

THE RIVER RESTORATION CENTRE

Annual Report for 2010/2011



The River Restoration Centre

RRC is a “not for profit” information and advice centre working across the UK.

The twelve month period has been a time of consolidation and development for the staff at RRC. James Holloway formally moved up to the Projects Adviser role. In September and January the team undertook development exercises looking at personal strengths, working preferences and team roles. In addition Nick Elbourne has begun a part-time MSc at Cranfield University (part-funded by RRC). Richard Vivash retired from the Board in July 2010 having served on the RRC and RRP Boards since 1992. The RRC welcomed new board members Claire Thirlwall and Fiona Bowles.

RRC Staff

Managing Director	Martin Janes
Science & Technical Manager	Jenny Mant
Senior Projects Adviser	Di Hammond
Projects Adviser	James Holloway
Information Officer	Nick Elbourne
Accounts Technician	Joanne Evason
Administrator	Ian Brown

2010/11 saw a great deal of uncertainty due to the economic financial situation felt throughout the river management sector. Government departments and agencies showed signs of impact first with associated businesses including RRC looking at reduced investment in all aspects of previous spend. This situation was reflected in RRC’s business planning with changes arising monthly. The RRC 2010-2015 Business Plan was signed off in late 2010 with flexibility and a strong core focus of work areas being key to current and future development and delivery.

Towards the end of the period, RRC and its partners in an EU LIFE+ bid were given the excellent news that the project was to be funded. The RESTORE project will run until 2013 and is a major boost for RRC and the Environment Agency (the project lead).

Activities for Core Funders

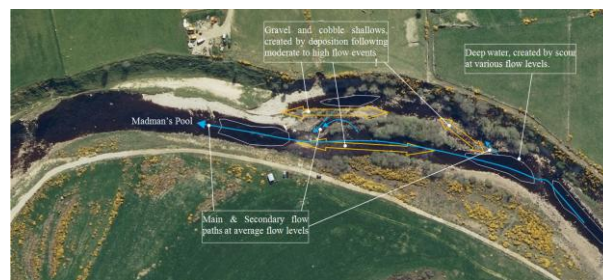
Scotland

The catchment approach to river restoration in Scotland has seen an increase in emphasis during this period. Led by the work arising from the Scottish Government’s transposition of the EU Floods Directive into the 2009 Flood Risk Management Act (Scotland) and continuation and expansion of the SEPA Restoration

Fund for WFD delivery. SEPA are also concentrating on targeting an element of the Restoration Fund towards the Priority diffuse pollution catchments working with SNH and others.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Uptake of the SEPA Restoration Fund has been very successful with more scoping studies coming forward focusing on river restoration. SEPA’s aim is to push for this approach as standard, to encourage a more integrated and long-term approach to restoration of natural processes and ecological habitat improvement. RRC is supporting this approach directly through advice on projects and is in place to provide technical guidance to the Fund panel on restoration applications. Specific advice provided on the Rivers Glas, Pefferly and Brora.



The River Brora, Sutherland

Scottish Natural Heritage

SNH have been working with SEPA to lead on and support work areas on river restoration and catchment management. In addition, RRC has been supporting SNH area staff with follow up proposals for the restoration of a section of the Logie Burn in Aberdeenshire. This arose from an initial scoping report by RRC in 2006. A repeat of the successful SNH & RRC ‘Working with Rivers’ sharing good practice event was planned but delayed until 2011 due to programming constraints.

Northern Ireland

Similar to Scotland, Floods Directive led developments have been prominent, as well as the continued efforts towards WFD investigations and implementation.

Rivers Agency

Rivers Agency and a wider working group had begun to look at the potential for a pilot catchment project to demonstrate the effectiveness of natural flood management techniques on reducing flood risk. RRC assisted the Rivers Agency and the NFM working group in assessing the availability of UK and EU-wide information, the completeness of previous studies on

evidence and benefits and then provided support and input to an initial workshop in November 2010 with discussion from researchers and other agencies.

On the River Roe, the Rivers Agency Environment Section is looking at options to remove the impoundment caused by a gauging weir. RRC provided a number of alternative methods to allow gauging to continue but with a reduced impact on the hydromorphology. Following on from RRC work in 2009 the group at Connswater have begun to take forward suggestions for the river.



Opportunities for the Connswater, Belfast

NIEA

Following on from the three-year agreement with NIEA, a continuation agreement has been signed for two further years. The content has been reduced in line with budgetary cuts being felt by all of the Agencies, but maintains NIEA support of RRC as a central resource for their staff.

England and Wales

Government changes had a profound impact on both of the major English supporters for RRC. Funding restrictions and changes within the structure of committed work and staffing have affected delivery of river restoration work and planning of new works. However, both of the Steering groups on which RRC were represented in 2009/10 continued forward at a good pace.

The Pitt Review Working with Natural Processes group produced its output in the form of a short summary document. This is still being reviewed and scrutinised by the coalition government before general release. This short concluding report hides the significant degree of effort that the working group achieved through a variety of work packages. The intention is to make this available alongside the report.

Natural England

RRC has continued its role on the SSSI/SAC whole river restoration plan steering group alongside Natural

England and the Environment Agency. Hosted by Natural England, Jenny Wheeldon (NE/EA river restoration specialist), continued to push forward the established SSSI and SAC river restoration strategies and develop additional ecological visions for those remaining. This year RRC has had direct involvement in the R. Nar, R. Avon and R. Wensum.

RRC is disseminating the information arising from the process which is seeing unprecedented investment in the rivers network on a long term and whole river basis.

RRC was asked to provide specific advice to one of the SSSI network to try to answer issues of historic intervention and current structural impact on the sediment load of the River Camel. Interest in the natural morphology and process led changes was in conflict with angling opportunities and maintenance of pools.



The SSSI River Camel, Cornwall

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency, North West region, requested a series of WFD investigations to look for opportunities to improve the rivers Irwell, Roach, Etherow and Croal.



Impressive but impassable weirs on the Etherow

All three rivers have been significantly affected by past industrialisation and although much of that

infrastructure is either in decline or has been demolished, a legacy remains in the river landscape with weirs and wall river banks affecting significant parts of the water course. The projects identified a number of key opportunities and this resulted in a further short report to look in more detail at the options of removing a series of weirs.

Weirs have been a high priority topic due to WFD opportunities to open up passage to fish, and this resulted in a research and development driven project to pull together the evidence base for weir removal and the perceived limitations. This used the RRCs contacts and national inventory. In addition, case study information has been collected and the future aim is that some of these will help to further develop the Environment Agency's Mitigation Measures Manual for Heavily Modified Water Bodies. Indeed with the drive to assess the potential to remove weirs as a measure to achieve WFD outcomes a report was completed to review current assess best practice weir removal.

Advice has also been provided to Agency projects on the Rivers Rother, Keekle, Loddon, Arun, Ravensbourne, Lea, Brue, Chelt, Gade, Granta, Hiz, Rolles Brook, Tanners Brook and Mayes Brook.

River Restoration needs to encompass best practice river management and as such the River Sediment and Habitats handbook scope was developed which will provide the framework for new best practice management for operational delivery.

A number of data gathering meetings and on-site presentations were given at EA offices across the country during the year: at Brampton regional fisheries seminar; Nottingham; Winchester & Warrington.

Other RRC Activities



New EU LIFE+ Grant.

RESTORE – communication best practice river restoration across Europe.

Following a long period of lead in and preparation, RRC and partners (Environment Agency (lead partner), and others from Finland, Netherlands, Italy and Romania) were successful in attracting matching funding of €872,000 from the LIFE+ Information and Communication funding stream. For RRC this represents funding for approx 1.1 FTE over the three years of the project, or £155K.

The project will develop a network linking policymakers, river basin planners, practitioners and

experts across Europe to share information and good practice on river restoration activities. The main objectives are:

- To support river restoration practices across Europe. A database of river restoration projects will be created, providing understanding of policy opportunities and constraints, the effectiveness of restoration methods, design issues and project costs/benefits;
- To build up existing river restoration network capacity. Several river restoration networks are already established. The project will provide a European forum to support existing and emerging networks and will help identify the needs of networks and the barriers to effective operation and co-operation; and
- To promote effective river restoration knowledge transfer. The project will support the work of existing networks in communicating best practice. Tools to promote knowledge transfer will also be developed and used to communicate key messages to target audiences.

2011/2012 will see the RESTORE project take off.

RRC National River Restoration Inventory

RRC has continued work throughout the year on the National River Restoration Inventory (NRRI). There are approximately 4,000 active contacts on file at the current time. A data cleanse was undertaken by Ian Brown during the year to validate the contact information held. The total number of projects registered now stands at 2,008. During the year 227 projects were added and 251 updated. The RESTORE project offers the opportunity to match the RRC UK inventory with additional information from across Europe increasing the ability of RRC to extract information and offer advice based on a wider pool of information/

RRC Website

The website has been updated throughout the year by Nick Elbourne. Updates include the list of presentations made by RRC staff, London River Action Plan projects, the interactive map of UK projects and RRC members site visits. Case studies have also been added including the Cam at Trumpington, Highland Water in the New Forest, The Rother at Shopham Loop, Wensum at Bintree and the Calder Improvement Project.

ECRR – European Centre for River Restoration

RRC continues to represent the UK on the Management Board and support the role of the ECRR and the work of its other partners. This EU wide push to build the network of river restoration centres has been the main driver for the EU LIFE+ application and ECRR is set to take on the AfterLIFE+ role for the RESTORE outputs.

RRC participated, also as an ECRR Board member, at the Lyon FORECASTER project event (which has developed a tool for dissemination of restoration and hydromorphology information) and presented our experiences at a network meeting for existing and proposed restoration centres held in Bucharest.

Multi partner and non-core funder advice

The RRC does not competitively tender for work but carries out advisory work when requested by Members who are looking for independent advice on river restoration projects.

RRC revisited the River Skerne in 2010 at the request of Darlington Borough Council. DBC are looking to develop a masterplan for the Eastern part of the Town Centre, which includes the river. On the back of the ongoing success of the 1995-1998 River Skerne Restoration Project, the council were keen to get RRC's suggestions for this reach continuing on downstream from the previous work at Skerne Bridge.

Partnership working

The RRC's report for 2009-2010 highlighted a project on the River Nar to support a river restoration strategy and plan that took account of the interests of Natural England, the Environment Agency, the IDB and local landowners, fishing clubs and other stakeholders. Working in partnership with Karen Fisher and Nigel Holmes this has now been completed and measures have been implemented on the Nar following this plan.

Water Companies are now thinking more strategically in terms of water quality and improving habitat in rivers. RRC is undertaking an important piece of work for Yorkshire Water to identify opportunities to use river restoration methods as part of a suite of remedies to mitigate against water quality issues associated directly or indirectly with their sewage treatment works. At the same time this will identify opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations that have an interest in the watercourses.

Knowledge transfer

To target the growing student audience keen on the concept of river restoration, RRC staff provided support and advice to a number of Universities across the UK. Through lectures to students on the principles of river restoration, field visits to help make the link between the science and practical solutions, and a wealth of information delivered to both under- and post-graduates. Through the collective mixture of skills held by the three senior staff at RRC, the Centre was able to cover much of the course content for the river and wetland management module of Cranfield University's Masters in Environmental River Management, as well as the annual contribution to other Cranfield courses

As part of RRC's commitment to disseminate good practice restoration to a range of audiences, the RRC

and Cranfield University have updated the chapter on river restoration with "Restoration Ecology". This 2nd edition will be available in late 2011.

At the River Conservation and Management Conference in York in September 2010, RRC co-authored a paper delivered by Nigel Holmes, a previous RRC Chairman, on "The development, role and future of River Restoration Centres since 1990". This, and its proceedings paper, outlined the humble beginnings of RRC (as RRP) and the parallel development of other centres and the ECRR.

Consultation documents

In late 2010 a number of defra and Scottish Government consultations were announced based on the Flood Risk Management Acts in Scotland (2009) and England (2010). These documents stated how future flood risk activities would be carried out with regard to wider river management objectives. RRC felt it was critical that it should respond formally to the process to aid defra, EA and the Scottish Government to produce legislation and guidance that incorporates all of the current aims of a truly integrated approach to river management based on sound science and working with natural processes. It is clear that RRC's opinions alongside many others voiced, has contributed to major revisions of some of the more concerning elements of , for example, the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategy for England and Wales. RRC was also asked to provide further examples for the statutory Guidance on Sustainable Development for Local Flood Authorities.

RRC Led Site Visits

Seven site visits hosted by the RRC enabled 106 members to benefit from current developments in implementation of river restoration work. The sites were across England and Scotland and co-hosted by RRC Member Organisations.



The East Chisenbury site visit on the R. Avon, Hampshire.

There was also a talk in Edinburgh by Janine Castro (River Restoration Northwest – RRNW) on the US use of woody material which was attended by 40 members. There is a video recording of the presentation available on the RRC website.

Feedback has been very positive from the attendees and the events tend to be over-subscribed when offered. Due to their success RRC will continue to offer these opportunities over the next year

RRC 2010 Annual Network Conference

The 11th RRC conference was held in York with around 200 (inc.13 overseas) delegates attending. Presentations covered a broad range of issues relating to river restoration from policy to practice. There were also three workshops offered as part of the two day event. Presentations for the Annual Conferences have been added to the RRC website for reference and a short proceedings is being drafted, covering 17 of the papers. The RRC conference pages now contain an enormous resource in terms of past presentations, papers and other supporting material.

The site visits for the conference were close to Ripon: the River Laver at Galphay Mill (below) and Birkby Nab FAS construction site.



The River Laver, Yorkshire

RRC Training Courses

13 delegates attended the 2nd River Restoration course (Scoping, Design and Monitoring) in September 2010 at the Knepp Castle Estate. The event was split into classroom-based exercises and discussions with a variety of experienced speakers from different disciplines offering their own perspective on river restoration. Delegates were then invited to suggest possible restoration designs for the stretch of the River Adur (which flows through the Estate) and devise a monitoring programme to demonstrate applied understanding. Both the RRC Projects Adviser and Information Officer attended as delegates.

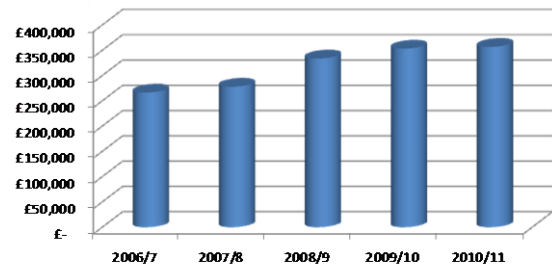
There were no Module 1 training events during the year due to insufficient numbers of delegates to cover the cost.

Financial Summary

Financial position

Even with the economic gloom surrounding future investment, RRC had another good year in 2010/11, in part due to the healthy amount of advisory work already planned and committed, and the hard work of the advisory staff in delivering this. For the year ending March 2011, the RRC’s turnover was £356K. This is a modest increase on the previous year of £3K, and maintained the previous positive upward trend.

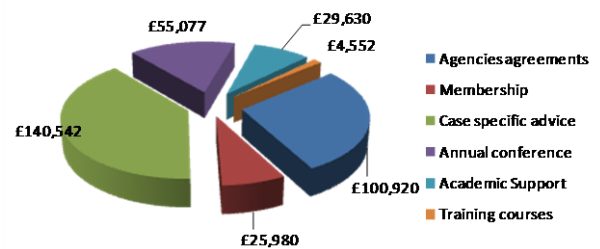
Turnover



Income

Income from RRC’s various funding streams has been apportioned below to show the relative importance of each.

Income streams 2010/11

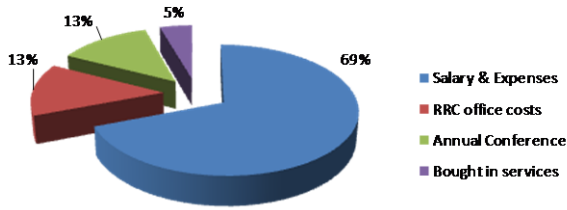


The Agencies agreements reduced by around £3K in real terms, due to the reduction in funding by NIEA. Case specific advice increased by £14K. Conference income matched the previous year’s figures. A healthy increase of 30% in membership income from Corporate, Organisation and Individual Members has helped to offset the dip from the statutory agencies.

Costs

As an organisation RRC’s single greatest annual investment is in its staff resource. The pie chart below shows that 82% of all RRC expenditure is for staff employment and their office base. The venue for the conference is the only other significant cost and necessary for the £55K income shown above. Bought in services are minimal (mainly website, database and newsletter design and Expert Adviser input).

2010/11 Expenditure



cover all possible costs. The Board then agrees any further retained provision. This Bridging Provision is to cover cash flow, business expansion, and bought-in cover in the event of long-term staff sickness.

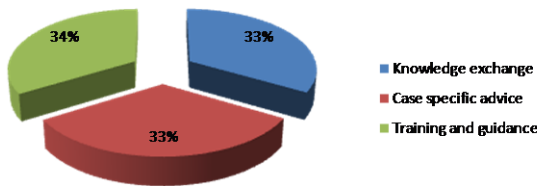
After provision for these two items (redundancy and bridging) has been agreed, an operating surplus is left to allow for cash flow, new development and new staffing as proposals for its utilisation arise.

Core activities

The Centre’s three core activity areas group the main services and deliverables of the RRC over the year. The groups contain a number of individual and linked activities so each area has a broad spectrum of targeted outcomes. The split between total expenditure on these activities is illustrated below.

Martin Janes
Managing Director
July 2011

Expenditure on core activities



The balance between the activity areas is roughly one third each, with some activities having a degree of overlap. This ‘equal’ three-way distribution of effort shows that RRC’s delivery, focus, and pro-active and reactive understanding of the needs of its members is soundly based. Continued promotion of the Centre in terms of these three core areas is strongly supported by this reflection of external usage of the Centre’s services. With the development of RESTORE as an information and communication (knowledge exchange) activity this area of focus will grow considerably. For 2010/11 the 2% of expenditure attributable to RESTORE’s inception is included within the knowledge exchange proportion. RESTORE will be identified independently in future reporting.

Retained Income

RRC aims to make a surplus each year to build a sound financial. As a not-for-profit organisation all surplus is retained for use by the business. In the financial year April 2010 to March 2011 RRC made a surplus of £16K

Each year the Board agrees how to apportion the retained surplus. A requirement of the employment of RRC staff is that RRC has a Redundancy Provision to