



BRINGING LONDON'S **RIVERS TO LIFE**



ANNUAL REVIEW 2014-2015



OUR PURPOSE

We are the voice for London's waterways. Thousands of Thames21 volunteers protect and champion the capital's network of water space, vital for nature and people in one of the most densely populated cities in Europe. We work hand in hand with communities to deliver tangible, sustainable improvement to rivers, streams, canals and ponds for environmental, social and community benefit.

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

The year marked Thames21's Tenth Anniversary as an independent registered charity and the extent to which the organisation has grown and developed and steadily built its role and reputation as the leading environmental charity for waterways across London and beyond is extremely satisfying. From a small litter clean-up operation it has become an established and multi-faceted non-government organisation (NGO) making a valued contribution to and indeed leading the development of strategies and plans; and yet never forgetting its most unique strength in connecting directly with grassroots communities and providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds who wish to get involved in nurturing, improving and transforming the natural world of our urban rivers.

There was greater focus on bringing communities and stakeholders together to help progress new management plans for many rivers and on delivering larger-scale environmental improvement projects such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. A reduction in traditional environmental improvement volunteering in the year was considerably offset by the increase in communities, schools and groups that the charity has connected to London's rivers through educational and outreach work, raising awareness of environmental issues, helping to change long term attitudes and behaviour. Ultimately this outreach will also help provide more practical opportunities for an increase in the number of people experiencing the satisfaction of achieving something very worthwhile; the friendships and connection with their neighbourhood which comes with volunteering for Thames21. This planned growth and strengthening of the charity's volunteering opportunities is the focus of the major new Development Programme which the charity launched during the year.

The year was also not without challenges and we seek to ensure that in the midst of the very exciting project delivery and development activity, the core function and framework upon which it stands remains firm.

I would like to thank the board of Trustees for their support and commitment to the charity's work, the energetic and dedicated staff team and particularly the charity's original Founder, Celia Hensman, who continues to champion the charity's cause at every opportunity.

FRANCIS CARNWATH CBE
Chairman of the Trustees



Francis Carnwath CBE
Chairman



Debbie Leach
Chief Executive

A YEAR OF ACTION



RESCUING RIVERS FROM RUBBISH, POLLUTION AND INVASIVE WEEDS

Thames21 volunteers worked together to clear disfiguring and dangerous rubbish from rivers across London – for example removing over 190 tonnes of litter from the Tidal Thames alone, in partnership with the PLA's Driftwood team. Other volunteers tackled invasive weeds from Himalayan Balsam to Giant Hogweed. Our volunteer Citizen Scientists monitored rivers for urban pollution including road run-off and sewage discharges.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

The charity created new, strategically-placed wetlands which use the natural ability of plants to clean polluted water before it seeps into rivers. Working closely with the London Boroughs of Enfield and Haringey, SuDS were constructed and then planted up by local volunteers at: Boyton Road; Grovelands Park; Glenbrook; and Houndsden Spinney.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

During the year...

20,797 people took part in Thames21 volunteering, education and engagement programmes.



PROJECT EXAMPLE: FIXING BROKEN RIVERS

We delivered an extensive programme of education sessions in schools, talks in communities, and tangible improvements from new reedbeds to SuDS all linked with our Love the Lea campaign in East London. It is helping spearhead a step-change in understanding and public involvement in tackling the huge problem of pollution in the river.



PROJECT EXAMPLE: THAMES RIVER WATCH

Community volunteers along the length of the tidal Thames carried out 492 water quality surveys to help monitor and understand the pollution challenges faced by our most famous and complex river. They provided a new information resource for the public and connected many more Londoners directly with the Thames. Training provided to volunteers included: testing for pollutants, fish identification, invasive non-native species and litter monitoring.



PROJECT EXAMPLE: THAMES21 TRAINING PROGRAMME

Empowering independent action on rivers, Thames21 trained and qualified a further 333 community leaders and volunteers to carry out their own local volunteering activities safely and effectively. Groups previously trained by Thames21 were also provided with support, monitoring, practical and technical advice throughout the year.



INVOLVING COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS IN MAKING NEW RIVER PLANS

Backed by government legislation for cleaner rivers, Thames21 hosted Partnerships which brought together local communities, organisations and authorities to develop new plans to protect and improve river catchment areas. Thames21 hosted or co-hosted Catchment Partnerships for the: Tidal Thames; Thames Maidenhead to Teddington; Ravensbourne River Catchment; Brent River Catchment; Rivers Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne; London River Lee; and Marsh Dykes Catchment.



THE CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIPS IN LONDON GROUP (CPIL)

A range of other NGOs also hosted River Catchment Partnerships, so Thames21 arranged and is chairing a group bringing together all Partnerships in or around Greater London to share solutions, and work together to tackle London-wide issues. Working Sub Groups were then set up to promote and report on river restoration projects; and to help tackle the widespread problem of misconnected drains contaminating rivers around the capital.

LITTER EVIDENCE GROUP

There is a lack of conclusive evidence on sources and pathways of litter from the land into the sea via rivers. Following the MCS Marine Litter Action Network Conference, Thames21 in partnership with the University of Leeds established and is co-chairing a new national group of academics and NGOs which will develop and deliver projects to fill the gaps in the evidence – and then use it to identify and help carry out the most effective action to combat the aquatic litter catastrophe.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: IMPROVING RIVERS FOR WILDLIFE

On the River Cray in Bexley and the River Pool in Lewisham, local volunteers constructed in-channel features such as berms and flow deflectors to create more diverse waterside vegetation and habitat for wildlife, and encourage more varied river flow to benefit fish and other river species.

River banks were also enhanced through community action – such as the 60 native hedgerow trees, 40 wildflower plugs and 100 native spring bulbs planted at locations along the River Brent.



PUBLIC EDUCATION TO INSPIRE CHANGE

Thames21 championed London's rivers throughout the year – calling for action, progress and the involvement of communities, companies, authorities and decision-makers. The charity worked on successful campaigns such as Break The Bag Habit pressing for a charge on single use plastic bags; and headed up Thames Tunnel Now, a coalition of environmental charities and amenity groups supporting effective plans to tackle the sewage contaminating the River Thames.

The charity reached out to local communities to encourage them to connect with their river through engagement campaigns and events such as Love the Lea and the campaign Festival in East London to the 3Rivers CleanUp in South London. 'Surface Tension' drew on both art and science to creatively explore pollution along the River Lea – resulting in an album of new music, field recordings and book of words and photographs which resulted in national interest.



Rob St John | Surface Tension

Friday 3rd April - Monday 4th May 2015, 9am-5pm
Stour Space, 7 Roach Road, Hackney Wick, London, E3 2PA

Artist talk 'in conversation' with Cheryl Tipp, curator of wildlife sounds at the British Library
Wednesday 22nd April, 7-9pm, free entry

Book and CD released April 2015
surfacestension.org.uk

Commissioned by Thames21's 'Love the Lea' campaign: thames21.org.uk/lovethellea





Celebrating the wonderful rivers of the Lea Valley

FREE

LIVE MUSIC FROM THE BONFIRE BAND
SOUND WALKS WITH ROB ST JOHN
BOAT TRIPS
PERFORMANCE ART #URBANFLOWEVENT (RIVERCITIES)
FACEPAINTER
POND DIPPING
AND LOTS OF RIVER THEMED FUN ACTIVITIES!
BRING A PICNIC!

SUNDAY 17TH AUGUST 11AM - 5PM



WALTHAMSTOW MARSHES PICNIC AREA
Opposite Springfield Park

WWW.THAMES21.ORG.UK/LOVETHELEA

[.COM/LOVETHELEA](https://www.facebook.com/lovethellea) @THISISYOURRIVER #LOVETHELEA



REACHING OUT - THE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In July Thames21 launched a major new initiative to involve more communities and work in new localities, building additional projects and activity hand in hand with London residents. In the first eight months the Development Team worked with 20 local community organisations in boroughs across London, as well as looking at how the charity's data systems can be improved to support its volunteers and also its growth.





A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

"At the beginning of the year, fed up with seeing litter and fed up with nothing been done about it, I had a veritable light bulb moment and decided to do something about it. So I started picking litter while out walking the dogs, and the most amazing thing happened, random people kept stopping me and asking if they could get involved.

I looked into organising a group clean-up and discovered Thames21.

I couldn't believe that they were offering free training and immediately signed up to the 'Leading a Waterway Clean-up' course. Quite a few places I haunt have badly neglected waterways. The training was invaluable; most of all, it was inspiring meeting others who were taking action to keep their environs clean.

I'm writing this having just led my first clean-up at the Brent Reservoir, with the support of Thames21 and the Canal and River Trust. It was easy to organise and it really exceeded my expectations! Twelve people turned up and a well behaved dog; we managed to clear about thirty bags of rubbish. Best of all, everyone was keen to come back for another event, which is already in the planning!"

Daniella Levene, Thames21 Trainee



IN 2014-2015 THAMES21 DELIVERED:

10,931 people in East London were reached through Love the Lea engagement and education events and activities.

5,673 people volunteered at river clean up events.

138 river habitat enhancement events were held for **1,932** volunteers.

48 events and activities removed invasive non-native weeds from our waterways with **478** volunteers.

Trained staff and volunteers treated over **500** Giant Hogweed plants.

106 family-friendly informal learning events were run for communities across London.

5,000 booklets on the Urban Water Cycle were delivered to households in critical drainage areas.

43 Training Days were delivered for **333** participants.

Objects removed from the River Thames included: **29** shopping trolleys, **2** motorbikes, car tyres, chairs, a mattress a fridge and **4** steel security barriers.

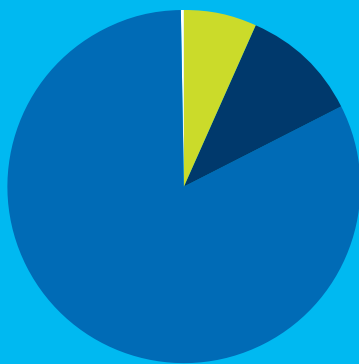
Objects removed from the River Brent included: **7** shopping trolleys, one minibike, **2** children's scooters, **4** mattresses, a wardrobe, a microwave, two TVs and a sofa.

Objects removed from the Grand Union Canal included: kitchen sinks and vacuum cleaners.



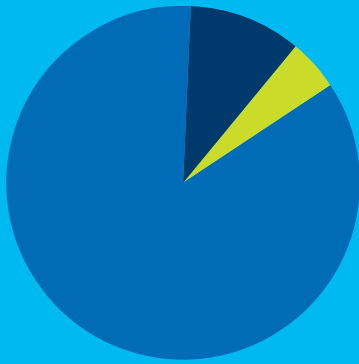
OUR INCOME AND WHERE WE SPENT IT

INCOME £ 1,777,186



Grants restricted	£ 1,461,519
Donations	£193,069
Gifts in kind	£121,794
Investment Income	£804
Total	£1,777,186

SPENDING £ 1,792,175



Charitable Activities	£1,761,46
Generating voluntary income	£20,945
Governance	£9,766
Total	£1,792,175

INCOME FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Excluding Driftwood Operations provided by the Port of London Authority

£776,565

23% INCREASE

£954,555

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

The financial information in this annual review is based on the draft accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015. The full audited annual report and accounts will be considered for approval by the Trustees on 17 September 2015, when copies will be available on the charity website www.thames21.org.uk.



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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

Aimia	Havering Council	Port of London Authority
Bexley Council	Halfords Media	Reed and MacKay Travel Ltd
Biffa Awards	Hammerson PLC	Rivers Trust
Bloomberg	Harney and Sons	Royal Bank of Canada
Brent Waterways	Hillingdon Canal Action	Thames Tideway Tunnels
Mr Charlie Porter	HSBC	Thames Water
City Bridge Trust	Informa House	The Tides Foundation
Corporation of London	London Legacy Development Corporation	Threadneedle
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs	Marks and Spencer Plc	Toshiba of Europe Ltd
Environment Agency	Merrill Lynch Europe Plc	Treasury Wine Estates EMEA
Goldman Sachs	NBC Universal International Ltd	Up Projects
Greenspace Information	Newham Council	Veolia
Groundwork Herts	Northern Trust	Wandsworth Council
Hackney Council	Ocean Conservancy	WME Entertainment UK LTD
Haringey Council	Outward	

TRUSTEES:

Francis Carnwath CBE (Chairman)
Deputy John Barker OBE
Richard Everitt (resigned 11/6/14)
Celia Hensman MBE
Louise Moore
Howard Davidson
Richard McIlwain
Anne Wadsworth OBE
Michael Hamilton
Alistair Gale

Richard Rutter (resigned 18/9/14)
Robin Mortimer (appointed 18/9/2014)
Nicholas Tennant (appointed 12/3/15)

Company Secretary: Anthony Denton

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Lulu Ash
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