

## **Report on flooding and river dredging** - January 2014

### **Introduction**

When the Environment Agency (EA) took over the National Rivers Authority in 1996, it virtually stopped the process of dredging. The authority's river boards, dedicated river engineers and 240 Local Flood Defence Committees were put under the control of the Environment Agency (EA). This gave the EA absolute power without responsibility or accountability. The EA and Natural England put most of our rivers under the EU Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in its Habitat Directive, which means they are protected. The EA has used this as another reason for not dredging. However, the EU directive on habitat decrees in Article 6 Paragraph 4 that **human health or public safety has precedence over SSSI Habitat**. The EA then apparently ceded part control/involvement to the European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR), which developed 207 restoration projects for English rivers.

### **ECRR Projects<sup>1</sup>**

Abbotts Hall Managed Realignment Scheme

Alkborough tidal defence scheme

Anton Crescent Wetlands Regeneration

Arborfield nature like bypass and weirs project

Babingley River at Hillington

Barking Creek near A13

Barking Creekmouth

Bleinheim Palace Project

Borrowash fish pass

Bures Mill fish by-pass

Burton Weir (Upper) Fish Pass - River Anker

Burton Weir (Upper) Fish Pass - River Mease

Burton Weir (Upper) Fish Pass Project

Butter Hill restoration project, River Wandle

Castle Acre Rehabilitation Project

Chambers Wharf

Charlton St Peter A 8  
Chowder Ness Managed Realignment Scheme  
Clayton Vale  
Colne Water Restoration Project  
Cornmill Gardens (QUERCUS)  
Cuckolds Haven Nature Area  
Darley Abbey Fish Pass Project  
Day Brook Rain Gardens  
De-culverting Moselle Brook at Lordship Recreation Ground  
Diffusing the Issue in Rural Ribble - River Loud  
Dove Weir removal  
Downham Playing Fields  
Drayton  
ERCIP - European River Corridor Improvement Plans  
Eden Crayfish Restoration Project  
Enhancement of the River Crouch following a pollution incident  
France Farm (Phase 1) A 9  
Freiston Managed Realignment Scheme  
Greenwich Peninsula  
Habitat improvements in the upper Kennet  
Hadfield Weir Fish Pass  
Haltwhistle Burn Restoration Project  
Harbertonford Flood Alleviation Scheme  
Hedleyhope Burn  
Highland Water at Warwickslade Lawn  
Kentchurch Weir Removal

Kirkstall Valley Weir Fish Passes Project

Langford Lakes project

Limestone Ribble Restoration Project

London Olympics Parklands

Long Eau (Great Eau)

Longstreet A 91a

Lower River Roding Regeneration Project

Lullingstone Castle

Manor Park

March Burn at Riding Mill

Mayesbrook Climate Change Park restoration project

Meades water garden regeneration project

Meander reinstatement on the River Wensum at the Ryburgh Loop

Mill Pool

Mill house private hydroelectric power generation scheme and fish pass

Moreton Channel Gravel Reprofiling

Nar SSSI project

Narborough Rehabilitation Project

New Forest LIFE project

Nine Chalk Rivers Project

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Babingley Catchment

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Burn Catchment

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Gaywood Catchment

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Glaven Catchment

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Heacham Catchment

Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Hun Catchment  
Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Ingol Catchment  
Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Mun Catchment  
Nine Chalk Rivers Project - Stiffkey Catchment  
Philips Park  
Pickering Beck & Dutchy Water improvement project  
Quaggy Flood Alleviation Scheme  
Quaggy channel improvements  
RSPB Fowlmere Nature Reserve  
Rams Brewery  
Re-connecting Meanders at Cranebank on the River Crane  
Restoration of Wandle Park  
River Alt at Knowsley  
River Avon Stream project  
River Avon at East Chisenbury  
River Bure  
River Calder improvement project  
River Cole at Coleshill  
River Cole- Life Project  
River Cray Catchment Improvement Project  
River Darent at Hawley Manor  
River Dart (Totnes) hydropower  
River Dearne at Mexborough  
River Dee  
River Frome Rehabilitation Plan  
River Glaven conservation group  
River Hogsmill Restoration Project

River Irwell Restoration Project

River Kennet Restoration

River Little Ouse at Thetford

River Marden at Calne

River Monnow (Going Native)

River Nar Catchment Improvement

River Nar Restoration Project

River Pool Linear Park Enhancement

River Quaggy- Chinbrook meadows

River Ravensbourne (Quercus)

River Rea Restoration Project

River Restoration at Hunworth (River Glaven)

River Rhee

River Roding Project

River Skerne- Life project

River Somer channel enhancement, Midsomer Norton

River Stour at Glen's weir (Throop fisheries)

River Valency at Boscastle

River Wensum Rehabilitation Project - Bintree

River Wid restoration scheme

River rehabilitation on the River Wensum at Swanton Morley

River restoration and flood alleviation on the River Brain at Witham

Rodley weir by pass channel

Rother meander reconnection

Salisbury Avon Restoration Project

Salmons Brook Urban Diffuse Pollution Project

Saltburn Gill ironstones mines

Seven Hatches

Sheephouse Wood Mine Water Treatment Scheme

Sherborne Windrush Restoration Project

Short Heath Brook Project

Source to Sea Programme

Source to Sea Programme - Kent catchments

Source to Sea Programme â€™ Duddon catchments

Source to Sea Programme â€™ Leighton Moss catchments

Source to Sea Programme â€™ Leven catchments

Source to Sea Programme â€™ Lune catchments

Source to Sea Programme â€™ Wyre catchments

Sowe Valley Project

Spring Meadow Meander Restoration

Strategic Framework for Restoration of the River Avon (SFfRRA)

Sutcliffe Park

Tanners Brook

Telford Urban Catchment Restoration

The Axe and Exe River Improvement Project (AERIP)

The Dart and Teign River Improvement Project (DTRIP)

The River Deerness Project

The River Deerness Project 2

The South Cornwall River Improvement Project

The South Cornwall River Improvement Project - Mevagissey River

The South Cornwall River Improvement Project - River Par

The South Cornwall River Improvement Project - St. Austell  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Bokiddicks Stream  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Crinnis  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Gorran Stream  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Polmear stream  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Portmellon Stream  
The South Cornwall River Improvement Project “ Warleggan  
The South Hams River Improvement Project (SHRImp)  
The Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP)  
Unit 1b - Long Bridge to Downstream of Louds Mill  
Unit 3a “ Hurst Bridge 2013  
Unit 4 - North Channel Phase 1  
Wallasea (North) Managed Realignment  
Wandsworth Riverside Quarter  
Wansbeck 100  
Welland for People and Wildlife Project  
Welwick Managed Realignment Scheme  
Wensum River Restoration Strategy  
Wensum River Restoration and Floodplain Enhancement  
West Lexham Rehabilitation Project

## **Organisations with involvement in England’s rivers<sup>2</sup>**

[Atlantic Salmon Trust,](#)  
[Catchment Science Centre,](#)  
[Centre for River Ecosystem Science,](#)

[European Centre for River Restoration,](#)  
[European Network of Freshwater Research](#)  
[Organisations,](#)  
[European Rivers Network,](#)  
[European Union of Water Management](#)  
[Associations,](#)  
[European Water Association,](#)  
[European Water Resources Association,](#)  
[Freshwater Biological Association,](#)  
[Global Water Partnership,](#)  
[River Restoration Centre,](#)  
[River Science Network,](#)  
[The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,](#)  
[The Rivers Trust,](#)  
[Wild Trout Trust](#)

### **Collaboration with other European Countries**

An organization formed called DGE<sup>3</sup> by Germany and the Netherlands seeks to coordinate all aspects of dredging. At this moment the following countries are active in DGE: Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, France, Belgium and Denmark.

The general objectives of DGE comprise: -

exchange of existing information and best practices on sediment and dredged material management in rivers, estuaries, coastal zones, canals and ports,

- exchange of experiences on the integration of sediment and dredging issues into river basin management plans and marine spatial planning
- exchange of experiences on dealing with new developments in legislation concerning dredging and dredged material management and related issues such as maintenance of waterways, ports, safety against flooding, Working with Nature or Eco-Engineering.
- provide technical input in formal networks to influence the implementation of new legislation that may cause bottlenecks for dredging activities (such as Natura 2000);
- discuss strategies on maintenance and relocation of dredged material
- enhance co-operation on specific issues, such as joint (monitoring) projects

### **DGE also focuses on compliance with EU legislation**

Implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

Implementation of revised EU Waste Framework Directive;



Implementation of the Birds and Habitat directives and Natura 2000;  
Implementation of Soil Protection Strategies;  
Implementation of Flood Directive;  
Environmental Liability Directive;  
Specific national legislation dealing with management of sediment and dredged material.

## **Conclusion**

The EU has competence over environmental issues and the directives above are just part of the legislation restricting independent flood response in the UK. The disposal of the dredged spoil is however restricted by the EU Waste Framework Directive and does have an affect on the dredging option. However it appears that cost is the main factor controlling dredging maintenance throughout the UK's river systems as it is quite possible to override the 'SSSI' issues but there is no consensus on dredging to avoid flooding in all cases and there are parties both for and against.

In the case of the Somerset flooding it appears that the two rivers concerned, Parrett and Tone are tidal rivers in part, (both 'high level carriers' and up to 10 feet above the surrounding flood plain level) and that both **may** be below high water and thus 'held back' at very high tides levels, so the bald statement that by dredging the two rivers all flooding would have been avoided, needs hydrographically verifying.

The Environment Agency's computer modelling, demonstrated that, if the carrying capacity of the Parrett and Tone was restored from its existing 60% of potential to around 90%, the severity of flood events would be, in their words, be "significantly reduced"<sup>4</sup>.

What is needed is an all party inquiry into the whole issue taking evidence from those who know the facts and then and only then produce a legally binding mandate on the Environment Agency together with ring-fenced funding to restore land drainage to its optimum level.

## **References**

<sup>1</sup>[http://riverwiki.restorerivers.eu/wiki/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://riverwiki.restorerivers.eu/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.restorerivers.eu/Portals/27/Network%20map/RESTORE/index.html>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.sednet.org/download/DGE-Objectives-March2011.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk/Commons-debate-cost-flooding-Somerset-Levels/story-20453023-detail/story.html#ixzz2rn0fsErD>

