's welcome
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Minutes of the AGM October 2012 as circulated with the newsletter.
5. Matters arising
6. Chairman's Report
7. Treasurer's Report and accounts
8. Bailiff Coordinator's report.
9. Ver Action Group'
10. Election of President.
11. Election of Chairman
12. Election of Committee – Nominees must be willing to stand with a proposer and seconder.

Existing committee members have indicated they are willing to stand for election plus John Bell and Martin Frearson

Officers will be appointed at the first committee meeting in November 2013

13. Future Open Meeting
  - Wednesday 29 January 2014 – Redbourn Village Hall'
  - Bill Barr and Howard Roberts "Farming the Ver Valley".
14. Any Other Business

**BREAK**

Presentation by Rob Sage and Matthew Ascott – Affinity Water

# VER VALLEY SOCIETY

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 AUGUST 2013

| <u>Liabilities</u>      |  | <u>Assets</u>          |                                 |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| £                       |  | £                      | £                               |
| <u>31 Aug 12</u>        |  | <u>31 Aug 12</u>       | <u>31 Aug 13</u>                |
| <u>Accumulated Fund</u> |  | <u>Balance at Bank</u> |                                 |
| 5,092.79                | Balance                                      | 4,530.55               | 1,143.62 Current Ac 14,496.51   |
| ( 562.24)               | Excess Expenditure over Income               | (3,898.55)             | 27,593.96 Business Acc 1,604.72 |
|                         |  |                        | 30,000.00 Lloyds Bond 15,000.00 |
| 4,530.55                |  | 632.00                 |                                 |
| 35,213.36               | Hammon Legacy less contribution to Herts C C | 35,213.36              |                                 |
|                         |  | 10,000.00              |                                 |
|                         |  | 25,213.36              |                                 |
| 18,993.67               | Lottery Grant less contribution to Herts CC  | 18,993.67              |                                 |
|                         |  | 18,993.67              |                                 |
|                         |  | -                      |                                 |
|                         | Friends of Ver Park less expenses            | 5,776.87               |                                 |
|                         |  | 521.00                 |                                 |
|                         |  | 5,255.87               |                                 |
| <u>58,737.58</u>        |  | <u>31,101.23</u>       | <u>58,737.58</u>                |
|                         |  |                        | <u>31,101.23</u>                |

I have examined the financial statements above and in my opinion they represent a true and fair view of the financial affairs as at 31 August 2013

D Jinks

Independent Examiner 16 Sept 2013



**VER VALLEY SOCIETY**  
**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2013**

| <u>2012</u><br>£ | <u>Expenditure</u>                   | <u>2013</u><br>£ | <u>2012</u><br>£ | <u>Income</u> | <u>2013</u><br>£ |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 222.05           | Room Hire                            | 228.50           |                  | Subscriptions |                  |
| 200.13           | Admin/Sec etc                        | 510.73           | 690.00           | 5Year         | 600.00           |
|                  | Donations                            |                  | 125.00           | Annual        | 130.00           |
| 6.00             | Ver Park Friends                     | -                | 89.25            | Donations     | 125.00           |
| 40.00            | H & M Wild Life Trust                | 40.00            | 865.57           | Interest      | 891.20           |
| 34.00            | C P R E                              | 34.00            | 205.54           | Sales         | 81.60            |
| 140.00           | Conservation course                  | -                |                  |               |                  |
| -                | Printing-leaflets                    | 527.00           |                  |               |                  |
| 200.00           | Bird Boxes                           | -                |                  |               |                  |
| 138.95           | Computer                             | 87.07            |                  |               |                  |
| 95.00            | Lecture Fees                         | 295.00           |                  |               |                  |
| 196.76           | Insurance                            | 196.76           |                  |               |                  |
| 108.74           | Bank Charges                         | 140.03           |                  |               |                  |
| 190.47           | Walk Wallets                         | -                |                  |               |                  |
| 500.00           | Book contribution                    | -                |                  |               |                  |
|                  | River Fly Monitoring                 |                  |                  |               |                  |
| 235.56           | Kits                                 | -                |                  |               |                  |
| -                | Riverside Way Scheme                 | 2,941.90         |                  |               |                  |
| -                | Tree Maintenance                     | 480.00           |                  |               |                  |
| 229.94           | Sundries                             | 245.36           |                  |               |                  |
| <hr/>            |                                      | <hr/>            | <hr/>            |               | <hr/>            |
| 2,537.60         |                                      | 5,726.35         | 1,975.36         |               | 1,827.80         |
|                  |                                      |                  | 562.24           | Excess of     | 3,898.55         |
|                  |                                      |                  |                  | Expenditure   |                  |
|                  |                                      |                  |                  | over Income   |                  |
| <hr/>            |                                      | <hr/>            | <hr/>            |               | <hr/>            |
| 2,537.60         |                                      | 5,726.35         | 2,537.60         |               | 5,726.35         |
| <hr/>            |                                      | <hr/>            | <hr/>            |               | <hr/>            |
|                  | <u>Note</u>                          |                  |                  |               |                  |
|                  | Lottery Grant                        |                  | £                |               |                  |
|                  | Balance as at 31 Aug 2012            |                  | 18,993.67        |               |                  |
|                  | Received NHMF fund                   |                  | <u>24,650.00</u> |               |                  |
|                  |                                      |                  | 43,643.67        |               |                  |
|                  | Contribution from Hammon Legacy      |                  | <u>10,000.00</u> |               |                  |
|                  | Paid to Hertfordshire County Council |                  | <u>53,643.67</u> |               |                  |



My aim for the coming working season is to have at least one task per month on the third Saturday of the month, 10.00 am until about noon. In addition, there may be extra work on a few Friday afternoons. I will contact you by e-mail, to give you further information.

Mark Carter, CMS, has produced Management Plans for Riverside Way Bricket Wood, and Sopwell Nunnery, St Albans and he and Zoe Channon (CMS Projects Officer) would be pleased if our volunteers would carry out tasks in these areas. There is also a possibility of working again in Verulamium Park next year.

Mark's article shows that there is much to be done along Riverside, where we could help. In addition to the work to be done by contractors, removing a substantial number of Ash trees to allow more light to reach the river, our members, who attended the Wild Trout Trust training days, will be able to install more river current deflectors.

We now have four CMS trained task leaders, plus First Aiders, so that we can work on tasks in specified CMS Management plans, on HCC and SADC land under the county insurance policy. Other tasks are covered by our BTCV insurance policy.

#### **Action Group Programme VVS volunteers**

- **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October  
10.00 am – noon. River-  
side Way, Bricket Wood**

Remove stones from the weirs, which are causing back up. Build another deflector. Remove small shrubs from the river bank. (Meet in the car park, off Drop Lane)

- **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November  
10.00 am – noon. Sop-  
well Nunnery, Sopwell,  
St Albans**

Coppicing overgrown willow and using the brush to build habitat piles.

(Parking available along Cottonmill Lane; no restrictions on Saturdays)

- **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December 10.00 am – noon. Chequers Redbourn**

Cut back the fallen tree; litter pick (Park in the Chequers car park)

- **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 10.00 am – noon. Harpenden Hill, Redbourn**

Scrub removal, working on a very steep bank and along the footpath. (Parking is very limited, near the roundabout)

As I will be borrowing some tools from the CMS, it would be very helpful if you would let me know if you will be coming. Please bring your own gloves and tools if possible. Hard hats can be supplied by the CMS, but if you have your own, please bring them for any work involving felling trees. I will send out e-mail reminders nearer the time.



*Volunteers hard at it in the river.*

## **Improving Water Efficiency in St Albans**

The Rivers Trust, together with Waterwise, has secured funding under the Royal Bank of Canada's (RBC) Blue Water Project to improve water efficiency in the town of St Albans. The project will engage with the local community and a range of stakeholders including Affinity Water, SADC, EA and HMWT to promote a more efficient use of water by residents and engender a long-term change in water culture. The program of awareness-raising and education will also **highlight the link between water use in the home and impacts upon the local, water-scarce River Ver and the ecosystem it supports**. In 2013-2014, the RBC Blue Water Project will focus on supporting initiatives that help protect water in towns, cities, and urbanized areas.

The Countryside Management Service, part of Hertfordshire County Council, has launched a project which will restore a stretch of the River Ver to its former glory, providing benefits for wildlife whilst also improving facilities for visitors. The project centres around Riverside Way, an open space owned and managed by Hertfordshire County Council. A number of partners including the Environment Agency, the Wild Trout Trust, the Chilterns' Chalk Stream Project and the Ver Valley Society are also involved.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of rivers. Hertfordshire's rivers like the Colne, Gade, Lea, and Stort, supply us with essential resources; they have shaped the County's landscape and history; and they still support important wildlife communities.

Chalk rivers like the River Ver, the Chess and the Mimram, are a characteristic and attractive feature of the Hertfordshire landscape, but they are rare in global terms. In fact, there are only 200 such rivers in the world: most of them occurring in south east England. Typically, these rivers emanate from aquifers that lie deep in the chalk below us. Their waters are alkaline with an even temperature, and a lively flow. A special community of flora and fauna has evolved to take advantage of these conditions.

Essential elements of healthy chalk rivers include:

- areas of bare gravel in the river bed. These are the spawning grounds for trout and other fish species;
- overhanging or fallen trees which provide refuges for young fish and invertebrates;
- vegetated river banks which allow shelter for insects, amphibians and small mammals.

Mark Carter, Countryside Management Service Projects Officer, said:

"The River Ver still provides an important habitat for iconic species like brown trout, kingfishers and water crowfoot, but I remember seeing white clawed crayfish and water voles on the Ver 40 years ago. Sadly both species have disappeared, victims of competition from imported species and loss of habitat."

Most of Hertfordshire's rivers have been extensively modified in the past and are still affected by our activities. For example, the millions of litres of water we use every day are pumped from underground aquifers which also feed our rivers. Low rates of flow diminish the River Ver's habitats, and the species the river supports suffer accordingly.

At Riverside Way, the course of the river has been re-configured, moved from its natural meandering channel and engineered into a straight and homogenous profile. There is a lack of habitat variety and the channel is mostly too wide and too straight for the generally small amount of water in the river. This leads to a build up of silt across the bottom of the river, as the mud particles drop out of the slow moving water to settle on the bottom over the important gravel bed.

So the project will to restore the river's ecosystem. Demonstrating how simple steps can be taken to create ideal conditions for brown trout and other fish species; and how these improved habitats will also have a positive knock on effect for invertebrates, amphibians, mammals and birds.

The Countryside Management Service has a team of volunteers who undertake a variety of practical conservation tasks on sites across the county. The Wild Trout Trust are pioneers of this new approach to river restoration and have trained the CMS volunteers to use over-shading trees to modify the river's flow. The volunteers were trained to fell the trees (which increases the amount of light and stimulates vegetation growth), then install the large woody debris in the channel. Tree trunks and brash are pinned to the river bed at various points along the stretch of river.

Nancy Young, Biodiversity Officer from the Environment Agency remarked, "The training really helped participants to understand the value of woody debris in river for fish; they are now keen to see it retained or installed - not removed!"

The different designs and positions of these deflectors, made with natural materials, should provide a variety of habitats and a central, scoured out, channel which will ensure an increased depth of water in the summer and autumn months when water levels are low. This is a new and experimental technique and there will be a certain amount of adjustment following monitoring of the river flows.

Riverside Way is found on Drop Lane, Bricket Wood, and the nearest postcode is AL2 3TX. It is a popular open space for families, cyclists, dog walkers and horse riders.

### What you can do to help rivers:

- Try to use less water. Every time a tap is turned on the aquifer is diminished and less water goes to the rivers of Hertfordshire. People in Hertfordshire use more water than any other county in the UK, and yet its one of the driest counties!
- Become a volunteer and help improve our natural environment. Visit [www.hertslink.org/cms](http://www.hertslink.org/cms) for details of your local group.
- If you are in Hertfordshire and a river goes through your land, talk to the CMS about improving the habitat. You'll need Environment Agency consent to proceed.



## Picture Selection



*Swan [Paul Foster]*



*Ernie Leahy and  
Maple School pupils  
examine the catch.  
[John Fisher]*



*Blackberries and rosehips.  
[Jane Gardiner]*

### **Chairman**

Andy Webb, 37 Alsop Close,  
London Colney, AL2 1BW  
Tel: (01727) 824043  
Email: [andy.webb1@btinternet.com](mailto:andy.webb1@btinternet.com)

### **Treasurer, Membership & Newsletter**

John Cadisch, 14 Prae Close,  
St Albans, AL3 4SF  
Tel: (01727) 862843  
Email: [john.cadisch@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.cadisch@ntlworld.com)

### **Deputy Chairman & Bailiff Co-ordinator**

Jane Gardiner, 18 Claudian Place,  
St Albans, AL3 4JE  
Tel: (01727) 866331  
Email: [janegardiner@madasafish.com](mailto:janegardiner@madasafish.com)

### **Secretary & Webmaster**

John Fisher, 92 High Street,  
Redbourn, AL3 7BD  
Tel: (01582) 792843  
Email: [john.fisher@btclick.com](mailto:john.fisher@btclick.com)

### **Ver Valley Action Group**

Sue Frearson  
Tel: (01727) 761878  
Email: [sue.frearson@which.net](mailto:sue.frearson@which.net)

### **Joint Webmaster**

Rachel Young  
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### **Committee member**

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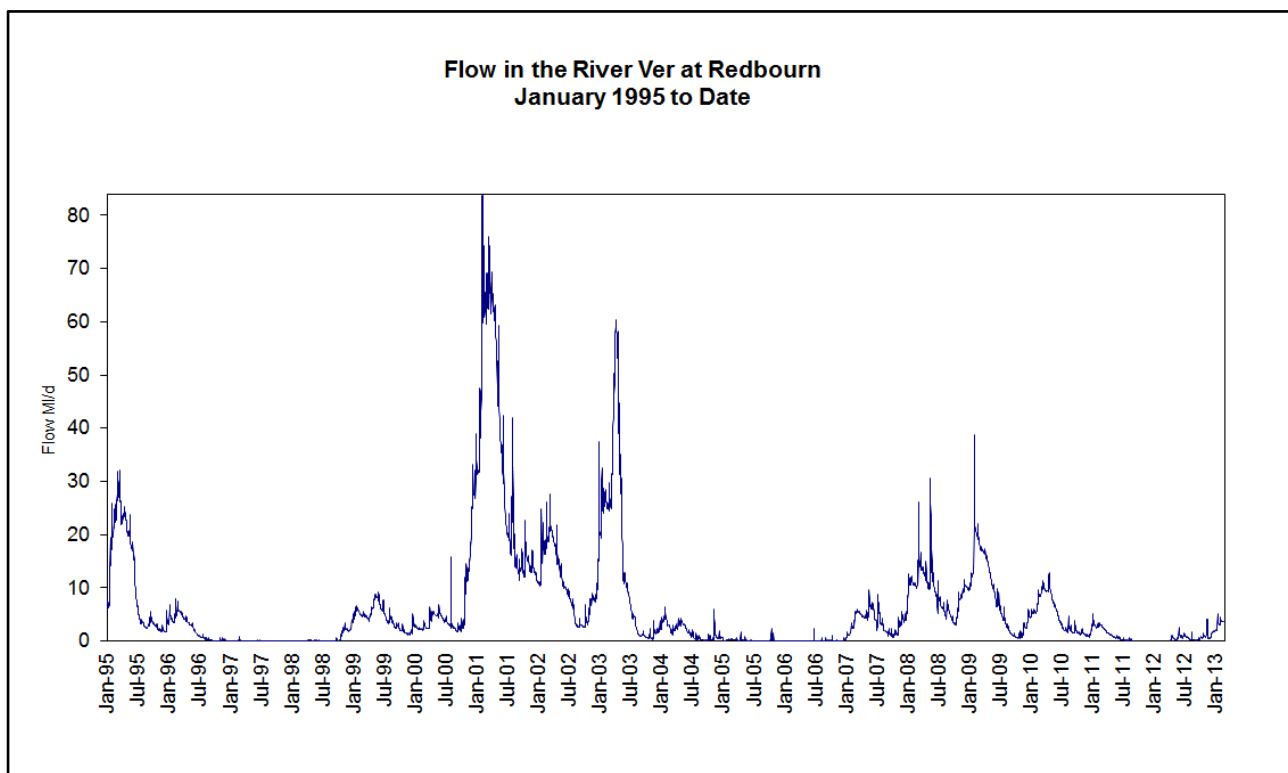
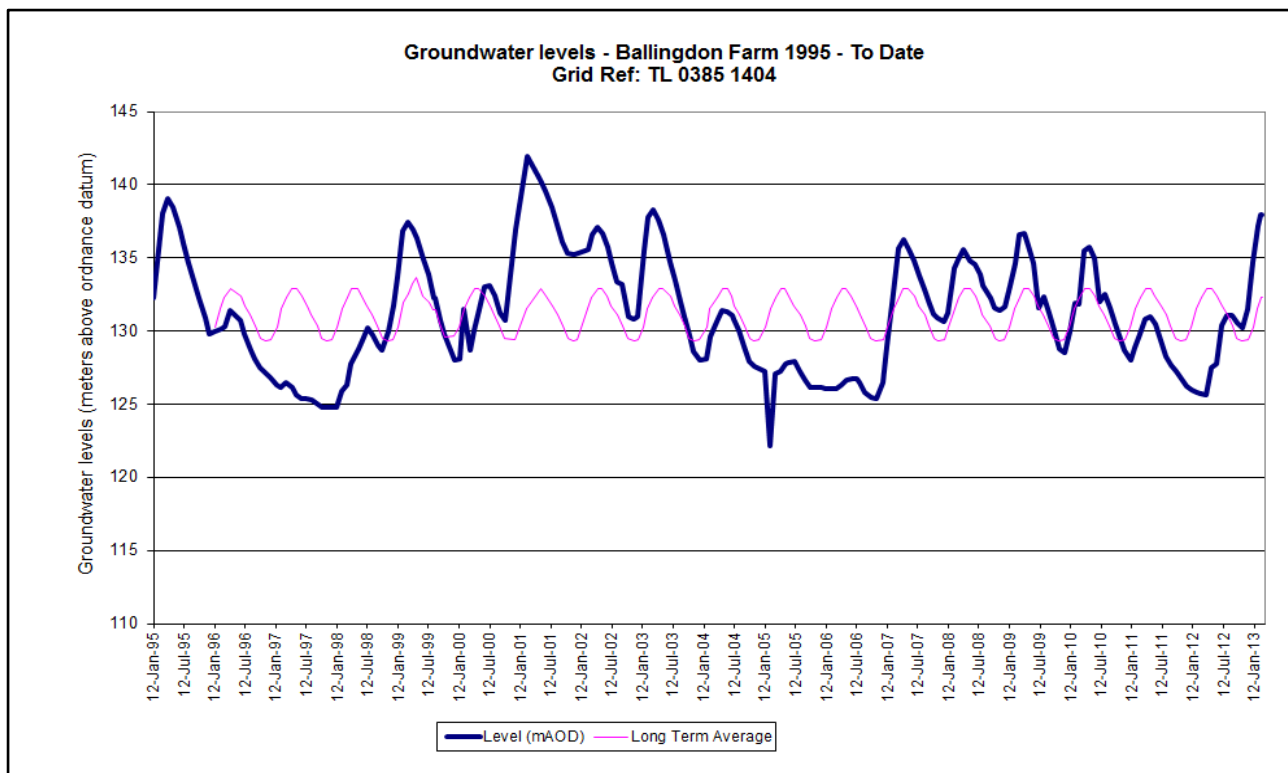
### **Newsletter Layout**

John Trew  
(Verulam Angling Club)

### **HOTLINES**

EA Incident Hotline: 0800 807060  
("Report all environmental incidents")  
EA Floodline:  
0845 988 1188  
"Cleaner District" (SADC):  
0845 125 8000  
Water Leaks (Affinity):  
0800 376 5325

We are grateful to Affinity Water for supplying periodic ground water and flow charts  
and to Veolia Environmental Services for printing and distributing these Newsletters.



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