

In 2014 we held a number of meetings across the Island aimed at stimulating people's involvement in their local watercourses. We asked about issues and opportunities. The meetings were well attended and we went away with oodles of information and a hope to get back to everyone by Christmas. Christmas 2014.

So here we are at Christmas 2015. We did update everyone, and for those interested in the Eastern Yar we held further workshops. But there was so much work to do, that is only now that we have been able to put everything in place to move forward. So this newsletter is an update about what we have done, and details of what is to come. We will produce newsletters bi-annually, and have put a variety of other means in place by which we can communicate regularly.

WEBSITE

Please have a look at the Island Rivers website—www.islandrivers.org.uk The website brings together information about the Island's rivers. There are details about each river and of self-guided walks along them, and events that we, or any of our partners are holding. We want to build an on-line gallery with **your help** and in time will be adding some beautiful artwork too. You can watch and listen to **Bill Shepard** talking about Newport Quay, and fly along the Medina River and Wroxall Stream thanks to **Richard Manser**. Not all is a bed of roses so we discuss the issues that affect the Island's watercourses and what the partnership is doing to improve their condition. This includes **volunteer opportunities**. There are also **links** to the many excellent sources of information that can be found elsewhere on the internet.



SOCIAL MEDIA

We also have a twitter feed and Facebook page which we use to send out items of interest. Please link to these if you can :



IslandRivers1



Island Rivers

DOWN TO THE COAST

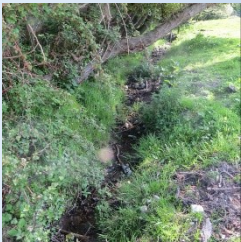
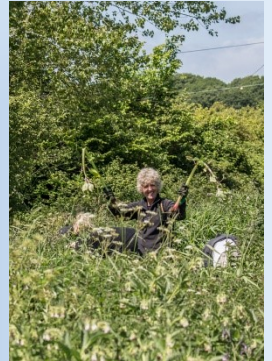
A great deal of our time has been spent working with other partners to secure a grant award of more than £1.5million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant has been awarded for a landscape partnership scheme – *Down to the Coast* – the focus of which is the intricate and diverse landscape of the eastern half of the Island, of which rivers are a major feature. There are suite of river projects within this 5 year programme, and as we get the full details we will keep you informed.



CURRENT PROJECTS

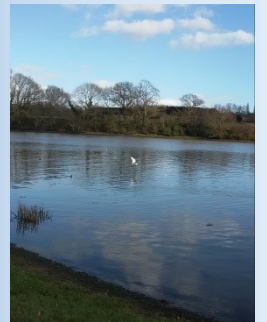
The Partner Organisations of Island Rivers are delivering a number of projects, both individually, and in collaboration. These projects all share the common goal of enhancing the Island's water courses for both people and nature.

PLANT POSITIVE is a campaign to control, and where possible eradicate invasive non-native plant species that are growing along the banks and / or within the Isle of Wight watercourses. Japanese Knotweed is one plant we have been tackling, and Creeping Water Primrose is another. Among the various actions is an opportunity for volunteers to become involved in a Himalayan Balsam pulling campaign. It's a summer activity and in 2015 our volunteers pulled for 1765 hours. They removed over 3 million plants weighing about 150 tonnes, the weight of 45 African elephants. Southern Water kindly helped us with funding this year and deserve a thank you.



WROXALL WETLANDS is a collaboration project between Hants and IoW Wildlife Trust and Natural Enterprise to improve water quality within the Wroxall Stream. We are **keen to hear** from land owners who would like to participate in work to stop run-off into the river.

MEDINA HOUSEBOATS involves the Isle of Wight Council and Isle of Wight Estuaries Project working together to provide better facilities for houseboat owners in Newport to dispose of sewage waste. We are nearly finished on this project.



CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING provides landowners with advice on how to protect water resources, address diffuse and point source pollution and enhance wetland habitats.

NEWPORT FLOOD RESILIENCE PLANNING Newport Parish Council are about to start recruiting wardens to support vulnerable neighbours during extreme weather events.

And coming soon...

Meanders and Reflections is in fact a suite of projects aimed at improving access to the Eastern Yar in both the physical sense – new footpath links, improved footpaths, revitalised signage and in increasing understanding of the river through interpretation and events

The Septic Tanks and Phosphorous Awareness Project will seek to raise awareness of best practice regarding septic tanks, and of phosphorous inputs more generally.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON ANY ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER INITIALLY CONTACT CAROL FLUX ON 01983 201563

GET INVOLVED

There are many ways in which to get involved in the management and care of the Island's Rivers.

We are currently recruiting **Flood and Severe Weather Wardens** for Newport.

Our annual **Himalayan Balsam Campaign** runs from May until late August each year and we are always looking for volunteers to help us hand-pull this invasive plant. It is good fun and remarkably therapeutic.

A number of local organisations have opportunities for **practical conservation volunteering**.

The **Isle of Wight Pond Wardens** look after local ponds and are recruiting.

We require **photographs** for our Rivers for our gallery on this website, and if you are one of the Island's many gifted photographers we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to have a greater say in the management of our rivers, you might be interested in our **local river groups**.

If you have a **strong urge to improve a local water-course**, please contact us as we might be able to help you. If you live in the East Wight we even have some funding to help.



Our Page 3 Boy, Steve is modelling the new Himalayan Balsam Volunteers shirts. Long-sleeved to ward off nettle stings. We are currently **taking orders** for these—price at the moment is £17.50 but it will go down with more orders.

AREA ACTION PLANS

The Isle of Wight Council is consulting on the above. Details can be found on their website—you need to respond by 16 December. We are working with them to see how we can best protect water-courses within this process and also through the Planning Department.

Newport Rivers Group produced and distributed this leaflet last year. Its just as relevant for anyone living alongside one of our urban rivers.

RIVERWATCH

Badly maintained rivers and watercourses can cause flooding.

They are also a danger to health and wildlife. Here are some simple steps to follow to ensure this does not happen.

For more details please contact Natural Enterprise 01983 296244
naturaleenterprise.co.uk/pages/projects/18-project-two

BEST PRACTICE FOR LIVING NEXT TO A RIVER

DO

keep growth of waterside vegetation under control and leave some cover for wildlife.

keep watercourses free of debris.

take garden waste or unwanted plants to the tip or compost them away from water.

DON'T

leave unsecured garden furniture near the river.

allow oils or detergents to spill.

dump general waste or rubbish in or near the water.

dump garden waste or unwanted plants in or near the river.

This leaflet has been prepared by Newport Rivers Group and delivered to you because you live alongside a river or watercourse.

Overleaf are some actions you should take to prevent flooding and to help wildlife.

If you would like to volunteer to help conserve your nearest river please call The Footprint Trust 01983 822282 or Natural Enterprise 01983 296244.

**newport
rivers group**

WHO TO CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY • 0800 80 70 60

If you spot someone dumping rubbish in your river or in the event of river flooding.

SOUTHERN WATER • 0845 278 0845

In the event of foul water or foul sewage flooding.

SOUTHERN WATER • 0800 820 899

In the event of water leakage.

ISLAND ROADS • 01983 822440

In the event of highway flooding and for advice on sandbags.

EMERGENCY SERVICES • 999

In the event of inundation.

KEEP THIS CARD SAFE - YOU MAY NEED IT!

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Island Rivers are hosted by Natural Enterprise.

Full details of the Island Rivers Partnership can be found at www.islandrivers.org.uk