



Holidays over now I'm afraid and it is back to hurricane gonzalo (gone now too!) and dark mornings. Plenty of BART activity to keep us busy during the Autumn and Winter though, so time will pass quickly. Not long until snowdrops – not that any of us should wish away the next few months when our rivers are often at their best. Add a few redwing and long tailed tits plus a chunky jumper and I will be happy trying to catch a few roach and perch in between BART work.

Back to the Newsletter!

Some Good News

The main reason we wanted to get another Newsletter out now is to let you all know that we are delighted that the Environment Agency (EA) have been able to continue their partnership working with us this year by funding two projects.

Our By Brook project made proposals for improving fish passage and other environmental factors on the brook as well as some quick win actions such as fencing and re-locating gateways.

The report has proved of sufficient interest for the EA to invest in further detailed investigations which will lead to a plan of action for the By Brook catchment. Our plans between now and the end of March therefore are to work with a firm of consulting engineers to assess last years work and build wider plans for the whole catchment which can be discussed and prioritised and hopefully lead to actions in future years. Our initial project concentrated on options for the area between Ford and Shockerwick. We will now be extending the area of coverage to include the whole catchment. This work will take place between now and the end of March and will include an ecosystems services assessment of the catchment as a whole as it is vital that any future work is set in a catchment context rather than as a series of isolated actions. And, of course, a continuing dialogue with stakeholders will need to take place before any options can be taken forward of course.

The EA have also provided some funding to support our Wellow and Cam initiative. We are working in the towns of Radstock and Midsomer Norton looking at options to make improvements to the river which will encourage more river life into the town centres along the river corridor. We have a great opportunity to involve lots of people in the river and are planning a number of engagement events over the next year.

Whilst BART is a charity and carries out a lot of activities with volunteers funding is vital if real improvement actions can take place across the catchment and we are grateful therefore for this support from the Environment Agency which is helping BART make a difference in a number of areas now. We now have a small additional fund to add to the EA funding and will be holding a number of habitat workshops elsewhere on the Brook like this one on the lower stretches of the Brook carries out with the Wild Trout Trust.



Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) establishes Riverfly Hub as part of National Network

BART's Riverfly Monitoring Initiative has become a hub for the catchment in order to support trained local volunteers who act as a first line of defence against degradation in water quality. Riverfly Monitors are often the first reporters of serious pollution and the Riverfly Partnership is actively expanding the hub network to support those efforts. BART's early experience of invertebrate monitoring shows that there is a demand for involvement wherever it has worked and the hub will ensure this demand is fulfilled. Follow up activity to support groups, and, to share information will further maintain the impetus gained from initial training, providing a base for further skills training. The BART Riverfly hub is one of five which have become established across England in 2014.

Martyn Hale has stepped forward to coordinate BART Riverfly activities and is currently undergoing accreditation to become a Riverfly Partnership tutor, whilst Ian Mock and Ben Fitch, National ARMI Coordinator for the Riverfly Partnership and Bart Team member, are working with Martyn to establish the hub and offer training support.

As well as enabling budding citizen scientists to monitor water quality within the catchment, in partnership with the Environment Agency, the hub will help BART to meet some of its own objectives with regard pre and post river project monitoring. The data, collected by volunteers, will be verified and held on the national online Riverfly Partnership database. Importantly all Riverfly data is publicly available and shared with biological record centres to help target conservation action.

In future Riverfly monitors may be able to undertake more detailed training, to be able to monitor other factors such as siltation, flow and water chemistry. The Riverfly Partnership is currently

working with a number of other organisations to develop these enhancements in line with Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives so that trained monitors can contribute to river basin management planning and the Catchment Based Approach.

Other News

BART and the Sustainable Eel Group combined efforts to place 100,000 juvenile eels into the upper Bristol Avon as part of the SEG's continued efforts to secure the future of the eel.



BART have commissioned a report on the possibilities of improving fish passage by removal of obstructions on the Trym and Hazel Brook in Bristol. We have also worked hard to bring new monies into the area and raise interest in the River. We have just won a small award which will help us work closely with local communities in the months ahead and lead to further improvements to the river in time.

Lots of work is taking place on other rivers such as the Marden, Biss, Bristol Frome, Somerset Frome and in the upper Avon where many opportunities have been identified for improvements to be made to water quality and habitat. These are being progressed into plans which we hope will soon attract funding and further projects in the months to come.

We have recently added a map to the volunteering section of our website showing BART Beacons and projects – it is far from complete and many more items need to be added - have a peek to see if you are on there as a beacon , if not contact Ian and get yourself added as soon as you can. A Rivers forum will be added in the next few weeks allowing us to collect local feedback from rivers and streams across the catchment – more info to follow.

Latest Beacon groups – Friends of the Abberd Brook and the BART Yeo group of volunteers. Several more will be added by Christmas and we hope the map will get busier and busier in the months to come.

Some of the things we are getting involved in are now appearing on the catchment based approach website. This is a great way of tracking not only what BART are doing but also the Catchment Partnership as a whole. Use the link below to have a look and once there look at the things people are involved in within partnerships up and down the country.

<http://www.catchmentbasedapproach.org/severn/bristol-avon>



BART Beacons are the way we are establishing a community of interest groups across the catchment who feedback news from across the catchment like old fashioned radio masts. They will be the “eyes and ears” of BART identifying problems or opportunities on their local stretch of river or stream. BART will share this information with other Beacons and look for opportunities to bring these together on logical projects to improve the health of the river. Local knowledge and interest is all you need to become a beacon; whether you are an individual who has something to share or a community or interest group we would love to hear from you.

Beacons are not necessarily volunteers but are independent partners with a mutual interest in sharing news about the rivers and streams within our catchment area. If you know of clubs, community groups , walking groups or indeed any groups who care about our rivers and streams and who might wish to become beacons please forward this newsletter to them.

Please take a look at our website – www.bristolavonriverstrust.org and follow us on Facebook and share this Newsletter with any friends who have an interest in the river.

Feedback or questions are welcome – just give me a call on 07411488084. Ian

