



# RIBBLE RIVERS TRUST

## Summer e-newsletter

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2015

## ALL CHANGE!

### A new direction for Ribble Trust

In November 2014 we submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of the Ribble Life [catchment partnership](#). The project entitled '[Ribble Life Together](#)' would be delivered collaboratively by the partners over 5 years, allowing organisations and community groups operating within the catchment to join together and deliver projects, satisfying multiple objectives and making a much bigger impact on the water environment.

In April 2015 we were informed that the application had been successful and the HLF awarded £371,500 for us to develop the project over 18 months. Having



*Ribble Life partners on a farm visit to discuss opportunities*

recruited new members of staff to the project, including Kathryn Turner as Programme Manager and Ellie Brown as GIS Officer, we're now in a busy period working with partners to plan activities that ensure rivers and the land surrounding them are better managed and monitored, with a view to significantly improving the natural heritage of the Ribble Catchment for people and wildlife.

The project will have a significant focus on involving local people, helping them to learn about their natural heritage, develop skills, alter their attitudes towards their environment and provide new opportunities for everyone to enjoy their natural landscape. This may be through practical conservation activities and surveys, education programmes and workshops, events, river walks and interpretation such as short films, apps, artwork, leaflets and signage.

The project aims to achieve the following objectives;

- **Improved water quality:** reduced pollution and improved coastal bathing waters.
- **Improved biodiversity:** increased habitat, connectivity and re-naturalisation.
- **Reduced flood risk:** using natural processes to aid in flood risk reduction.
- **Recreation:** improved access and information for people to access rivers and streams.
- **Education:** increased awareness, engagement and understanding of riverine heritage.
- **Social:** provide training, volunteering and other opportunities for people to be involved.
- **Economic:** increased tourism & recreation, as well as working with local businesses.
- **Climate change:** increased carbon sequestration and shading of streams.
- **Partnerships:** demonstrate how aligning partners' activities can bring multiple benefits.

## And that's a wrap... Four major projects completed

March 2015 was a landmark month for the Trust, with its four biggest projects all due for completion. We are happy to report that each project was finished on time and within budget, but even more proud of their impact on the riverine wildlife and communities.

Full evaluation reports have been written for each of the projects and are available to view on our website. Click on the links below to read the results and outcomes;

➤ **Diffusing the Issue in Rural Ribble**  
*Working with the farming community in five different sub-catchments to find solutions to water pollution from farms.*

➤ **Colne Water Restoration**  
*Implementing fish passage solutions and improving habitat on Colne Water, a heavily industrialised catchment.*

➤ **Limestone Ribble Restoration**  
*Improving river habitat and flow levels in and around the Yorkshire Dales by planting trees and restoring moorland.*

➤ **Urban River Enhancement Scheme (URES)** - *Transforming Burnley's town centre rivers for the benefit of wildlife and reconnecting local communities with their natural river heritage.*

# Water Friendly Farming

**“For this to work, measures that improve water quality must bring benefits to the landowner too.”**



The Ribble Catchment is significantly agricultural and this has an enormous impact on the health of our water environments. We couldn't do without our farms, so a major part of our work is to build relationships with landowners and find ways in which they can alter their practices to be more sympathetic to rivers and streams. For this to work, measures that improve water quality must bring benefits to the landowner too.

## Countryside Stewardship

Recently reformed with a much greater focus on improving water environments, the [Countryside Stewardship](#) scheme provides financial incentives for land managers to look after their environment, with £85 million set aside to support projects in 2016. Ribble Trust is ideally placed to help landowners recognise the opportunities for farm improvements and can work with them to deliver projects that help them access grants.

## Land management solutions for water

There are various things a landowner can do to improve water quality, such as;

- Riparian fencing and tree planting to intercept runoff and reduce bank erosion.
- Stoning gateways to reduce soil erosion.
- Repairing gutters to separate clean and dirty water, reducing volumes of slurry.
- Concreting farmyards to improve clean and dirty water separation.
- Creating wetlands to intercept runoff carrying sediment and nutrients.
- Roofing manure stores to reduce volume of dirty water.

## Environmental benefits

A polluted stream is more lethal to aquatic wildlife when the water is warmer, and with climate change bringing rising temperatures, good water quality is even more crucial. Planting trees on riverbanks not only reduces the amount of pollution entering watercourses, but once matured, the trees cast shade over the water and help to keep the temperatures down.



*This section of the River Loud was fenced off and planted with trees in 2014 to reduce faecal inputs from cattle.*

The benefits of water quality improvements are seen downstream too along the coast and [designated bathing waters](#), making our beaches safer places for people to enjoy.

Cleaner rivers can support greater populations of invertebrates and fish, which in turn supports birds and animals and improves the overall biodiversity of the catchment.

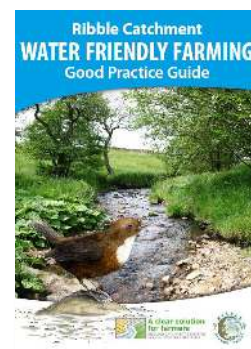
## How is it all funded?

Recently we received grant funding from Defra's Catchment Restoration Fund, United Utilities' [Catchment Wise](#) fund and [SITA Trust's](#) Enriching Nature programme that enabled us to fund work of this type.

Going forward, we're working closely with United Utilities to target the tidal zone of the Ribble Catchment and work towards cleaner beaches in the North West. We're also heavily involved with Natural England, who have funded a third year of [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) visits in the mid Ribble area and a separate five-year project that will enable us to work with 18 farms in the River Loud catchment to facilitate the improvement of the natural environment.

We will also be delivering [Pinpoint](#) training this year to environmental professionals to help them spread the water friendly farming message even further.

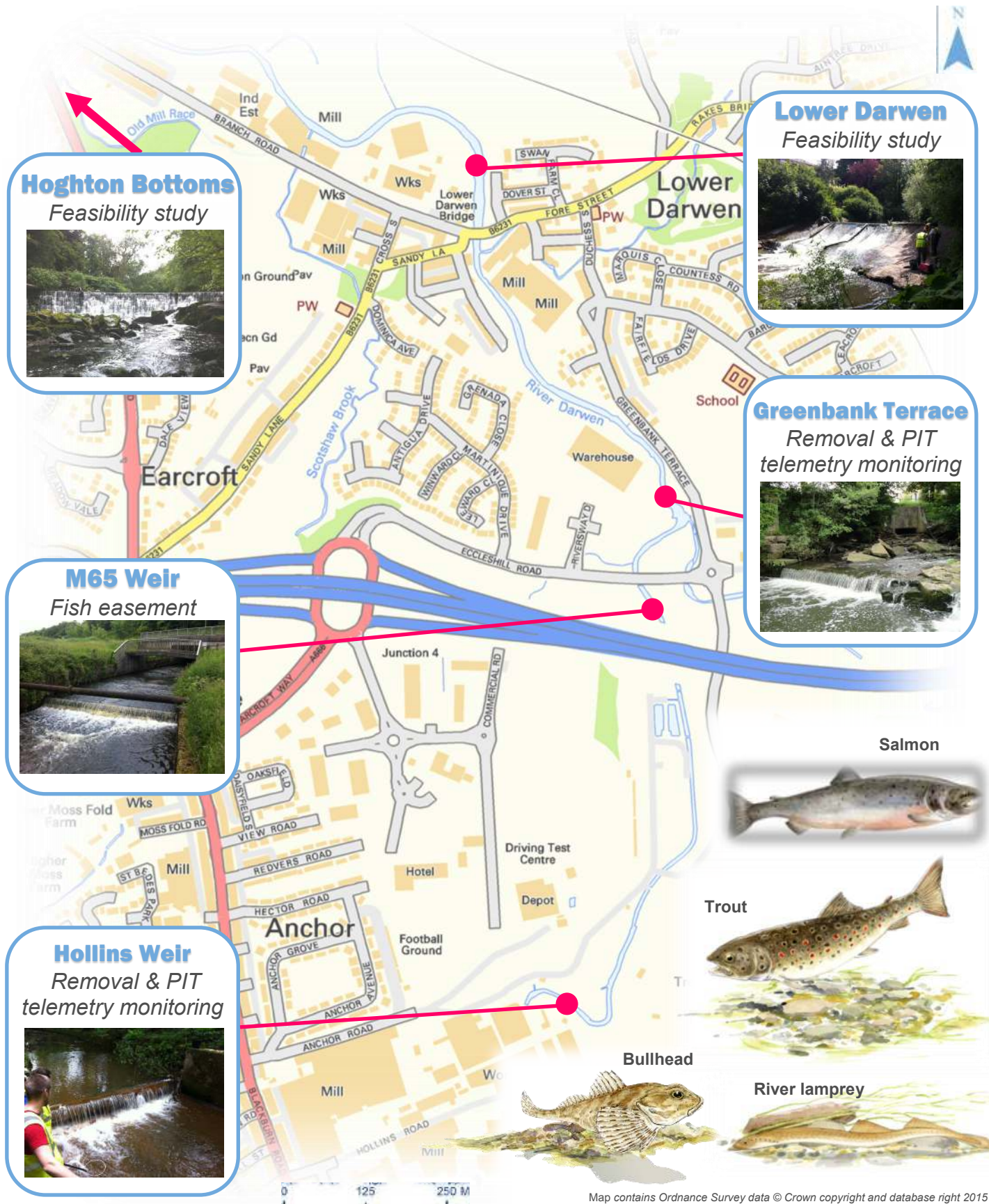
How can farmers improve their land management to benefit the water environment? Our handy guide has plenty of info, click the image below...





# Reconnecting the River Darwen

The River Darwen is second only to the Brun and Calder for modification and industrialisation. This year, we've turned our focus to improving fish passage on the Darwen following our mapping study back in 2011, which identified all 186 barriers to fish migration and prioritised them. Thanks to funding from the Environment Agency, we've been able to make a start on improving this river system for species such as salmon, trout, eels, chub, dace, bullhead, stone loach, brook lamprey.







Juvenile salmon (right) found in Colne Water in June, the offspring of adult salmon that made an epic journey from the North Atlantic, using 5 Ribble Trust fish passes to spawn in Colne! (Left - trout fry for comparison)

## Fish surveys

The summer survey season is in full swing and this year we have extra help in the form of our two Survey Assistants - Rosemary and Stephen, who are assisting Gareth, Mike & Paul, enabling us to have two survey teams out simultaneously. This has allowed us to collect more data than ever before, which we'll use as evidence to demonstrate the impact our projects have had, as well as the potential for future projects to improve river habitat quality and fish populations.

The surveys so far have turned up some incredibly exciting results, which are a testament to the functionality of the restoration techniques we've employed over the past few years. Salmon fry have been found in new locations in Colne Water and the River Calder for the first time in decades, meaning our weir and channel

modifications through the urban centers of Colne and Burnley allowed adult salmon to successfully pass through and go on to spawn. A sea trout has also been found moving up into Leagram Brook, where we've carried out extensive riparian fencing and tree planting, as well as replacing a pipe bridge with a clear-span bridge.

### Tracking Salmon on the Ribble

After 3 years, the study into salmon migration patterns in the Ribble Catchment has come to an end, dispelling many individuals' original theories. The study served its purpose in that we now have a more informed idea as to where to target our habitat improvements to improve survival rates of juveniles, but it left us asking even more questions, for example pondering the passability of seemingly insignificant in-river obstacles. [Read the full summary report here.](#)

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*Ribble Rivers Trust is the trading name of Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust Ltd.*



### Interested in volunteering?

Join our volunteer mailing list for regular updates about activities you can be involved in to help protect and restore our river environments.

Email [admin@ribbletrust.com](mailto:admin@ribbletrust.com) with your request to join the mailing list.




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*Thank you to all our existing members, volunteers and funders - you make it all possible!*



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