

RIVER DOUR

Ray Newsam

A lot has happened since Jeremy Cope's report in the last newsletter, not least of which is that due to his extensive commitments to several other causes he asked me if I would be prepared to take over as Chairman with him as Secretary, and this was duly agreed by all at the July meeting of the group.

The main activity during this time was the announcement by The Environment Agency that the River Dour was to be included in the latest round of calls for community organisations to bid to form catchment partnerships and take on various responsibilities for the rivers in their areas. I attended an Executive Meeting of the Society to explain this proposal, and our submission of a bid was approved there and at our July group meeting. I subsequently attended a meeting of the East Kent Catchment Improvement Group at The Stour Centre in Ashford, hosted by the Environment Agency, at which the final details of our bid were agreed. The meeting was also an opportunity to meet many other staff and volunteers and find out what is happening on our East Kent rivers from the source to the sea.

All bids within the South East River Basin were co-ordinated by The Wandle Trust, which has a tremendous record of achievement in turning a chalk stream much like The Dour, running through four London boroughs, from an officially classified open sewer in the 60's to a viable trout river today. For the

purposes of the bids The Dour is a sub-catchment of The River Stour catchment - if approved our partnership will be with the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership while that for the Stour will be between the Wandle Trust and the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, although in effect all will work closely together. We have just heard that the bid has been successful but not yet had the details, hopefully there will be a lot more to tell you in the next edition.

The monthly volunteer river clean-ups have continued over the summer, with many bags of rubbish collected and the added surprise of a live grenade being found in the waters of Barton path. In one clean-up the volunteers were able to restore some recently vandalised bird feeders from the river back to their home at the Riverside Centre, and on the same day a group of volunteer staff from Affinity Water joined in the tasks and were pleasantly surprised at the quality of the river and the wildlife associated with it.

We'll hopefully soon be organising some surveys to find out residents' views about the river and improvements they would like to see, but of course are open to suggestions or offers of help from members at any time.

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the front cover.*

