



## From the Team

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A huge welcome to the Spring 2022 Riverfly Partnership Newsletter. Since our last issue we have seen Covid restrictions be completely lifted and we are all once more able to get outside and enjoy all that nature has to offer. Storms this winter have caused widespread damage and disruption in various parts of the country, we hope that you our valued volunteers and your families managed to stay safe during those stormy times. We are absolutely thrilled that since our last newsletter and despite weather events and the continuing pandemic, you have all continued to monitor where you can.

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From July 2021- March 2022 you have:

- Uploaded **2350** records to the ARMI database
- Captured information from **641** different sites, from **292** rivers across **94** catchments
- Highlighted **79** trigger level breaches



In March, we were sad to say good-bye to Riverflies Partnership Coordinator, **Naomi Lumsden**. Naomi was a fantastically valuable member of the team with her enthusiasm for invertebrates and her knowledge of their place in our freshwaters and we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavour.

We are incredibly excited to welcome aboard **Trine Bregstein** to the Riverflies Team. She has a brilliant background consisting of a variety of roles that will render her an absolute asset to the role. Please enjoy a few words here from Trine herself: *'I'm very pleased to be joining Alex at the Riverfly Partnership and working at the FBA office on the shore of Windermere. Very excited to engage with the riverfly volunteer community, further my knowledge and work towards conserving valuable species and habitats.'*

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## New Website and Database being Developed Thanks to the Environment Agency

Long term partners and funders of the Riverfly Partnership, the Environment Agency has recently allocated resources especially for the development of a new Riverfly Partnership website and database. The new website is now live and features an updated look, with improved usability and graphics. The database will be developed with [Cartographer](#). A firmly established platform for data, with a focus on environmental projects. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Environment Agency. Their support and partnership over the years has shaped our methodology, provided funding, and given key expertise.

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## Westcountry CSI: Citizen Science Investigations

For the past 6 years, the Westcountry Rivers Trust have been embarking on a fantastic citizen science initiative for the sake of their local bodies of freshwater. Westcountry CSI (Citizen Science Investigations) is a growing community of citizen scientists with the same goal in mind; to lend a close eye to the goings on, both good and bad, within the rivers, streams, ponds and lakes of Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset.



▲ *Westcountry Rivers Trust has a fantastic CSI initiative*

Volunteers are provided with the training and data collection forms needed to provide concise and valuable surveys of the waterbody

they have been assigned within their location, making sampling accessible for each volunteer. This will also allow for Westcountry CSI to gain a broad scope of all 854 waterbodies in the Westcountry. The surveys aim to use both observational and water quality measurements in order to provide a clear picture of freshwater health. The reach that citizen scientists have is incredibly helpful in discovering more about the well-being of the habitats around them. In this initiative alone, there have been over 300 active samplers in the region, who have successfully taken over 3600 samples since 2020!

When a Westcountry CSI volunteer goes out into the field, they bring with them their CSI Water Quality test kit. This consists of a syringe, a turbidity tube, an insta-test Phosphate kit, a total dissolved solids (TSD) probe, and some hand sanitiser. With this equipment, they will be able to test the turbidity, phosphate level (in ppb), total dissolved solids (this measures the conductivity of the water and so increases with the increase in dissolved ions from both natural and anthropogenic source), and the temperature. These are all important elements of water quality, providing the database with a valuable scope of the health of the freshwater across the county.



Comparatively, the ARMI training and monitoring employs the power of citizen scientists in a very similar way to the Westcountry CSI. By providing you, our monitors, with training and supplementary material needed to identify the riverflies in your local waterbodies, we can obtain similar information concerning habitat health with a focus on invertebrates rather than direct water samples.

These two different citizen science projects both work towards a common goal; tracking changes in the freshwaters which can supply evidence for the employment preservation activities, pollution mitigation or other practices that progress eventual protection of freshwaters around the UK.

Involvement in Westcountry CSI is open to anyone located within the Westcountry. Signing up can be accomplished by emailing: [csi@wrt.org.uk](mailto:csi@wrt.org.uk). If you would like further information about the initiative, please visit <https://wrt.org.uk/westcountry-csi/>

▲ *Westcountry CSI sampler Lydia, completing her tests by the river*



## A Journey Through Time on the River Aire

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In order to accompany the fish pass that been built at Kirkstall Abbey in the Spring of 2020, the Aire Rivers Trust had planned a detailed exhibition about the history of the River Aire. However due to changes implemented for safety during the pandemic, the exhibition could not continue in person. As an alternate, Aire Rivers Trust brought the exhibition online making accessible to a wider audience.



This wonderful exhibit details the importance of fish passes to the presence of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) throughout the history of the River Aire. Using a cleverly detailed interactive webpage (which can be efficiently viewed in full screen), you can manually move through the timeline and follow a historical trail down the river.

Industrial activities, building of weirs, implementation of water treatment and the construction of fish passes are just some of the fascinating events that heavily effected the health and ecology of the river. Being accessible yet detailed with its information, it is a lovely read and one we would very much recommend to those interested in freshwater health. You can check out the exhibition here: <https://aireriverstrust.org.uk/online-exhibition/>

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**SAVE THE DATE!** Riverfly Conference 2023 which will be held in the Flett Theatre at the Natural History Museum, London, on Friday 17 March 2023. Further details will be announced in the next Newsletter and on the website.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT!** Richard Chadd Volunteer of the Year Award. Do you know an ARMI volunteer who deserves some recognition? Volunteers are asked to nominate an ARMI participant for this award, please state your reasons, within a 300 word limit. The winner of the award will be announced at the conference in March 2023. Submissions to [info@riverflies.org](mailto:info@riverflies.org) with the subject - Volunteer of the Year.

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### EA Triage Update

The Environment Agency is reviewing how it may respond to pollution events- especially category 3 and 4- as part of a new triage process . The EA receives over 100,000 incident reports a year, every one of which is recorded and assessed.

The Incident Triage project is looking at how best to use resources and maximise benefits for the environment. They will continue to attend the most serious incidents and concentrate efforts on regulatory activities which prevent incidents from happening in the first place. Intelligence from incident reporting helps the EA to plan and prioritise our work to protect the environment.

The value of Riverfly monitoring in the providing an early warning of a water quality problem or potential pollution has been recognised. The EA are looking at how this process is best incorporated into the new incident reporting arrangements. What is important is that trigger level breaches are received and reviewed by the local ecology experts.

As soon as the triage process is embedded new arrangements will be shared with Riverfly and the best way for volunteers to share results with the EA confirmed. If you wish to [report an environmental incident](#), you can do so by calling 0800 80 70 60 and please make a note of your EA incident number so you are able to follow up what actions are taken by the EA.

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