

Issue 18 | Spring/Summer 2015

Newsletter

A photograph of a man in a white and blue single scull, wearing sunglasses and a white shirt, rowing on a river. He is looking towards the camera. The river is calm with some ripples. In the background, there is a stone bridge arch and dense green trees on a hillside.

Hexham Fish Pass

Work starts on much needed project

New Trustees

Two new trustees to support
the board

Our community

Tree planting, education trips
and new work to begin

Our 18th Newsletter

Spring Summer 2015

Welcome to our latest newsletter, which is jam-packed with information on what we have been doing over the last 6 months. Project staff have been delivering on our projects and our Director has been concentrating on future proofing the charity and the work we do. We have taken a fresh look at our work and planned actions and aims for the next five years in a strategic business plan with the support of the Board of Trustees.

This plan shows our ongoing commitment to the catchment area, the rivers, the wildlife and the residents who enjoy our river environment. There's lots you can do to help, so please read the back page with tips on the support we need.

Two New Trustees

 We are delighted to welcome Lord Donald Curry of Kirkharle and David Bradshaw to the board as new trustees. The pair will ensure that we can broaden our horizons and strengthen our future position.

The two local men have a passion for the area and the work we do. Donald brings a huge amount of agricultural policy knowledge and experience in environmental management. David on the other hand will support us with financial and fiscal matters, having many years experience in accountancy.

Meanwhile our much-loved Malcolm Newson will be reducing his hours further. Having taken soft retirement two years ago, Malcolm will now be stepping back further to enjoy time with his family. We have been lucky enough to receive plenty of Malcolm's time for which we thank

him. We are, of course, delighted he will still be in touch with us in the capacity of a volunteer.

After nearly eight years with the Trust our River Watch Manager, Ceri Gibson, is embarking on a new challenge. Ceri will be Pearl Mussel Project Manager at the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) running a three-year national project funded by Biffa and managing the Pearl Mussel Ark based in Windermere. She will also have responsibility for developing new research projects - great news as we have lots of ideas for protecting our Freshwater Pearl Mussel population.

Ceri said: "It's been a really difficult decision. I've thoroughly enjoyed working at the Trust but this opportunity is a really exciting one at this stage of my career. I am looking forward to finding ways that the FBA and the Trust can continue to work together."

We and our volunteers will miss Ceri immensely. We are now planning how to replace Ceri (not possible, surely!) and make sure we continue to support our River Watch groups.



Malcolm Newson

Cover image courtesy of Crest Photography

Here's to the Fish Pass!

Much needed fish pass at Hexham Bridge starts this summer.

 The construction team, appointed by Northumberland County Council, will be on site from this month (May) and work should be completed by September, weather depending.

We have achieved this project thanks to a partnership between ourselves, Tyne Riparian Owners & Occupiers Association, Northumberland County Council and The Environment Agency. The build of the structure, which is on the east side of Hexham Bridge, will make it

easier for migrating salmon and sea trout to get past the bridge footings. It is great to see this much-needed build starting, following many years of hard work to secure the funding, designing the pass, and gaining the approvals needed from the Environment Agency and the Planning Departments.

It is important that the work is carried out in the most cost effective way with the least disruption to the health and wellbeing of the river and its inhabitants. We have every faith

in the local authority, which will now see the project through to its conclusion.

It has been a challenging project due to the complexities of the site. We are now confident that we have all the necessary plans and support in place, allowing us to complete what is a real milestone in the Trust's eleven-year history.

Members of the public are welcome to visit the site, but we do ask that you take care and respect the barriers that will be erected.



From left to right: Kris Westerby (Northumberland County Council), Chris Carter (Environment Agency), Willie Browne-Swinburne (TROOA Chairman) and Susan Mackirdy (Tyne Rivers Trust)

Metal Mine Success

You may recall a few newsletters ago we included an article on Metal Mines...well great progress has been made since then.



We have secured funding to start to tackle some of the sources of metal inputs to rivers in the South Tyne and Allen Valleys. In total we need more than £500,000 over a five-year period, but to start with this year we are pleased to have obtained a guaranteed £75,000, awarded to us by Defra via the Environment Agency.

The impact of historic mining on the river environment is huge. The damage to river ecology from lead, zinc and cadmium is now being addressed under the Water Framework Directive.

Around the sources of the South Tyne and the East and West Allen the mines can go back as far as Roman times. Many mines were powered by water through the ages and even today old mines continue to drain in to the South Tyne bringing with them metal pollution.

One of the major sources of pollution is old spoil heaps, where heavy metal-contaminated sediment is mobilised and makes its way into our rivers during heavy rainfall – it is these sources that we will tackle.

We will be working with the North Pennines AONB Partnership to deliver this work, in conjunction

with their work to improve river habitat being undertaken as part of the Allen Valleys Landscape Partnership.

This is an exciting start to a project to reduce these toxic metals. In some places we will be planting metal-tolerant trees and plants, which should reduce some of the metal pollution. We will also be focusing on preventing further river erosion where we are aware there are metal 'hot-spots'.

For more information, visit our website at
www.tyneriverstrust.org



Thousands of trees better off



The team from Natural England and Tyne Rivers Trust

 The Tyne Valley is benefitting from 18,000 new trees thanks to the work we have been doing with The Woodland Trust, Catchment Restoration Fund and Local Environment Action Fund (LEAF). The project is one we are particularly proud of and is great example of partnerships helping to improve the environment of the region.

The whole of our team have been busy out and about planting the trees, alongside much needed volunteers including Natural England's Northumbria team.

7,000 willow, alder, rowan and hawthorn trees have so far been planted along the tributaries of the Tyne to consolidate the river banks.

We have also planted a further 10,000 on land near Otterburn with the permission of the Ministry of Defence, for which we would like to thank them.

Commercial law firm, Muckle LLP, is offsetting the environmental impact of its carbon emissions by getting involved too. Muckle's Let's Think Green Team has given us a £5,000 grant towards the cost of planting the trees.

Our thanks also go to the landowners and farmers who have allowed us to access their land and plant trees along their river banks. Without their support and cooperation we could not have planted so many trees in much needed places.

One such place is near Risdale, where Natural England joined us to plant 200 alders and rowans and 300 willow pegs.

This area was chosen as it is adjacent to the River Rede where Freshwater Pearl Mussels still survive. For many years we have been striving to improve the water quality in the Rede catchment by working with local farmers to reduce fertiliser use, improve cattle fencing and plant trees.

More trees will be planted from October 2015 onwards, when the tree planting season begins again. We need lots of volunteers to help us, so please call Graham on 01434 636905 if you are interested in helping us.

The Trust's Education Programme

Over the last few months we have been working with lots of students and pupils of all ages.

Salmon in the classroom

Thanks to the enthusiasm of a local angling club, we have brought a hands-on project to Newbrough Primary School allowing them to get up close to and learn about the lifecycle of the salmon.



Children releasing salmon
Image courtesy of Hexham Courant

The project is now being rolled out to two other schools in the area. Local resident and fishing enthusiast Keith Harrison, Newbrough and Fourstones Angling Association, Ridley Hall Fishing Syndicate and Tyne Rivers Trust are all part of the partnership education based project.

24 pupils from year three and four, aged seven to nine, worked on the project in their classroom, incubating salmon eggs sourced from South Tyne stock.

The children oversaw the eggs hatching, watched them grow and then once the salmon were strong enough they were released into the Newbrough Burn where we have been working for several years with local landowners and the community to improve water quality and river habitat.

Canning Street to Kielder

60 Newcastle school children benefitted from another of our projects. The Canning Street Primary children, who are from year five (aged nine and ten), enjoyed an educational day trip out to Kielder, to learn all about Water Voles and their natural environment.

The Kielder Water Vole project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to create an environment suitable for the reintroduction of Voles into Kielder Forest and gather memories of how the North Tyne has changed over the past century.

The project, a partnership between the Tyne Rivers Trust, Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission, received an additional funding boost through the Winter Warmers programme funded by Natural England Northumbria Team.

The Northumberland Wildlife Trust team ran the day's activities teaching the children about Water Voles through games, life cycles and den building.



Canning Street School trip

Students join the team

We have launched an innovative project utilising the time and knowledge of some of the region's students for the first time.

Jonathan Pearson and Rob Cruikshank have helped us to research the development of an in-school education package across the River Tyne catchment. The package, when launched, will complement existing curriculum based learning and activities with the added benefit of being bespoke to the Tyne.

The research will help us decide the best way to structure a future schools project and we have also given the students a chance to experience working first hand in the third sector.

Rob is a BSc Geography student in his final year at Northumbria University whilst Jonathan is studying a BSc in Environmental Management also at Northumbria University.



Jonathan and Rob

The education project is being designed to be as inclusive as possible through a wide variety of subjects including geography, biology, history, art, music, economics and business studies.

Jonathan and Rob are interviewing teachers to ascertain the value of the proposals, and what is and isn't feasible in the school environment.

They are finding out what resources would be needed, what training, where it fits in the current curriculum and the particular needs of each school.

We are looking to utilise the time and skills of many more students going forward and are looking to strengthen our relationships with the universities in the area for this purpose.

Flood Awareness with Haltwhistle Community Campus

57 children from year 7 took part in a Flood preparedness day delivered by OASES (Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists) and the Trust as part of our ongoing engagement in the Haltwhistle catchment.

The town has suffered increasing flooding over the last few years so

the children were keen to understand how to prepare their families for flood events through games (developed by Environment Agency as part of their SHOCFlood programme) and a site visit. They also prepared posters and leaflets for distribution throughout the community to share their learning and help others be Flood Prepared.



Flood preparedness day

Trust Bites

Where our funds come from and how you can help

As you will see from this newsletter there is lots of positive work being done and that doesn't happen without funds. As well as all the work we do, we must also remember we are a charity and there are lots of ways we raise money. We bid for funding for specific projects, often working through partnerships, but we also rely heavily on the support of volunteers, fundraisers and donors. Is there something

below that you can help with? If so, please get in touch!

Volunteer

We always need bodies to be involved in our activities be it tree planting, river watch or something else! To find out more please contact Graham Holyoak on 01434 636905.

Funding News

We are always working to win that next pot of funding. At the moment we are developing a major Education Bid, have been working with the Border Uplands Partnership on a Landscape

Partnership bid for Redesdale, and are awaiting news on a Big Lottery fund application. Keep your fingers crossed for us, and if you hear of anything else we could bid for, please let us know!

Photos needed!

We are in desperate need for a good bank of photography of the river, wildlife and people across the Tyne Catchment. If you are a budding photographer, or even a professional who would like to help us by letting us use your photography for free with named credits, then please contact Antonia on 07702 214391.

Fundraise for us

Keen Fundraisers We would like to say a huge thanks to Leona Skelton for her ongoing fundraising efforts for us. Leona walked the Pennine way alone in April/May, a huge challenge a few of us here would like to undertake if we had the time! If you would like to show your support for Leona's challenge (and our work) please visit her fundraiser page on the Virgin Money Giving website.

Harry Remnant has also been raising money for us as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. Harry cycled 10 miles from Buteley fell to Chollerton and then ran 10km along Hadrians wall on a sunny but cold day in April, raising funds for us and for Help for Heroes along the way.

You could follow Leona and Harry's example and raise funds for us...an activity, a walk, the Great North Run, a tea party in the garden...the ideas are endless and all funds are gratefully received.

Tyne Rivers Trust

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Join us for an event this summer

4th June 2015 Guided Walk for Haydon Bridge Nature Club. A short circular evening walk visiting some of the features of the Haltwhistle Burn CRF project. Non-members welcome, £4 charge.

12th June to 6th July 2015 History of Pollution in the Tyne, an exhibition at the Low Lights Heritage Centre, Fish Quay, North Shields, NE30 1JA.

Saturday 13th June 2015 (repeated Saturday 20th) from 6pm Public Lecture by Leona Skelton on 'The Power and the Water' project and her part in that on the History of Pollution in the Tyne.

Sunday 26th July Derwent River Day at Derwent Park, Rowlands Gill. Try out fishing and learn about your river.

Saturday 8th August Tyne Rivers Trust @ Leazes Park, Newcastle. Try out fishing and learn more about your river.

Sunday 9th August 11am to 4pm Rowing Open Day, and other family activities in and around the village hall at Ebchester.

19th September Zipwire the Tyne from the top of Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. If you would like to sponsor us, or even join us, please get in touch!

Contact us for full details of any of the above events