

## LIVING RIVER PROJECT – UPDATE NOVEMBER 2008

The Living River project is a four year, Heritage Lottery Funded project focussing on the River Avon and its tributaries. The project aims to raise awareness about the river and its habitats and make the most of those areas where public access is good. All this is done through involving the local community in the work that is carried out.

Over the last two years the project has been doing just that. Whether that is through working with Friends Provident and HSBC through their employee volunteering scheme, having fun at the many events we have been helping with (including the Harnham Water Meadows Trust Family Environment Day), or learning new skills like the people who helped take the photos for the new panels at the back of Salisbury Library.

We have been involved in river restoration projects such as at Figheldean where over 20 villagers turned out to care for their local mill pond, Langford Trust where a big volunteer effort has improved over 300m of river for all kinds of wildlife and Salisbury city centre where as well as repairing the work at Crane Street we have moved upstream into the Maltings to make this area better for wildlife and much more pleasing on the eye.

We have started to deal with the problem of invasive plants. Over 200 people have been involved in pulling Himalyan Balsam this summer. Starting to tackle problem species now means that the Avon won't suffer the same fate as some of the rivers in Dorset and Devon where the banks are inaccessible to people and the resident wildlife replaced.

We have supported some major access improvements too at Wildlife Trust nature reserves Blashford Lakes and Langford Lakes. This means that both these places are better for visitors. Several new kilometres of path have been laid at Blashford. Langford has seen some much needed improvements that mean visiting schools will get much more out of their visits.

Away from the river itself we have published 'Elvis the Egret' a children's picture book and accompanying story sack which has been a great success in local schools. Our trout tanks in Salisbury Library and at Langford Lakes have been a real hit too. Why not pop along and see these fish grow from tiny eggs to the small fish that will be released back into the river at Easter.

This is just a flavour and we are only half way through...

If you would like to find out more or get involved – [www.livingriver.org.uk](http://www.livingriver.org.uk) or [Martin.gilchrist@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Martin.gilchrist@naturalengland.org.uk) or 01722 334856 or 87 Crane Street, Salisbury SP1 2PU



*A young volunteer getting to grips with Himalyan Balsam*



*Family Environment Day at Rose Cottage*



*Volunteers hard at work in the river*