

WHY IS THE NATIONAL TRUST DIGGING A NEW STREAM CHANNEL NEXT TO THE RIVER WHARFE?

You may have seen the works being carried out between the river and the road just south of Buckden – and wondered what's going on!

These works are being paid for by the National Trust to enhance the condition of the River Wharfe system for its water quality (hydrology) and for the native plant and animal communities. It is part of a wider and longer-term project with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the National Park Authority to improve the condition and naturalness of the upper river system (as open meeting in the village hall in 2013) – with works only being carried out with the agreement of the relevant farmers (in this case in agreement with Garry Schofield).

Here, on Heber Farm, the objectives are twofold:

- Firstly to reconnect a small tributary stream to the main river to allow fish, insects and other animal and plant species to move between the main river and the inflowing tributary. This connection was broken, probably in the mid 1800s, when about a 70m section of the inflow was submerged into a stone culvert. This has now been by-passed to recreate a meandering stream channel.
- And secondly to remove about a 30m section of floodbank from the edge of the River Wharfe. The removal of this section of the floodbank will mean that water will back-up onto the adjacent land more quickly when the river is in spate but will also mean that it will drop more quickly when the river flow decreases again – and thus should not adversely affect the farming of the adjacent fields.

We'd be happy to hear any comments you may have and to answer any questions. Please contact Peter Welsh – peter.welsh@nationaltrust.org.uk or tel 01729 830 416