

River Dour

Deborah Gasking

Some wonderful news: Iona Dubienic of White Cliffs Partnership has been a busy bee working with The Wild Trout Trust, a conservation charity working to make a better world for our rivers, lakes and their wildlife, including our native trout. Flourishing wild trout populations are a sign of the health of our waterways and the land around them. The Trust offer practical advice and hands-on habitat improvement projects. Their Trout in the Town project, assessed Our Finest Dour's levels of achievement and activity as a community group, and awarded it their Silver Level accreditation.

Here are a few facts:

Not so Good (in fact, extremely concerning) Pet flea treatments are highly toxic insecticides used on cats and dogs to kill fleas, and recent research shows they are getting into our rivers.

This is worrying for our invertebrate life in rivers, and the fish and birds that depend on them. This was highlighted by Buglife

three years ago but no regulatory action has been taken: "The massive over-pollution of all waterbodies with fipronil is shocking and there is an urgent need for the government to ban the use of fipronil and imidacloprid as flea treatments."

Amazing:

Brown trout have between 38 and 42 pairs of chromosomes. Humans have only 23 pairs.

A typical female brown trout produces about 2,000 eggs per kilogram (900 eggs per pound) of body weight at spawning.

Brown trout eggs need a constant supply of cold, clean and well oxygenated water.

The majority of trout die before their first birthday. Mortality rates in their first year of life are typically 95% or greater, falling to around 40 - 60% in subsequent years.

Brown trout can reach the ripe old age of 20 years.

Trout scales have growth rings, as new hard tissue is added around the edges as they grow. They can be read just like growth rings in a tree.

The River Dour Steps Project

Alan Lee

The access steps to the river, situated adjacent to the new River Education Centre at Buckland Bridge, have now been completed after months of wet weather. The ground water levels remain very high, one of the highest for some years. The stream is even running out of the chalk cliffs onto the seashore, this is most unusual as there has been so much rain. A short video can be seen on Our Finest Dour Facebook page.

Led by Iona Dubienic, Landscape Partnership Officer, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, the project was funded with the aid of Dover District Council and Dover Big Lottery. It is part of a three year scheme with Affinity Water and the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enhance and educate local people about the river, its bio-diversity and the surrounding environment.