



# Restoring Europe's Rivers

## RESTORE Events: Reporting

### Restoring London's Rivers

**NLA, The Building Centre 26 Store Street, WC1E 6BT**

**Thursday 25 October 2012, 08:30-09:30**

LIFE 09INF/UK/000032

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## Event Details

The event took place on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and was billed as a 'breakfast talk'. It was held at the Building Centre in central London where New London Architecture (NLA) is based. .

NLA is the premier independent forum for debate about the future shape of the city and a permanent information resource about what's happening in architecture, planning, development and construction across the capital.

The breakfast talk was part of NLA's year-round programme to share knowledge, analyse policy, debate change and identify opportunities. NLA free breakfast talks regularly attract audiences of over 200 people, including a broad range of public and private sector professionals: planners, developers, property advisors, architects, consultants, engineers, policy makers and other industry experts, as well as students and members of the public with an interest in the topic.

The event was full to capacity with over 220 people attending. Altogether 350 people had registered their interest.

## Outline of event

NLA promoted the event as being sponsored by RESTORE.

Antonia Scarr (Project Manager gave a 15 minute Introduction to the event. Martin Janes (Managing Director, RRC) was part of the discussion panel at the end of the event.

The introduction set out the wider context for the talk by introducing the extent of London's river network, how far this network has been interrupted, buried and modified, and the benefits of river restoration for London. It also introduced RESTORE and its role in river restoration in the capital, alongside key partners. EU targets were discussed, and best practice case studies of river restoration in Europe were presented. This was set in the context of lessons that could be learnt for London by explaining the relevance of river restoration to the built environment community – what benefits can river restoration bring to areas of regeneration and exploring any evidence to show that it leads to value uplift. It also looked at the role do planners, developers, and practitioners have to play in delivering these river restoration projects. The talk finished with by showing how RESTORE is a repository of information about river restoration and the different methods it uses to do that: website, RiverWiki, handbook, networks and bulletins.

There were 3 other presentations from river restoration professionals: Mike Vaughan, Principal Engineer, Atkins, who spoke about the River Lea and the Olympic Park. Mehron Kirk, Landscape Architecture Director, BDP spoke about the River Ravensbourne, Ladywell Fields. A more light-hearted approach was taken by James Bowdidge, Chief Executive, The Property Merchant Group and Honorary Secretary, Tyburn Angling Society

## Key findings

The main participatory method at the event was through the 20 minute panel discussion following the presentations. The audience were eager to know about:

- Costs of river restoration: how is this to be funded, need for examples showing comparative costs of maintaining traditional structures versus river restoration.
- Wider issues of water quality and pollution
- Deculverting smaller rivers
- Sustainable drainage systems and the Thames super sewer
- Long term maintenance costs

## Attendance

220 people attended. Over 350 registered an interest. The list of attendees represented a cross-section of professions: architects, engineers, landscape architects, sustainable development, town planning, urban design, transport planning, research, management, law.

Architecture	49
Landscape architecture	24
Managers	18
Engineers	13
Urban planning	11
Town planning	7
Solicitor	3
GIS	1
Marketing	1

The rest of the audience was made up of researchers, directors, consultants, writers, students. It was not able to break down the list any further since the categories did not specify area of work.

## Support for restoration Practices

How did the Event Support river Restoration practices across Europe?

The event began with a question: do you think you should be involved in river restoration? About half the audience thought they should be. The question was intended to prompt the audience to widen their understanding of how river restoration can be accommodated in all developments, and is not dependent on either the size of budget or of the site. At the end of the event the question was asked again and the response was clearly more positive with around 80% of the audience saying yes. This should be seen in the context that not all of the audience are involved in development or design, but are interested observers.

The *Feedback* (below) includes the collated responses from the feedback forms for the event. We had about a 10% response rate to the forms which were offered as hard copies on the day of the event. We were not able to send electronic versions to participants since NLA do not offer this service. We found the response rate to be typical of such surveys in comparison to previous RESTORE events.

## Building on Network Capacity

The event was attended by a London based UK audience. It increased our profile within the architectural, design and planning professions which to date we have had limited success in reaching.

## Feedback

Monitoring forms were given to everyone attending the conference. We had 27 responses out of a potential audience of 220. This response rate is fairly typical and we are investigating other methods of increasing feedback from our audiences. We also noted that the feedback forms were overly long and contained questions not relevant to our audience, most of whom had not seen our website.

However, given the limited response rate we found the information provided on the forms useful for further development of our website and publicity purposes. The comments fell into the following categories:

### *Has our presentation given you a fuller understanding of the value of river restoration in London? If so, in what ways?*

Knew about projects but not the details

Breadth of project and vision

Interested to see what can be achieved as part of development

Opportunities for increasing human enjoyment, biodiversity and also place-making opportunities

Yes – the examples demonstrated opportunities in London especially in constrained areas

Yes – in terms of what is going on and challenges of implementation

Better understanding of scale of possible projects

Yes – Ladywell Fields and Olympics site

Technical consultation

Gave details about innovative projects

How work in Lewisham fits into the bigger picture

Yes – that there is a network of professionals working on such projects – and the opportunities (cultural, environmental) that river restoration provides

***Are there any issues about river restoration that you would like more information on?***

European/built environment solutions, socio-demographics and economy

Strategic overview

Tidal terracing/ecological enhancements

Phasing, timescale, adoption relating to maintenance and management issues

Bio-engineering techniques

Funding streams – and obtaining funding - funding

Pollution and quality of water

Challenges and solutions – stages from design to actual construction

Information on cycle paths

Constraints – response to biodiversity offsetting

Consultation, application processes

Costs

Maintenance costs – always raised by potential clients

EU funding evaluation

Post 2012 legacy

Role of London wide government, Assembly and Mayor

Urban drainage and rainwater

What if any guidelines do developers have to follow to accommodate and protect rivers in London?

***Are you willing to help disseminate information gained at the workshop and to what type of organisation?***

Within TE2100 database (3,000)

Generally via networks such as colleagues and team members

Through own blog

Yes – to own company via emails

Community groups, emails, networking and presentations (if supported with info)

With [www.connectedcities.Co.uk](http://www.connectedcities.Co.uk)

Architects Journal magazine

Planning Aid

Writing and teaching

Social networking

Interreg – River Corridor Improvement Plans project

To colleagues in river restoration (Regent's Canal project) and colleagues in Istanbul and Mauritius

***Can you recommend any good practice case studies for the River Wiki?***

Reculverting of R. Morelle (?), deculverting of R. Wandle, Wandle Valley Landscape partnership schemes

Wandle Trout project

***What else would you like to see on our River Restoration in Europe website?***

More advice on implementation issues

Details of any issues encountered with the projects i.e. obtaining planning permission and how this varies across European countries

More education and awareness, information on arts projects for community

Central Europe – where development is most required

Business case and benefits appraisal

How to estimate the number of visitor trips

Integrating cycling and walking into river restoration

***Can you recommend any good practice guidance or research?***

Estuary Edges, TE210

Water company and policy department @LLA

Global water partnership, SIWI (Stockholm International Water Partnership) WaterWiki (UNDP)

Joachim declerk's work on the urban masterplanning project in Istanbul – focusing on a waterway and nature

## **Feedback Outcomes**

The breakfast talk, in particular the audience discussion which formed an important element of the event, highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed by RESTORE.

- Currently there is a lack of information on costing of river restoration , particularly in relation to funding and maintenance
- There is a need to highlight smaller schemes that can be replicated at low cost to show audience that river restoration can start with the introduction of planting or removing hand landscaping.
- There is a need for a supportive and active community of practitioners in river restoration
- Need for projects/case studies at the smallest scale
- Need for better ways of getting feedback – e-forms instead of hard copies?
- Update the content of our monthly bulletin to reflect a wider more participatory audience

## **Dissemination of Event Outcomes**

How will any outcomes from the event be disseminated to a) Attendees, b) Other main target audience?

The event gave the audience the opportunity of listening to different aspects of river restoration: they were shown our communication tools (RESTORE website and Wiki) and were presented to consultants in restoration practice.

As a result of the event we will be writing an article on river restoration and maintenance costs for NLA magazine. This will also be offered to other press outlets in the identified sectors of planning, architecture, landscape design and engineering.

We have posted a news item on our website about the event and have also uploaded the presentations from NLA

<http://www.restorerivers.eu/NewsEvents/Pastevents/tabid/2763/Default.aspx>

A news item about the event with a link to the NLA website was sent out in our October 2012 e-bulletin.

An article about the event, written by NLA, appeared in the Winter issue of New London Quarterly (issue 13)

We are now using social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) more actively to engage our audience and create a community of practitioners

## Follow Up

What follow up will there be?

- Web dissemination

Information posted on RESTORE website

Information posted on NLA website

News item in RESTORE e-bulletin

- Notes to attendees

All people who expressed an interest in RESTORE by giving their email addresses will be contacted and invited to receive our monthly e-bulletin.

- News articles

NLA magazine article – we will publish an article in New London Architecture magazine on the topic of maintenance costs and river restoration which was the issue most closely questioned by the event audience. Our partners will be able to use the article format, substituting examples from their own countries, and use it in their own communications strategies.

- Follow up events

Follow up half day event at NLA (dependent on costs) with RRC on river restoration and maintenance costs.



Toni Scarr presenting at the NLA breakfast talk: photo by R. Hanniffy

