



UNLOCKING THE SEVERN

Newsletter February 2019



organisations in 63 countries highlighting the importance of open rivers and migratory fish.

Unlocking the Severn is a once-in-a-lifetime river restoration and natural heritage project that will bring major benefits to people and wildlife along the River Severn.

Powick Weir ready for shad!

The Environment Agency completed work on Powick Weir in summer 2018 to improve fish passage and create the most efficient flow conditions to assist twaite shad to migrate upstream.

A naturalised rocky bed was put in, with a low-flow channel specifically designed to ensure a section of water is at the right depth and velocity to assist the twaite shad's migration upstream.

Environment Agency Officers took steps to safeguard all fish when water was temporarily removed from some areas around the weir during the construction works. They caught and moved fish to appropriate locations up and down stream and used this opportunity to collect data about levels of protected species such as salmon, trout, grayling, barbel, chub, dace, roach, perch, pike, gudgeon eels, elvers, and lamprey.

Wishing Fish leads World Fish Migration Day Parade

In April last year, school children and families from across Worcester came together to celebrate World Fish Migration Day - an international event with over 2,000

The great King Wishing Fish puppet was paraded through the high street accompanied by a fabulous fishy entourage of beautiful, brightly coloured river creatures which danced, swam and swayed across town. This culminated in a great fish hoe-down at the University of Worcester's City Campus.

Over 1,400 children took part in art, dance and storytelling workshops in schools and at the Hive during the lead-up to the event. These were led by community artists who inspired children and supported them to create their own spectacular performances and artworks. On the day itself revelers watched a powerful dance performance, boogied to the samba band and enjoyed a fish-themed picnic.

Other World Fish Migration Day activity across the region included fish flag-making at Severn Valley Country Park and Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, and a volunteer drop-in and training day at Upper Lode Weir in Tewkesbury.



Diving into the archives

Workshops across three counties are underway with 36 volunteers taking part. The

sessions are led by archivists with project staff supporting. Volunteers have learnt how to use the catalogues and are starting to order historic documents to examine. Choosing different topics to research, all the volunteers have a fascination with the river. Some grew up close to the Severn and some have worked in relation to it.



We look forward to sharing facts and stories with you on social media, the website and as part of exhibitions.

Works begin in Worcester

State of the art fish passes will be installed on four navigation weirs on the River Severn, with Diglis and Bevere as the first two sites to see works begin this spring. The construction of both fish passes will take approximately ten months.

To prepare the sites, teams were onsite in both locations in February to remove a number of trees along the riverside. It is always regrettable to lose trees, and as an environmentally motivated project we do not undertake this lightly.

Jason Leach, programme director commented: "We're delighted to be starting work in Diglis and Bevere on what is a once in a lifetime project that will bring major environmental benefits to the river and the species that can thrive here. The decision to remove trees from the river bank this February was not taken lightly and only after

all other avenues were explored. The tree work is being undertaken before the bird nesting season. We will mitigate the loss of the trees by replanting new trees along the River Severn corridor – five replacement trees for every one we have to remove - and we would like to assure people that we are only proceeding on the basis that the long-term ecological benefits of what is one the largest projects of its kind ever attempted in Europe are so worthwhile."

"In addition to the major engineering works providing fish passage, we have an exciting science, heritage, education and volunteering programme, so there are opportunities for people to get involved and help shape the project over the coming years. I'd encourage anyone interested in any aspect of the work to get involved."

Getting involved in 2019

This year will have an exciting array of activities for river-lovers and local people to get involved, including wildlife photography workshops, an exhibition at The Hive in Worcester and the opening of new Unlocking the Severn themed play equipment and river trail at Severn Valley Country Park.

We are also hoping that more volunteers will join us than ever before to help monitor the shad migration this spring!

For more information:

www.UnlockingtheSevern.co.uk



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