

## In this issue:

[An update on the Affinity Water Plan](#)

[Historical scenes we may see again](#)

[World Premiere of our film \(2<sup>nd</sup> September\)](#)

[Beane and Mimram Catchment Plan](#)

[Correction](#)

[And](#)

[Very high ground water levels](#)

RBRA Chairman:

Dave Stimpson

Secretary:

Ian Knight

River Wardens:

Bob Thornton

News Letter:

Philip Hewett

Contact e-mail:

office@davestimpson.com

# What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association – Issue 7 Spring 2014

## Welcome

As reported in our last newsletter, the wettest winter for 200 years has certainly helped raise the water level in the aquifer, the underground reservoir that feeds the Beane. That, combined with the previous exceptionally wet spring has meant that the river has been flowing consistently for the past 18 months. As a result we have seen some signs of recovery in the upper Beane which had been dry for 18 months before that. (Remember the protest walk along its bed?) Water fowl, frogs and stickle backs have all returned and in many places the bed of the river is now looking gravelly instead of being silted up and choked with undergrowth. An encouraging sign given what we are delighted to report below ...

## 90% reduction at Whitehall gets Thumbs Up from OFWAT!



*This is the news we have been waiting for!*

Affinity Water has announced the good news that their Draft Water Resources Management Plan has been given 'Enhanced Status' by the regulator OFWAT. Although this is not formal approval yet, it does give Affinity Water the go ahead to begin planning and survey work on their 5 year plan. By starting this summer the hope is that 6 months can be saved from the overall programme.

**The plan will result in a 90% reduction in abstraction at the Whitehall Pump station down from an average of 18 mega litres per day to 2 mega litres per day.** This will be achieved by building a new pipeline from an existing pump station at Sacombe to the water treatment works at Whitehall, the water then being distributed to Aston and Stevenage using the present mains pipes. The Sacombe works currently supplies Harlow. Harlow will be supplied from alternative sources further east. Affinity Water is confident this is a viable solution and this has to be endorsed by OFWAT.

Affinity Water have thanked the RBRA for support for their proposals and have also said that public support has played a key part in the plan being given a conditional go ahead at present.

## Historical Scenes That We May See Again



I spoke to a man at the petrol station in Walkern last month who told me that as a lad he had caught small trout and carp near the ford. He said there are none there now. That was 15 years ago.

Hopefully, in the future we will see catches like the one on the next page, caught by B.J.Gripper before the Whitehall Pumping Station was built.

### Correction

In the Spring newsletter we reported that no properties had been flooded along The Beane. Sadly that was not true as one house was flooded in Walkern. Our apologies and sympathies are extended to the person concerned.

### Ground

#### water is very high

The RBRA have been dipping bore holes on behalf of the Environment Agency for 18 years. The highest levels were recorded in 2001 with 2014 coming a close second. Levels will start to fall now, how fast and how quickly will depend on how much rain we get and how hot it is. Still, we think we are safe from a hose pipe ban!



## **2<sup>nd</sup> September – world premiere of ‘On the Banks of The Beane’**

We now have a date for the ‘World Premier’ of ‘*On the Banks of the Beane*’ and this will be September 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Hertford Theatre before an invited audience. Invitations will be sent to our local MP’s, local Councillors, the WWF, Affinity Water, the Environment Agency as well as our members. Entrance will be by ticket as we must manage the numbers, but everyone will have the chance to get one.

Our film has progressed from the film making stage to the editing stage, and the final bits of editing will be done shortly. The news from Affinity Water now means we can write a positive ending to the film.

More details will be given in our next newsletter.

## **Beane and Mimram Catchment Plan** ([www.beaneandmimrampartnership.org.uk](http://www.beaneandmimrampartnership.org.uk))

A message from Bob Thornton ([antheaandbob@hotmail.com](mailto:antheaandbob@hotmail.com))

The Giant Hogweed and the Himalayan Balsam are growing again. Some spraying of the Hogweed has been done. The photos show a patch of hogweed before spraying and 10 days after spraying. There is more to be done. If anyone has any hogweed in their garden and would like it sprayed I would be happy to do it. A small voluntary donation may be requested to cover the cost of the spray and the protective clothing depending on the number of plants sprayed.

Charlie Bell of the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust has set some dates for pulling Himalayan Balsam. If anyone would like to join a group of volunteers on any of the following dates or if you have any Balsam in your garden you would like help removing please let me know.



15<sup>th</sup> May  
27<sup>th</sup> May  
26<sup>th</sup> June  
10<sup>th</sup> July  
24<sup>th</sup> July  
(+ maybe some in August if it's suitable).