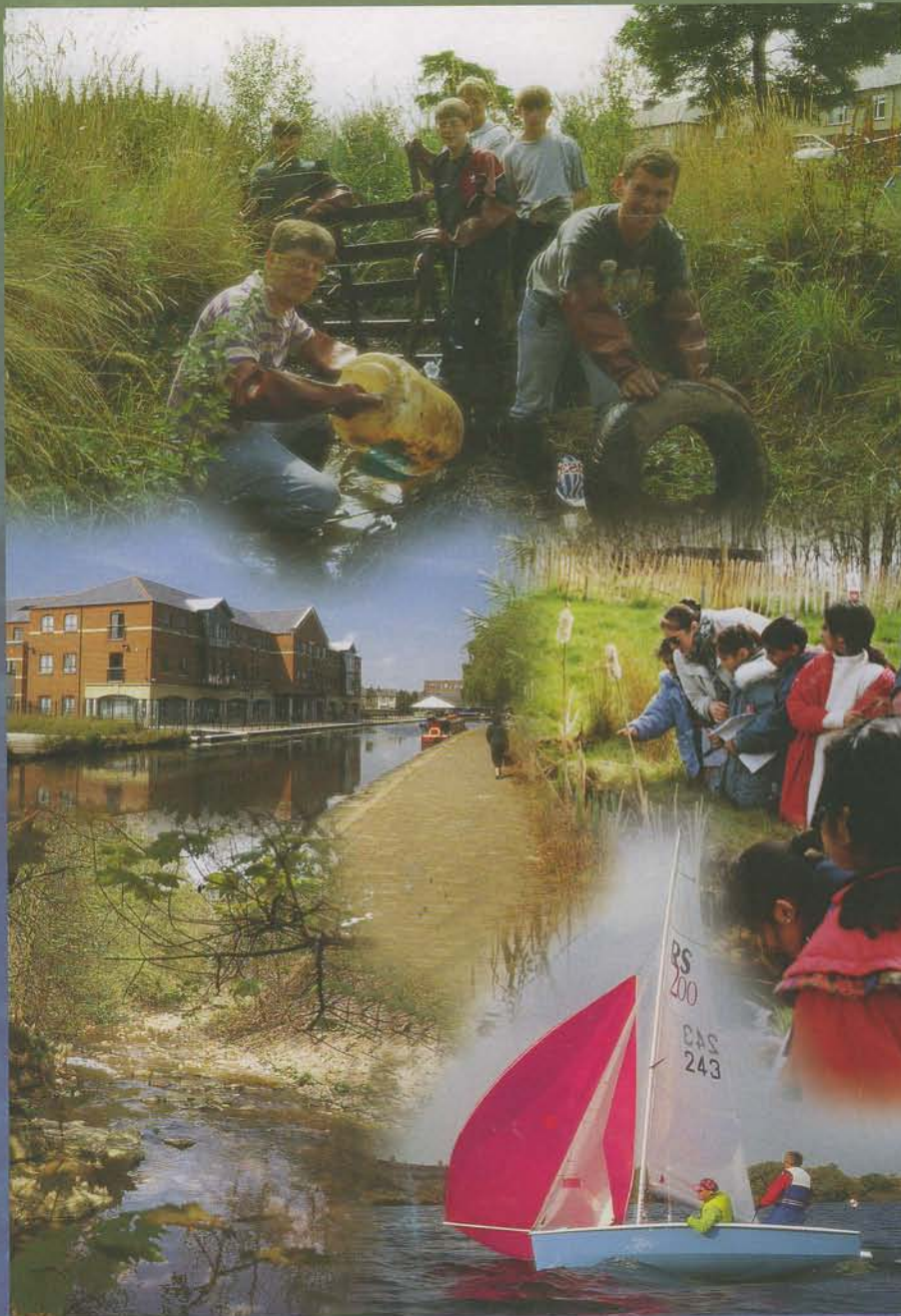




## Mersey Basin Campaign

Building a healthier economy  
through a cleaner environment





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## Preface



**Angela Eagle MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**  
**for Environment, Transport and the Regions**

I am delighted to have been asked to introduce this mid term report on the Mersey Basin Campaign. The Government is determined to keep environmental issues high on the agenda and I congratulate the Campaign and its partners on having done exactly that so successfully for so long. The Campaign is a model which I know a number of countries - including China, Japan, Brazil and Spain - have been to examine and from which they have much to learn. The region, and for that matter the UK, can be very proud of such environmental credentials.

The report is careful to stress that despite all that has been achieved the Mersey Basin Campaign is still only half way towards its targets. The same level of commitment and investment has to be maintained for the second half of its term if the grand prize of a regional environmental transformation is to be secured.

In those endeavours it has my full support.

*Angela Eagle*



## Foreword



**Marianne Neville-Rolfe**

*Regional Director*

*Government Office for the North West*

I am delighted to be able to add my congratulations to the successes of the Mersey Basin Campaign at this, the mid point in their 25 year work programme.

Tackling the legacy of the industrial revolution in the North West demands commitment, hard work, enthusiasm and original thinking to transform what was often a polluted and unhealthy environment into a green and pleasant place both to work and to live. The Mersey Basin Campaign has been leading in these efforts, focusing and stimulating the work of its many partners to improve the quality of the region's streams and rivers and contributing to overall environmental regeneration. Amazing progress has already been achieved. The work of the Campaign however continues to improve and care further for our environment. I know that they will continue to develop new and fresh ideas and to forge imaginative links to carry their successes into the new millennium. We in the Government Office remain eager to continue to work closely with the Campaign to help secure even bigger successes for the region's people, economy and environment.

*Marianne Neville Rolfe*



**Dennis Morrison**

*Regional Director*

*Government Office for Merseyside*

I am pleased to contribute to the Campaign's Mid Term Report, particularly since I have been struck by the progress since my return to Merseyside after 7 years absence. Not only is the Mersey much cleaner, there is a palpable sense of confidence in the many initiatives which the Campaign has fostered. From businesses seeking a commercial return to schools helping to clean up a local stream, there is a feeling that they can make an important contribution to revitalising Merseyside. There also appears to be a much stronger commitment to partnership within the region, a significant change in attitude to which the Mersey Basin Campaign has contributed greatly over the last few years.

The Government Office for Merseyside looks forward to working closely with the Campaign over the next phase of its development.

*Dennis Morrison*



## Overview



**Brian Alexander**  
*Campaign Chairman*

The Mersey Basin Campaign is approaching the mid-point of its 25 year partnership to clean-up the region's rivers, streams and canals, regenerate the adjoining land and change people's perceptions of their rivers - to see them as an opportunity not a problem.

Many of the improvements which are leading to the success of the Campaign are coming from investment by North West Water, the Environment Agency, local authorities and businesses.

However, within the Campaign one of the major areas where we can 'add value' to these water quality and waterside improvements is through our support for the voluntary sector - a support which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

Within the region, volunteer time and project support worth millions of pounds has been at work improving the region's watersides. Local people are getting involved in their watercourses through water sports and waterside recreation as well as clean-ups and improvement work. And voluntary sector involvement is growing all the time.

The Mersey Basin Campaign has played a major part in this. Through the Mersey Basin Trust we help local voluntary and community groups carry out practical projects through advice and funding. All of the Trust's projects are partly or completely supported by the Mersey Basin Business Foundation - representing the business partners in the Campaign.

River Valley Initiatives are a key Campaign initiative which provide a mechanism where people can really make a difference to their environment. River Valley Initiatives are partnerships which help local people focus the aims of the Campaign on a particular stretch of river.

The voluntary sector's contribution to the Campaign over the years has been essential for the long term success of the regeneration of our river valleys. Along with businesses, and local and national government, volunteers make an equal partner in the Campaign.

The Campaign, however, is now developing international links and the pioneering work to clean up the Mersey has been noted by other areas of the world battling with problems of pollution, a legacy of their, often outdated, industries.

Campaign representatives have spoken at conferences in Japan and Spain while the Campaign continues to develop links with China - hosting visits from delegations wanting to find out more about the water quality improvements and riverside regeneration carried out by the Campaign partners in the region.

As we look to the future the essential now is not to become complacent. The effort, commitment and investment that has brought us so far need to be maintained - and arguably increased. Only then can we continue to realise our ambitions and encourage others to do the same both nationally and internationally.

*B. Alexander*



# Introduction

*Dank and foul, dank and foul  
By the smoky town with its murky cowl  
Foul and dank, foul and dank  
By wharf and river and slimy bank  
Darker and darker the farther I go  
Baser and baser the richer I go.*

Charles Kingsley

Charles Kingsley knew the polluted rivers of northern England well and not all his writings were as idyllic as *The Water Babies*. The River Mersey and its tributaries have improved dramatically since the Mersey Basin Campaign was launched 12 years ago. In this mid-term report, we should on no account be complacent but at least Kingsley's poem is no longer relevant!

The initial aim of the Mersey Basin Campaign – improved water quality as the stimulation for landward regeneration – has proved to be both robust and productive. Investment programmes have resulted in the removal of most of the unsightly pollution and many formerly dangerous or unsightly waterside sites have been brought back into productive use.

The Campaign partnership however, can never rest on its laurels or afford to ignore the problems which remain, as the report which follows clearly illustrates.

## Origins of the Campaign

The Mersey Basin Campaign is the 25 year initiative to clean up the rivers, canals and estuary of the Mersey Basin and improve degraded land so that it is useful to the community. Formally launched by the Department of the Environment in 1985, the Campaign covers an area of 4,680 square kilometres and with some 2,000km of watercourses, it is one of the largest river basin projects in the world (Figure 1). At the inception of the Campaign, the Mersey Estuary was the most polluted in the UK, receiving up to 60% of the mainland pollution generated by industry and a population of over 5 million.

The Campaign has a unique remit to concentrate on rivers and canals whilst working with other partners with wider responsibilities. The Campaign's objectives are:

- to improve river quality to at least fair standard by the year 2010 so that all rivers and streams are clean enough to support fish;
- to stimulate the development of attractive waterside environments for businesses, housing, tourism, heritage, recreation and wildlife;

Figure 1: Mersey Basin Watercourses



- to encourage people living and working in the Mersey Basin to value and cherish their watercourses and waterfront environments.

## The First Periodic Report

In 1995, the First Periodic Report on the Campaign was published. This identified changes occurring in the Mersey Basin area and assessed the detailed impact of the Campaign during its first 8 years of operation. Achievements highlighted in the Report included:

- steady improvements in water quality in the Mersey Basin, with an overall gain of 75.5km in Class 1 (good) and Class 2 (fair) rivers;
- significant levels of investment in waterside development, including environmental improvement, conservation, housing, industry, tourism, recreation and education projects;
- the establishment of a range of education and community action grant schemes and the publication and distribution of a wide variety of Campaign publications aimed at schools and the general public.

## The Mid Term Report

This Report provides an assessment of the Campaign at the mid-point in its 25 year lifespan. First, it outlines the current organisational framework of the Campaign



which has evolved and been extended over the last four years. It then focuses on the importance of partnership in translating Campaign objectives into action on the ground and provides an overview of the activities of two of the key partners: the Environment Agency and North West Water. Progress in the three principal areas of Campaign activity: water quality, landward regeneration and education and awareness is then considered. Finally, the Report looks to the future and explores some of the issues and factors which are likely to shape the direction of the Campaign over the next twelve years.

### The New Environmental Context

In preparing the Mid Term Report it has been important to recognise the changing context within which the Campaign has operated since it was established in 1985. Of particular note has been the growing prominence of sustainable development and associated concerns related to biodiversity following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. These issues have increasingly influenced the form and direction of public sector activity at national, regional and sub-regional level, and the high profile of sustainability in the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (GONW/GOM, 1996) is tangible evidence of this. They have also become important determinants of private and voluntary sector activity. These developments have brought into sharper focus the value and relevance of the Mersey Basin Campaign to all sections of the North West community.

The three principal aspects of the Campaign's work – improved water quality, economic regeneration and community action – represent a significant step toward meeting the ambitious goals set at the Earth Summit. As this report shows, the Campaign can be seen to be at the hub of efforts to encourage and develop environmental, economic and social sustainability in the North West and thereby contribute to the enhancement of environmental quality and regional competitiveness (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Three 'Arms' of Sustainability



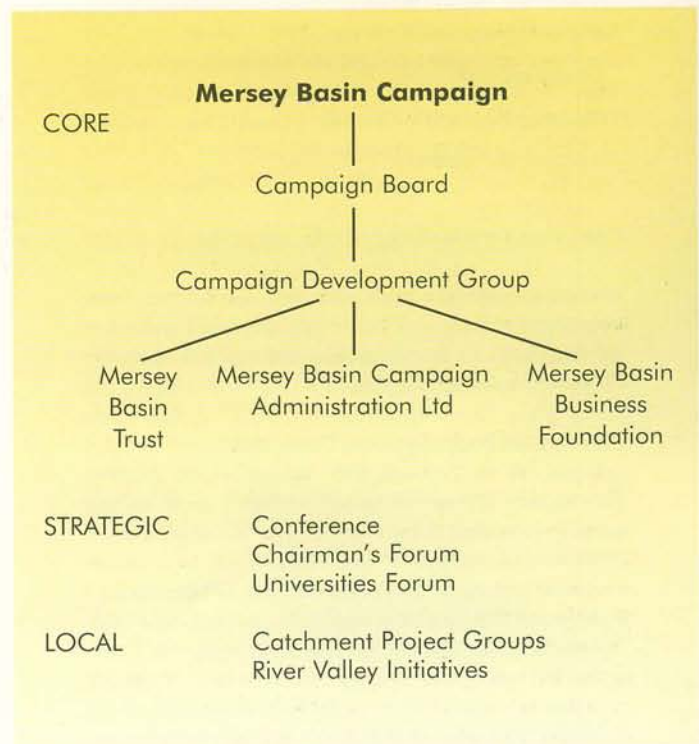
In this respect, the Campaign has been extremely successful in encouraging co-operative action to support its own specific sustainability aims. It is also a valuable partner and model for others developing sustainability action programmes more generally within the region. It is envisaged that sustainability will continue to provide the basis for the progression and evolution of the Campaign as it moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## THE CAMPAIGN TODAY

### The Campaign Structure

The Mersey Basin Campaign has evolved over the past twelve years as a focus for co-ordinated action related to the improvement and care of watercourses within its catchment. It brings together a wide range of organisations – public, private and voluntary – all individually concerned with the Campaign's objectives and provides a framework to develop more effective collective working. The formal structure of the Campaign has been developed to nurture this unique partnership and to reflect the diversity of experience and interests of the Campaign partners (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Mersey Basin Campaign Structure



At the heart of the Campaign are three core organisations: Mersey Basin Campaign Administration Ltd., the Mersey Basin Trust and the Mersey Basin Business Foundation.

Mersey Basin Campaign Administration Ltd. is a subsidiary company of the Business Foundation, and manages and promotes the Campaign's activities. It is grant aided by central government.

The Trust is a registered charity which supports voluntary groups undertaking environmental action.



The Trust also develops understanding and awareness through education and the dissemination of information about the water environment.

The Business Foundation serves as the link with the business community, acting as a conduit for sponsorship for the Campaign in general and specific themes within it, whilst injecting business thinking. All three are represented on a monthly Board under the Campaign Chairman (Figure 3).

### Key Campaign Activities

#### Waterside Care & Improvement

Stream Care      Waterside Revival  
Water Watch      ICI Green Action Grants

#### Water Quality

Mersey Measure

#### Education & Awareness

Water Detectives      Green Generation Grants

#### Business Links

Business & the Environment Awards  
Farming 2000      Water Management

#### River Valley Initiatives

#### Campaigner

#### Mersey Basin Weekend

#### Award Schemes

#### Campaign Development Group

Meeting twice a year, this Committee is concerned with strengthening a sense of ownership amongst the diverse representation in the Campaign and seeks to develop Campaign policy and action.

#### The Mersey Basin Business Foundation

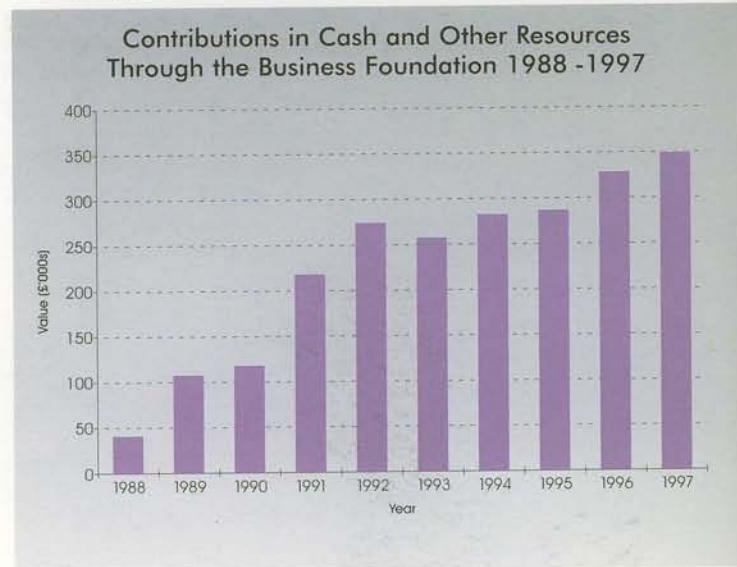
The Mersey Basin Business Foundation grew out of initial involvement in the Campaign by ICI (1987), Shell (1988) and Unilever (1989) and was formally launched as a separate arm of the Campaign in 1992. Its aims are to:

- help identify, fund and implement projects to a high standard;
- encourage greater participation in Campaign activities by all sectors of the Community;
- enable like-minded businesses to meet and discuss solutions to environmental problems; and put 'green' sponsorship for the Campaign on a business like basis.

The Business Foundation Membership currently stands at 19 with contributions for 1997/98 in cash and other resources standing at some £350,000. Figure 4 shows the steady and impressive growth in contributions since 1988.

The Business Foundation seeks to recruit new members each year and actively seeks a wide range of companies to align with involvement with specific

Figure 4:



projects. This allows the development of a sense of ownership and closely matches the range of schemes with available resources, both Campaign-wide and in specific areas. Thus the River Valley Initiatives for example are attracting support from businesses keen to secure environmental benefits in their locale.

#### Mersey Basin Business Foundation Members 1997:

Addleshaw Booth & Co.	Manchester Ship Canal
AEA Technology	Company
Associated Octel	Manweb
Bechtel Water Technology	NatWest
Brunner Mond	North West Water
Deloitte & Touche	Royal Bank of Scotland
ICI	Shell UK
ICL	Transco
Manchester Airport	Unilever
Pilkington	Vauxhall Motors Ltd.

#### The Mersey Basin Trust

Voluntary sector activity has always been a fundamental part of the Campaign, and the Trust was established to support and promote this activity. The Trust is the medium through which local communities can become involved with the Campaign, and play a central role in delivering Campaign objectives. The Trust's remit covers:

- the provision of support to voluntary sector and schools environmental projects through grant schemes, advice and other assistance as appropriate;
- facilitating private sector investment in Campaign projects and activities;
- involving new organisations with the Campaign;
- maintaining the media profile of the Campaign;
- supporting particular elements of Campaign activities such as River Valley Initiatives (RVIs).

Trust membership is either full (predominantly voluntary groups) or associate (mainly schools and small businesses) and has grown strongly over the past few years (Figure 5).



Figure 5:



Trust members include: wildlife groups, outdoor recreation interests, urban and rural heritage organisations, schools and educational groups, community organisations, canal and civic societies.

The Trust seeks to develop partnerships for environmental change at the local level through educational project support, networking, the dissemination of information and spreading good practice through seminars and workshops.

The Trust's work has become extended and strengthened through the establishment of RVIs using education initiatives, publicity, and the work of project officers who give advice and support to community groups.

#### Mersey Basin Conference

Sponsored by North West Water, the 5<sup>th</sup> Mersey Basin Conference was held in 1996. Some 200 delegates considered the themes of 'environmental progress', 'youth is our future', 'water and watersides' and 'continuing the Campaign'. The Conference gives the opportunity for individuals and groups from throughout the Campaign area to come together to review progress, announce major new initiatives and offer ideas for the development of Campaign objectives in the future. A promotional video, sponsored by the Environment Agency, illustrating Campaign achievements was launched at the Conference.

#### Chairman's Forum

A sense of ownership is strengthened in the 2 years between Conferences through the Chairman's Forum, an annual meeting of senior members of all the interests represented in the Campaign. While the Conference draws from the entire Campaign membership the Forum concentrates direct involvement at the highest levels of key Campaign partner organisations. At the Forum local councillors and senior management from Campaign organisations

receive presentations, discuss issues and, through participating in active workshops, present advice and perspectives on a wide range of Campaign matters.

#### Mersey Basin Universities Forum

The Universities Forum was established in 1995 as the 'fourth arm' of the Campaign's activities, its role being to identify opportunities for making the best use of the regional university resource. Encouraging collaboration within and between universities and the Campaign partners is a central part of this process. The Forum acts as a network through which technical and other information relating to the Campaign can be disseminated.

A baseline study was conducted in 1996 to 'assess the level of activity of universities in work relating to the objectives of the Mersey Basin Campaign, and to identify the potential for future involvement'. The study assesses current university activity; the place of the Campaign in the broader public policy framework; international initiatives; and funding opportunities for university-based studies of relevance to the Campaign. The Forum is designed to be mutually beneficial, with requests for research from the Campaign partners being complemented by suggestions for further work by the Universities. The Forum thus holds the potential to promote closer links between academic institutions in the North West, through more joint working and funding bids for example, and also acting as a source of student projects related to the Campaign.

#### International Links

Over the past few years, the Campaign has developed links with Japan, Spain, Brazil and various regions in China including Chengdu and Shanghai. The visiting delegations have met Campaign partners and visited sites such as areas of regeneration and wastewater treatment installations. The Campaign partners have advised the Chinese delegations in developing partnerships and techniques used within the Mersey Basin.

#### Catchment Project Groups

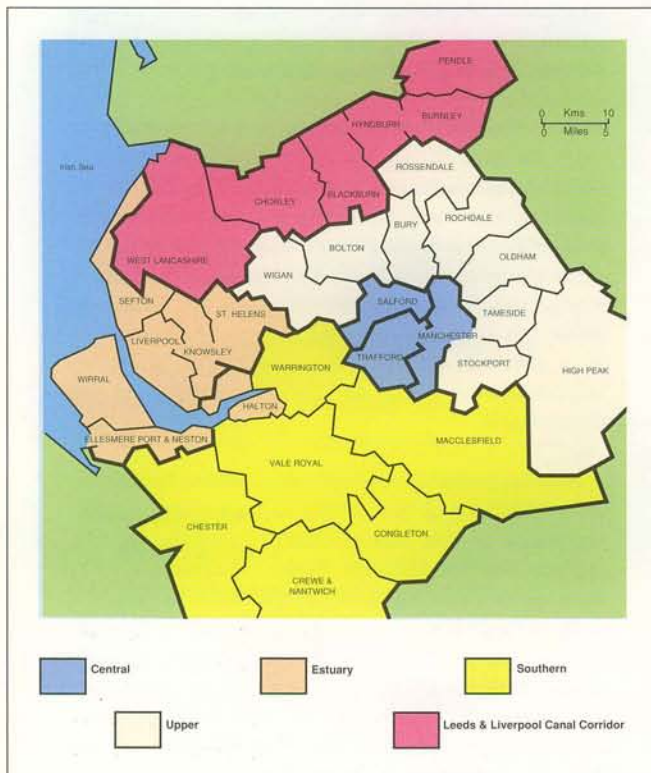
The Campaign area is split into 5 project groups (Figure 6). These are led by local authorities but bring together interests and expertise from public, private and voluntary sectors to address the specific needs of the catchment. Since 1993 these have been complemented by River Valley Initiatives which seek to address, in a more fine-grained fashion, the specific problems and opportunities associated with particular watercourses.

#### Mersey Estuary Management Plan

Strategic guidance for the future planning and management of the Mersey Estuary has recently been developed through the Mersey Estuary Management Plan, commissioned by the Mersey Basin Campaign.



Figure 6: Catchment Project Groups



The Plan provides an advisory framework which enables existing interests to be safeguarded, new development proposals evaluated and the full potential of the Estuary as a natural resource realised. The Plan, which was launched in February 1996, is based on 15 background reports and looks to four strategic objectives: estuary resources (including water quality and biodiversity), economic development (including urban regeneration and tourism), recreation and the development of understanding amongst the public along with the monitoring and review of actions. Over 30 official bodies have agreed a protocol pledging their intention to help implement the plan.

The implementation of the Management Plan represents the Mersey Basin Campaign in action, whereby the Campaign partners oversee and co-ordinate, through a forum and project groups, action on the plan and other complementary activities.

### River Valley Initiatives (RVIs)

The Campaign's use of partnership as a means of securing action at the local level is expressed in both its structure of Catchment Project Groups and, more recently through the establishment of River Valley Initiatives. The Project Groups enable groups of local authorities to work together and pursue common cross-boundary interests; RVIs build on this joint working, targeting specific watercourses, using a project officer to stimulate and maintain local involvement. RVIs form a direct link between the Campaign and the Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs) being published by the Environment Agency, and the Agency together with North West Water is represented on the Steering Group of each RVI. In addition to the Steering Group,

each RVI forms sub-groups to explore specific issues such as access and recreation and publicity.

Alt 2000, established in 1992, helped pioneer the RVI concept and the full programme was formally launched in 1993. Since then, the number of RVIs has grown to seven.

Figure 7: River Valley Initiatives

- River Alt (Alt 2000)
- River Beal (Beal Valley Partnership)
- River Bollin (Bollin RVI)
- River Darwen (Darwen RVI)
- Wirral (RiVa 2005)
- Sankey Brook (Sankey NOW)
- River Weaver (Weaver Valley Initiative)

A number of other potential RVIs are also under consideration, and the target is for at least 15 RVIs by the year 2000.

RVIs build on the existence of:

- clear problems and issues;
- a discrete geographical area with local identity;
- active (or latent) voluntary and private sector interest in owning the initiative;
- potential links between existing countryside management initiatives in the area; and
- the opportunity to lever funds from a range of sources including the private sector.

The objectives of each RVI differ according to the nature of the watercourse, its surrounding area and the perceived issues and opportunities. Typically, the RVIs aim to:

- increase awareness and opportunity;
- maintain and improve water quality;
- combat litter and debris in and around the river;
- increase use of the river and its environs as an educational resource;
- improve access;
- protect and improve nature conservation interests; and
- encourage public, private and community interests to participate in the protection and enhancement of the river.

The Weaver Valley Initiative in Cheshire, is an excellent example of the way in which long-standing initiatives associated with a river can be embraced and given new life. Building on a £4.5m Cheshire



County Council land reclamation programme centred on salt-related dereliction, the Weaver Valley Initiative has taken forward this stimulus to embrace nature conservation, landscape re-creation and the realisation of leisure and tourism potential.

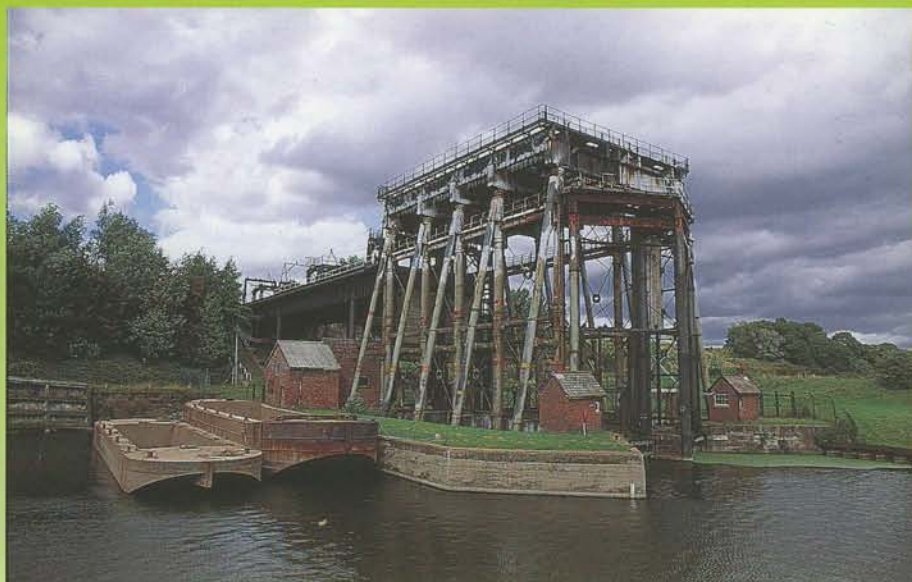
A 1989 corridor study undertaken by British Waterways, and commissioned by Vale Royal Borough Council, identifies a number of areas for activity along the length of the Weaver using the rich industrial heritage associated with the salt industry and its attractive landscape setting as the basis for the development of a linear park linked by a cycleway. This is being developed by Groundwork and will link into the network of cycleways in Cheshire and be part of the Sustrans network.

The reclamation programme centres on 230 acres between the Anderton Boat Lift and Wincham (see below) and 35 acres at Winsford. These areas are being extensively planted as part of the Mersey Forest and the aim is to create a new landscape setting for the Valley's industrial heritage.

The Weaver Valley Initiative has embraced activity at a variety of scales, from large land reclamation and tree planting to local voluntary activity such as Owley Wood in Weaverham, Furey Wood, Northwich (a site donated by ICI Chemicals) and Beechmill Wood, Bradley, carrying out programmes of woodland management, footpath maintenance and tree planting helped by grants from the Campaign through the Stream Care scheme, managed in the Mersey Basin Trust.

RVIs differ from established river valley management projects (such as those in Greater Manchester) in that they are not targeted solely at countryside management, access and recreation and environmental improvement. They can cover economic development for example and can build on existing initiatives or reinvigorate latent interest. Their strength exists in the carrying forward of Campaign objectives at the local level, and tapping into sources of finance, such as private business, creating a sense of local ownership. The RVI concept enables an early assessment of the problems and opportunities in an area, and sets goals and targets to meet local needs whilst retaining a broader perspective. A position statement or baseline study has now been completed for many of the RVIs.

New RVIs are core-funded by the Mersey Basin Campaign, the Environment Agency and North West Water and both the Mersey Basin Trust and the Mersey Basin Business Foundation are involved in establishing and developing the RVI programme. The Business Foundation seeks sponsorship from private businesses for specific RVIs; for example, Pilkington sponsors the Sankey RVI, Associated Octel and Vauxhall sponsor RiVa 2005, and Brunner Mond sponsors the Weaver Valley Initiative. The Trust through Campaign grant schemes encourages the development of local action in partnership with local authorities and Groundwork for example.



*The Anderton Boat Lift*

#### **The Anderton Boat Lift and Anderton Nature Park**

The Anderton Boat Lift was constructed in 1875 as a link between the Weaver Navigation and the Trent & Mersey Canal to transport salt and coal for the area's burgeoning chemical industry. Rebuilt in 1908 after corrosion of the hydraulics system which powered the Lift it continued in operation, transporting commercial and then leisure traffic until closure in 1983 because of severe corrosion. The Lift is now the centrepiece of an £11m bid to the Millennium Commission by British Waterways and the

'Friends of Anderton Lift' for its restoration, landscaping of the area and the creation of a visitor centre.

The Lift is adjacent to the Anderton Nature Park which runs alongside the River Weaver. Using over £1/2m of Derelict Land Grant, this site has been created on 19 hectares reclaimed from the dumping of industrial waste and subsidence caused by salt extraction. As part of the Mersey Forest, the Nature Park is being managed to provide a diverse habitat of woodland, grassland and wetland, along with extensive public access to enable its enjoyment.



## Partnerships for change

*Achieving the ambitious goals set for the Mersey Basin Campaign rests on the active involvement of a variety of organisations: public, private and voluntary. Notable amongst these are the Countryside Commission, English Nature, the Community Forests, Local Authorities, Groundwork and the Development Corporations. However, the activities of two partners are of particular importance in providing expertise, enthusiasm and expenditure: the Environment Agency and North West Water. Together, these have proved to be a powerful combination. An understanding of the operation and involvement of these organisations is important before consideration is given to progress in relation to each of the Campaign's objectives.*

### The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency was formed in 1996 combining the responsibilities of the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution and the Waste Regulation Authorities. The Agency's principal aim is to "protect or enhance the environment as a whole, in order to play its part in attaining the objective of sustainable development" (Environment Act, 1995). In particular, the Agency is required to:

- take a holistic approach to the protection and enhancement of the environment;
- take a long-term perspective;
- maintain biodiversity by exercising its statutory obligation with respect to conservation;
- discharge its regulatory functions in partnerships with business in ways which maximise the scope for cost-effective investment in improved technologies and management techniques;
- develop close and responsive relationships with the public, local authorities and other representatives of local communities and regulated organisations;
- provide high quality information and advice on the environment.

Central to the Environment Agency's approach is integrated environmental management and planning. This recognises the importance of the interactive nature of environmental processes, and the need to use a cyclical process of setting standards and targets for environmental quality, engaging appropriate mechanisms for the delivery of those targets, and subsequent monitoring and review.

### Catchment Management Plans (CMPs)/Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs)

The Catchment Management Plan process embodies this approach. Initiated by the National Rivers Authority, CMPs (now being superseded by LEAPs which address wider environmental concerns relating to land, air and water) assess and prioritise environmental management needs. The approach has evolved as a vehicle for establishing an integrated, multi-functional approach to managing the water environment. Centrally, the approach is one rooted in partnership, open to consultation, an annual review of objectives and a full review of the plan every five years. The LEAPs are in two parts: a broad strategy

statement looking five years ahead and an action plan looking one year ahead. They identify issues, actions, responsibilities, costs and a timescale for action. Typical issues include:

- impacts of contaminated surface water discharges on surface water quality;
- impact from sewerage overflows on surface water quality;
- impact of discharges from wastewater treatment works on surface water;
- impacts from industrial sources on surface water;
- culverts causing flood risk, poor water quality and loss of habitat;
- litter and illegal fly-tipping into water courses creating maintenance and amenity problems;
- poor access to water courses for maintenance works and recreational activities;
- lack of water-associated recreational and amenity sites; and
- intensive cultivation of land to the edge of watercourses increasing the risk of pollution and loss of habitats.

The Agency works closely with the Campaign particularly through the River Valley Initiatives and these are closely integrated into the LEAP process (Figure 8).

It is expected that by 1999, 10 LEAPs will have been produced for the Campaign area.

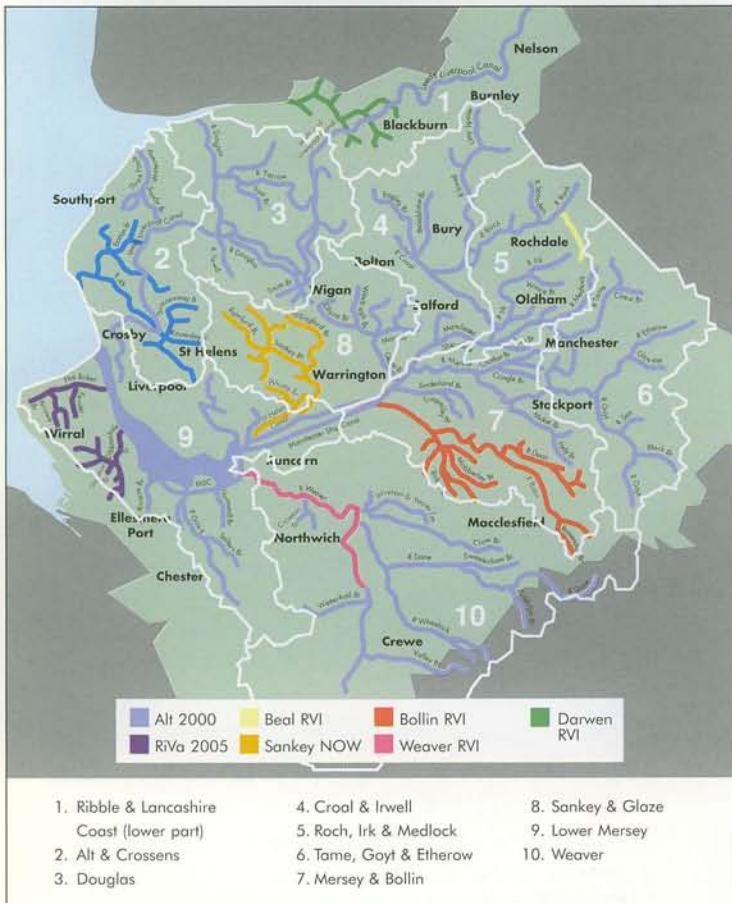
### North West Water

The improvements in river water quality achieved over the past years have, to a large degree, been the direct result of investment by North West Water in sewage treatment and the sewerage network. This investment, which amounted to some £550m in the 1980s, accelerated following the launch of the Mersey Basin Campaign in 1985. Since privatisation in 1989, more than £700m has been spent on over 800 sewerage and sewage treatment projects within the Basin and further significant work will be completed by the Year 2000. Over the 25 year period 1985 - 2010, the water quality investment programme is expected to total some £2.5bn.

The investment programme itself is built upon the day to day need to provide, maintain and improve the large and complex water and wastewater systems in the North



Figure 8: LEAP Boundaries and RVIs



West. Improvements to these systems have been undertaken because of the requirement to meet statutory quality standards as defined in a series of European Directives and to improve the state of the Basin's watercourses, notably the Mersey Estuary, specifically targeted for improvement through the Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme.

Since privatisation, investment programmes have been agreed with water regulator OFWAT based upon detailed Asset Management Plans (AMP) developed by North West Water.

Figure 9: The National Environmental Programme - Works & Impact

Wastewater Treatment Works	Impact
Davyhulme	MEPAS
Warrington	MEPAS
Widnes	MEPAS
Hillhouse	Alt
Fazakerley	Alt
Ainsdale	Alt
Oldham	Irk
Royton	Irk
Chorley	Yarrow
Failsworth	Medlock
Macclesfield	Bollin
Worsley	Astley Brook

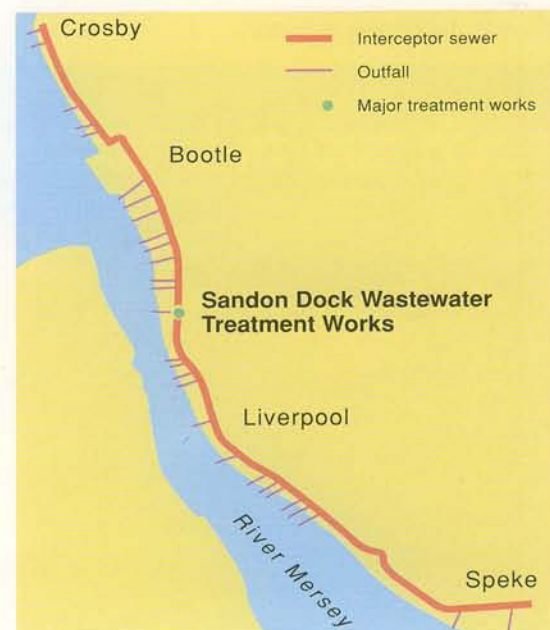
Programme implementation is in five year periods: 1990 - 95 (AMP1) and 1995 - 2000 (AMP2). The ongoing AMP2 programme includes substantial investment to meet the requirements of the EC Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive particularly in addressing the problems of unsatisfactory combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Some 170 CSO problems in the Mersey Basin will be resolved in the period 1995 - 2000. In addition, under the National Environment Programme, up to £130m (of £500m nationally) is to be spent on improving a number of key wastewater treatment works to address particular water quality problems (Figure 9).

### Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme (MEPAS)

A significant proportion of North West Water investment has been specifically directed towards the Mersey Estuary. Started in 1981 and now in its final stages, MEPAS has consisted of a series of projects costing some £300m necessary to meet the twin objectives of the alleviation of aesthetic problems associated with the discharge of untreated waste water and ensuring that a minimum of 10% saturation dissolved oxygen is present in the water column at all times.

Key elements of the scheme have been the provision or expansion of sewage treatment works on both banks of the Estuary and the interception of untreated outfalls by new sewers serving the treatment works. The most notable example is Liverpool, where the construction of a £170m, 28km interceptor sewer gathering waste from 28 former outfalls has substantially been completed. Flows are now diverted to a new £50m currently primary treatment works located at the former Sandon Dock site.

Figure 10: MEPAS: The Mersey Interceptor Sewer



MEPAS has significantly contributed to the improved condition of the Estuary and the increasing numbers and variety of wildlife. Further improvement by the year 2000 will occur due to a) the completion of



Artist's impression of the completed Sandon Dock Wastewater Treatment Works.



ongoing projects at Davyhulme and Warrington wastewater treatment works which are designed to reduce ammonia inputs which detrimentally affect dissolved oxygen levels in the Estuary and b) the provision of secondary, biological treatment at Liverpool, Birkenhead and Bromborough to meet the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive.

**River Water Quality Benefits**

In addition to improvements to the Mersey Estuary, substantial progress has been made on many inland catchments as a result of North West Water investment. In total, in excess of 150km of watercourse have benefited from investment since 1985. Specific examples over the period 1985 - 1995 have been:

<b>Watercourse</b>	<b>Location</b>
River Irwell	Ramsbottom to Bury
River Tame	Stalybridge to Stockport
River Goyt	Whaley Bridge
River Bollin	Macclesfield
River Medlock	Oldham to Manchester
Folly Brook	Swinton
River Croal	Bolton
Bradshaw Brook	Bolton
River Roch	Rochdale to Bury
Westleigh Brook	Westhoughton
River Glaze	Leigh
Prescot Brook	Prescot
Black Brook	Chapel-en-le-Frith
Mobberley Brook	Alderley Edge
Birkin Brook	Knutsford

**Conclusions**

Up to the year 2000, investment is committed to meet statutory requirements such as the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and to complete the National Environment Programme.

To meet Campaign objectives by 2010, it will be essential that funding is available post 2000 to tackle the substantial number of remaining unsatisfactory Combined Sewer Overflows and wastewater treatment works where higher standards will be needed to meet river water quality objectives. The funding issue must be addressed in the next pricing review, AMP3.



# Water Quality

The success of the Mersey Basin Campaign can be measured in many ways, but the main thrust has had to be the major improvement in water quality. The First Periodic Report revealed steady progress towards meeting this ambitious goal as a direct result of North West Water's immense capital investment programme. As the Campaign reaches its midpoint an assessment of recent progress must recognise the current context for water quality improvement which critically includes a revised water quality classification scheme.

The Campaign's originally established water quality objective is to improve the quality of all watercourses by the year 2010 to at least Class 2, 'fair' standard so that they are able to support fish. The old NWC (National Water Council) scheme based on a professional judgement of quality using a variety of indicators has now been superseded by the General Quality Assessment (GQA) system. Figure 11 shows the comparison between the two. The Campaign's objective for water quality now translates into achieving GQA Grade D or better. This system is used to determine river water quality through measures of chemistry, biology, aesthetics and nutrients. The latter two indicators are in the process of being established; to date chemistry and biology are the only elements which are fully monitored in all watercourses.

Building the chemical profile of river water quality typically involves measuring dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand and ammonia (NH<sub>4</sub>) levels, the latter two being key indicators of pollution.

Figure 11: The NWC & GQA Classification

NWC Class	GQA Grade	Description	Indicator Species
1a	A	water of very good quality (suitable for all fish species)	trout, salmon, stonefly larvae, mayfly larvae
1b	B	water of good quality (suitable for all fish species)	as above
2	C	water of fair quality (suitable for high class coarse fish populations)	dragonfly larvae, caddis fly larvae
2	D	water of fair quality (suitable for coarse fish populations)	water hog louse, horse leech, daphnia (water fleas)
3	E	water of poor quality (likely to limit coarse fish populations)	fewer hog lice, low populations of leeches and fleas
4	F	water of bad quality (in which fish are unlikely to be present)	fish absent because of lack of food. Only blood worms present in the worst quality water



Everything you expect and more for around 58p\* a day.

\*The average domestic household cost for water and wastewater services is 55p a day.

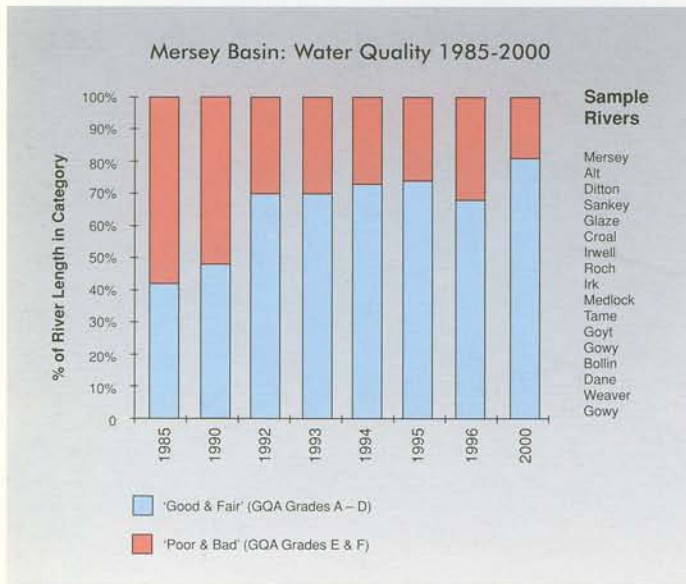


Facing up to the future

North West Water's 1997 advertising campaign highlighted the company's commitment to water quality improvements



Figure 12

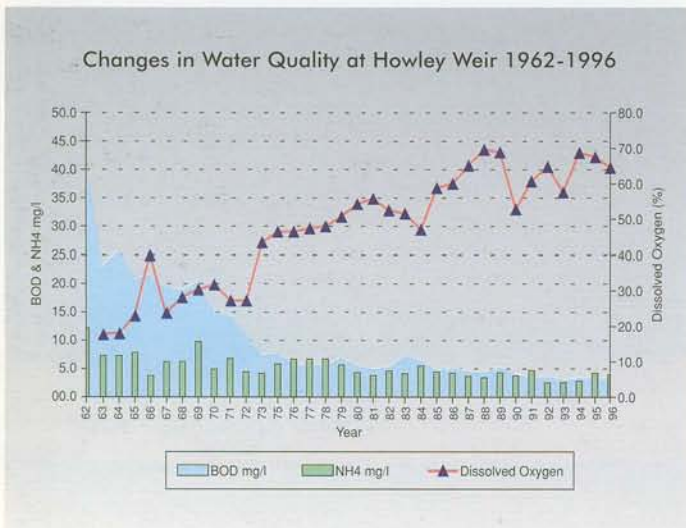


### Results of Water Quality Monitoring in the Mersey Basin

Figure 12 shows the results of water quality monitoring of rivers in the Mersey Basin over the years 1985 - 1996 with a projection for the Year 2000. Despite a recent fall in overall water quality (due to general climatic conditions and natural variation between years), there has been a steady increase in the proportion of the length of watercourses classed as 'good' and 'fair' over this period and a commensurate fall in the proportion of 'poor' and 'bad', reflecting the significant investments made by North West Water during the late 1980s and early 1990s along with improved farming practices reducing agricultural pollution.

Figure 13 shows the progressive improvement in the key indicators of Dissolved Oxygen, Biochemical Oxygen Demand and ammonia at a key sampling point in the Mersey Basin: Howley Weir, Warrington.

Figure 13



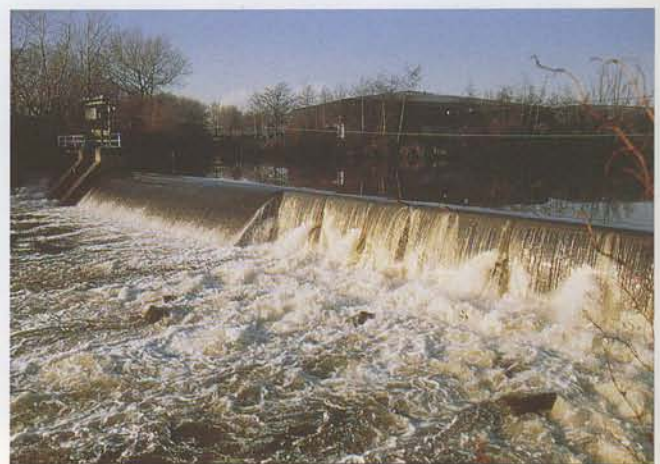
### The Mersey Measure

The complexity of monitoring changes in water quality and the wide variety of influential factors called for the development of a more sensitive means of measuring changes in water quality. The Mersey Measure developed by ICL and the Environment Agency is the response. The Measure uses 8 determinants: dissolved oxygen, ammoniacal nitrogen, BOD, suspended solids, nitrates, pH, temperature and chlorides, and integrates these into a continuous index of water quality ranging from 10 (poor) to 100 (good) (Figure 14).

In all, 19 sampling points are used by the measure and Figures 15, 16, 17 & 18 show the encouraging results for four of these: the Medlock, Roch, Glaze and Mersey. These are some of the more significant improvements in the Mersey Basin, illustrating, in case of the Medlock, Roch and Glaze, the impact of improved wastewater treatment works coming into use in the early 1990s. The link between investment and improved water quality is not always so readily apparent, however, and investment must be maintained to secure long term benefits.

Figure 14: Mersey Measure Water Quality Index Classification

WQI Class	Range	Interpretation
I	71 - 100	Water of high quality suitable for game fisheries and high quality industrial abstraction
II	51 - 70	Water of reasonable quality suitable for good coarse fisheries, indirect contact sports such as canoeing and most industrial abstraction
III	31 - 50	Polluted water with generally moderate value uses including indirect contact sports and reasonable to sporadic coarse fish population
IV	10 - 30	Badly polluted water of low economic value requiring substantial investment in treatment facilities. Use generally restricted to non-contact recreation, sewage transport and navigation



Howley Weir



Figure 15

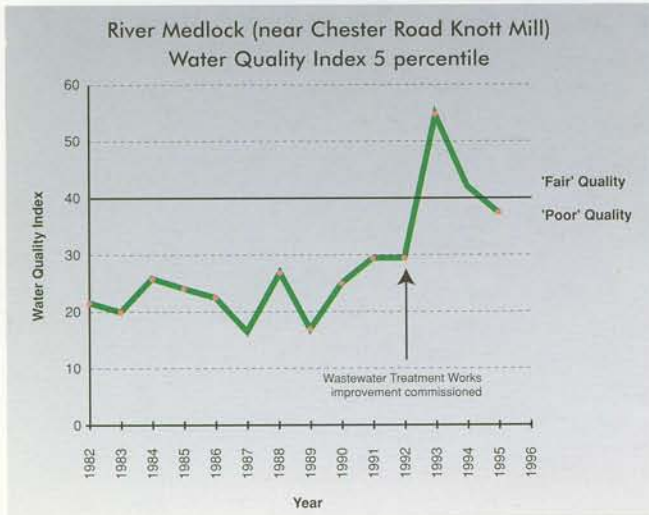


Figure 16

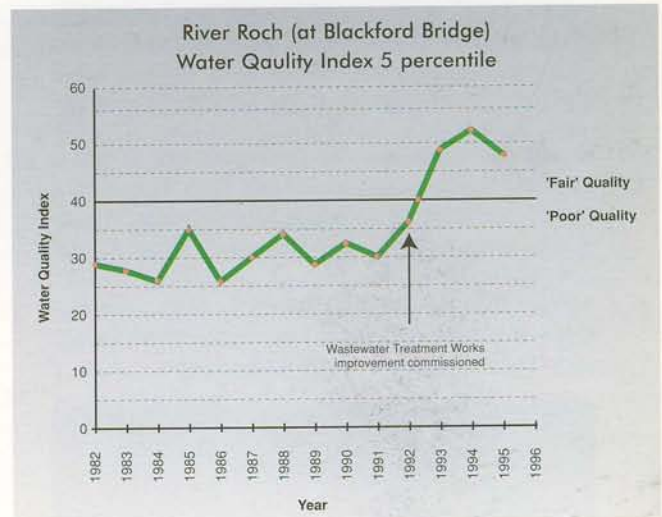


Figure 17

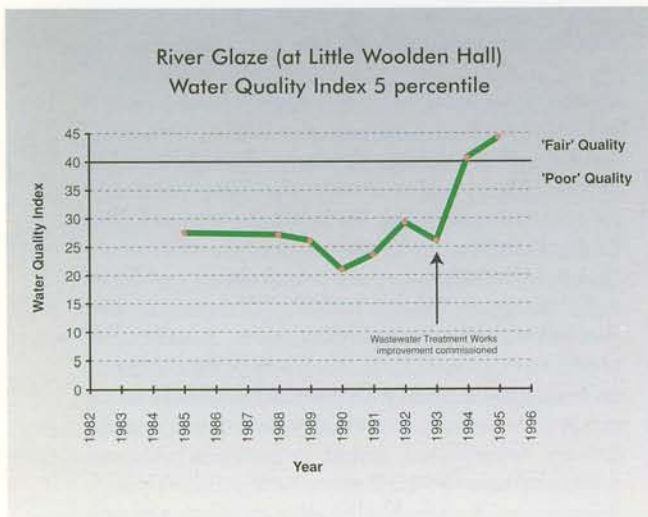
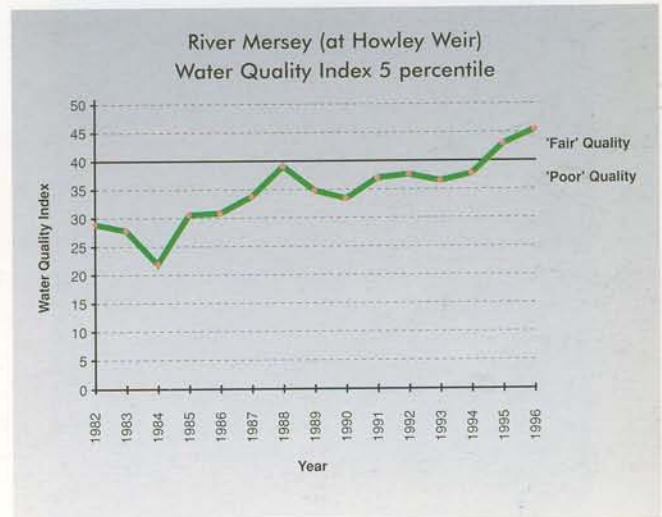


Figure 18

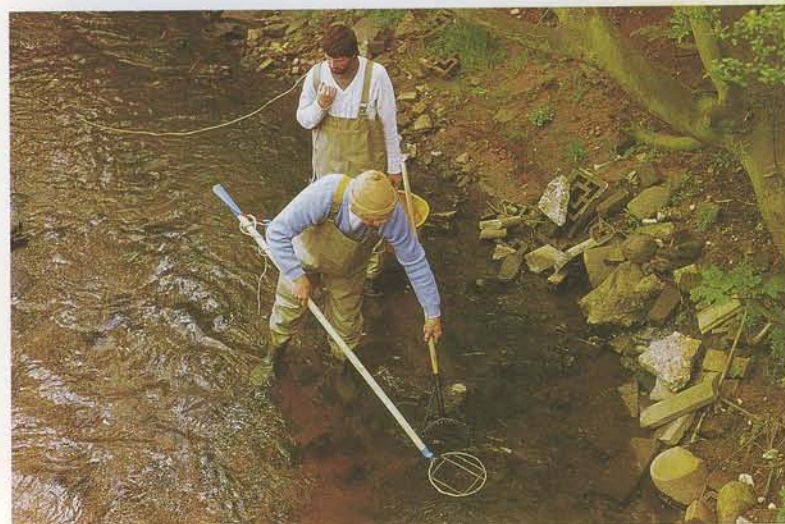


### Wildlife & Water Quality

A core objective of the Campaign is that in time all watercourses become clean enough to support fish. Given the history and persistence of pollution in the Mersey Basin river systems, this is an ambitious task and particularly difficult for the more sensitive salmonids (trout and salmon). The return of fish, in both abundance and species diversity, is particularly important for a range of other predator species such as kingfisher and the once common otter. Some 21 river catchments are periodically surveyed in the Mersey Basin, totalling some 219 individual watercourses. Almost 80% of these contain fish of some kind, and around 34% support brown trout. However, the population, health and species diversity does vary considerably between watercourses. Nevertheless the relative abundance of brown trout, a species which demands high quality water is heartening.

As part of the Agenda 21 process relating to the quality of water courses, Cheshire County Council has set the target of increasing the population of five 'indicator' species: brown trout, otter, frog, kingfisher and water vole. Information on some species is better than others;

two of these species, the kingfisher and otter, are particularly sensitive to the quality of water, habitat and abundance of fish.



Electrofishing Survey - to check fish numbers.



In 1995, the Mersey Basin Campaign carried out a survey of Kingfisher and Dragonflies/Damselflies using sightings from members of the public. Between May and September there were some 704 kingfisher sightings widely spread throughout the Campaign area. Further study over the next five years will help to fill out the picture of their numbers, location and breeding success, given that cold winters can have a great effect on resident populations. There were some 3,990 sightings of dragonflies/damselflies over the survey period of the 27 species resident in the Campaign area, ranging from the very common and widespread brown hawker to the rare and localised emperor.



*Kingfisher sightings are evidence of cleaner river water*

A species which has attracted particular attention is the once common otter. Up to the 1950s, otters could be found on the Wirral, and the Rivers Gowy, Weaver, Etherow, Dane and Goyt (Butterill, 1995 p.10). The decline in otter numbers is strongly related to a combination of pollution and habitat removal (Butterill, 1995), though disturbance and mortality through road accidents are influential. A survey of 88 sites in 1995 revealed traces of activity on the Dane, and Weaver giving hope that recolonisation from surrounding counties such as Staffordshire and Shropshire will take place. The 1995 survey also assessed the suitability of rivers for otters, and found that in general the upper reaches of the Gowy, Weaver, Dane, Goyt, Etherow and Bollin were suitable for recolonisation, based on factors of water quality, fish stocks, potential holt sites, cover and degree of disturbance. A combination of further water quality improvement and habitat creation would be most beneficial to the wider re-establishment of the secretive otter and the 3 year Cheshire Otter Project funded by the Environment Agency and Worldwide Fund for Nature and carried out by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust is helping to promote this.

Cheshire is one of the lead authorities in producing a biodiversity audit in line with the demands of Agenda 21. Many of the plants and animals identified as being of priority for attention through Local Biodiversity Action Plans have water habitats; these include the otter, water vole, black-necked grebe, the shad, great crested newt, natterjack toad, lesser silver water beetle, white-faced darter, white-clawed crayfish, the river water crowfoot, and the black poplar.



*Opportunities of fishing increase as water quality improves*

### **The Mersey Estuary**

The Mersey Estuary carries a double burden: first it is the location for a variety of polluting industries, and second it is the focal point for the river systems of the Mersey Basin and as such inevitably concentrates problems derived elsewhere in the Basin. Pollution problems are compounded by the configuration of the Estuary which is narrow-necked and although the Estuary is tidal, water is not readily flushed out into Liverpool Bay. Water can take up to a month to pass out of the Estuary meaning that damaging discharges readily accumulate. The result is that water quality is generally poor throughout the Estuary. Nevertheless, despite its pollution problems, substantial areas of the Estuary have statutory nature conservation designation as sites of local, national and international importance.

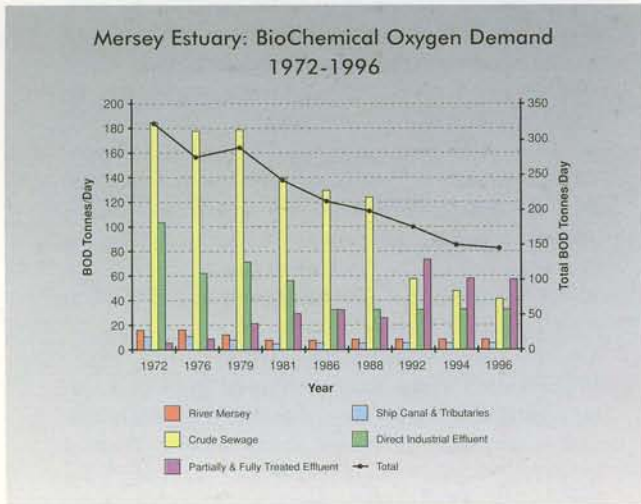
There has been a significant improvement in the water quality of the Estuary over the past 15 years. Figure 20 shows the progressive reduction in Biochemical Oxygen Demand load in the Estuary in total and from various inputs. Notable are the reduction by two thirds in crude sewage inputs and the 50% fall in industrial effluent. The Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme (see p. 13) has had a significant impact on water quality.

### **Heavy Metals**

The Mersey Estuary was the focus for the industrialisation of the North West of which the development of the chemical industry was the precursor to the petrochemicals industry of today which dominate the Estuary skyline. Inevitably, the levels of toxic discharges effectively banished aquatic life from much of the Estuary, though these are much reduced from their high point in the 1930s and 1940s. The challenge remains to address the remaining problems and continuing mercury inputs is one of these from the chlor-alkali plants at Runcorn and Ellesmere Port. During the mid 1970s inputs stood at around 60 tonnes per annum. As a result of improvements in effluent

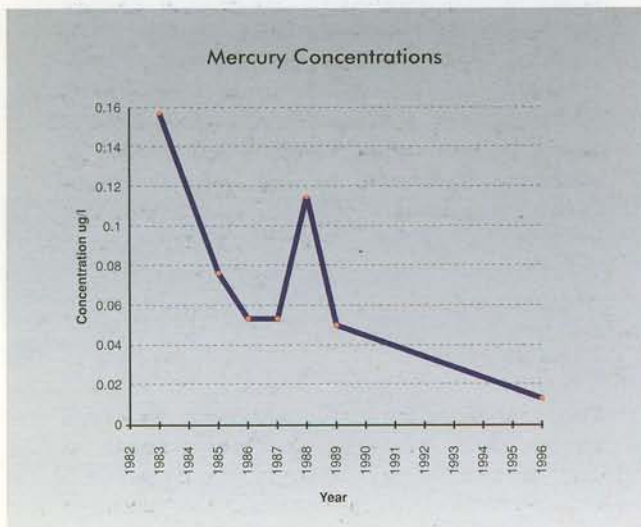


Figure 20



treatment and new production techniques these are now down to around 1 tonne per annum, reflected in the declining concentration of Mercury in water (Figure 21). Whilst the direct inputs of heavy metals into the Estuary have declined significantly over the last 50 years, their legacy remains in sedimentary deposits and consequently in the fatty tissues of some long-lived species such as eels which feed in this zone. A 1992 study of some 800 eels and flounder found that levels of mercury and lead exceeded recommended levels, but levels of cadmium, copper, chromium and zinc are typical of those levels found in other UK estuaries. A repeat survey in 1996 of 250 fish found significant declines in mercury levels in the flesh of eels and flounder to below recommended concentrations.

Figure 21



For fish species in general, the Estuary is becoming a more hospitable environment. Over 35 species of marine, estuarine and migratory fish have been recorded in the inner estuary, though most occur only occasionally and four are common. Despite the notable reduction in mercury levels, other pollutants remain significant enough to be of concern, and MAFF advise

against fish consumption. Significant problems exist with PCB and DDT concentrations, and for other contaminants, although these are no more serious than other estuaries such as the Thames, Seine and Loire. Nevertheless, fish quality in the Estuary still does not yet bear comparison with those of cleaner estuaries such as the Solway Firth.

Within the last five years, a number of unusual species long absent from the Estuary have returned. At the Seacombe Ferry Terminal, Wallasey, for example, fishing off the pontoons has brought up: cuttlefish, squid, octopus, sea trout, lumpfish, garfish, horse mackerel, pipe fish and anchovy. This gives great hope for the return of the once common, but pollution sensitive, salmon to the rivers of the Mersey Basin. The Seacombe Aquarium displays some of these more unusual species found in the surrounding waters.



The annual Mersey swimming race

Bird populations respond rapidly to pollution problems and the Estuary is home to internationally important communities of waders, wildfowl and seabirds. The Estuary is designated as internationally important for shelduck, teal, pintail, dunlin and redshank, and nationally important for wigeon, grey plover, black-tailed godwit and curlew. Winter maxima of these species show a general increase, though clearly conditions in summer breeding grounds can be influential on population levels (Figure 22).

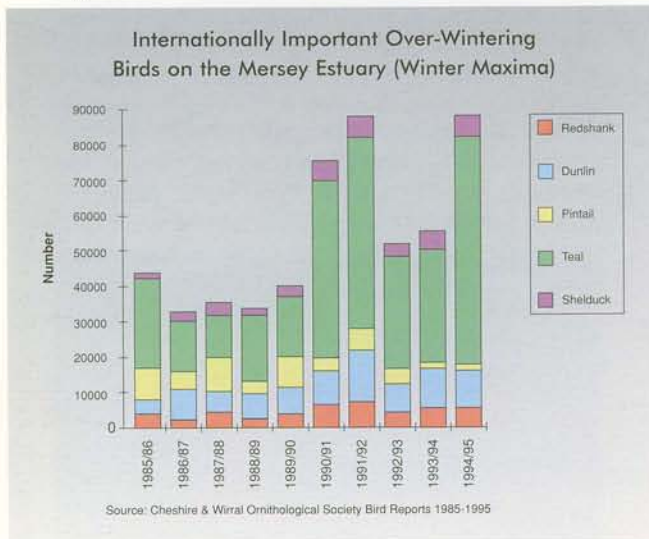
#### Salford Quays

A thriving port for some 90 years following the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, the old



Manchester Docks have been transformed into a lively commercial, residential and recreational environment centred on the four principal docks of the complex. Improved water quality has been a central feature of the

Figure 22



1985 development plans for the Quays, and the isolation of three of the docks from the grossly polluted Manchester Ship Canal is central to the success of landward regeneration. Isolation was completed in 1988 and water quality rapidly showed signs of improvement with significantly reduced levels of ammonia and suspended solids. An artificial oxygenation system to raise Dissolved Oxygen levels was introduced, and oxygen saturation levels above 90% are now achieved.

Algae and zooplankton rapidly prospered and the introduction of a more diverse habitat to what are essentially concrete tanks through artificial reefs rapidly created the conditions for the re-introduction of fish which were long absent from this once inhospitable environment. Over 12,000 fish were introduced into the Quays in 1988 - 1989: roach, rudd, carp, chub, dace and perch and in 1993 trout to control total fish numbers.

The fish feed on the 42 species of invertebrate found in the basins. This compares with 22 in the adjacent Ship Canal, 4 of these in very low numbers. This greater diversity is a direct indicator of cleaner water; many of the invertebrate species are present in high numbers in the Ship Canal, indicating a lack of competition (Litton, 1996). Ironically, these provide an excellent food source for Pochard resident on the Cheshire meres. Some problems do remain with blue-green algae and various physical, chemical and biological ameliorative measures are in train.

#### The Ship Canal

The persistently poor water quality of the Ship Canal is directly related to a combination of pollution from upstream catchments and its physical character - its

canalised profile acting as a settling tank for organic matter, the effect intensified by the canal's slow flow. Stratification of the water body combined with a high Biochemical Oxygen Demand created by the organic material regularly results in anoxic conditions in the lower layers of the water column.

The production of hydrogen sulphide and methane from the accumulated sediments results in offensive odours, worse in summer and compounded by the rise of sediment mats. This, combined with problems of litter from illegal fly-tipping, can render parts of the Canal most unattractive.

Improvement in the water quality of the Canal will be central to securing future bankside regeneration. Under the guidance of the newly formed Trust of interested parties, oxygenation and dredging have been proposed as short term solutions, and although to some degree these might still be needed in the long term, continuing upstream water quality improvements will be essential. The £127m Lowry Centre is projected to be an integral part of this improvement and the culmination to the redevelopment of Salford Quays (see p.24).

Despite being heavily polluted, the Salford and Pomona Docks are the focus for one of the UK's largest wintering flocks of Pochard and Tufted Duck. The Mersey Basin population, which has increased significantly since 1980, currently peaks in January at around 2,700 Pochard and 2,000 Tufted Duck, over 85% of which have been observed feeding at night on the pollution-tolerant invertebrates of the docks. Although the birds appear to be generally tolerant of the disturbance created by redevelopment of the docks, ironically, water quality improvements through improved sewage treatment could affect invertebrate densities and hence long-term waterbird population trends (Marsden, 1997). However, cleaner water is likely to benefit many of the 20 or so species such as Cormorant, Goldeneye and Great Crested Grebe, recorded at the docks, which eat fish or molluscs. Sponsored by the Mersey Basin Campaign, extensive baseline survey data now exists in order to help predict what will be complex patterns of response by individual species to environmental changes.

#### Conclusions

**Water quality in the Mersey Basin has been improving significantly since the inception of the Mersey Basin Campaign. The ambitious target of achieving 'fair' water quality in all watercourses is now within sight, although inevitably there remain some persistent problem areas, notably the Manchester Ship Canal. Nevertheless, wildlife is responding to the widespread improvements, and a reinvigorated aquatic environment now provides the basis for landward regeneration and the stimulation of community action to care for their local watercourses.**



# Landward Regeneration

*The Mersey Basin Campaign was founded on the twin aspirations of improved water quality and the regeneration of waterside sites. In parallel, and closely associated, with greatly improving water quality has been the transformation of hundreds of hectares of derelict land and buildings into offices, homes and leisure and tourism attractions. The regeneration effort is characterised by a huge range of initiatives, both in scale and in the partners involved, from the Development Corporations to individual local authorities; the Campaign has been nurturing strong links with many of them.*

At the centre of much of the redevelopment activity over the past decade have been the Urban Development Corporations which have been injecting new life into the heart of Manchester and Liverpool, using their neglected and undervalued waterways and waterside sites as the focus for regeneration. These initiatives are now winding up, but their legacy is the transformation of derelict waterways and watersides in the centre of Manchester and Liverpool. As with local authority regeneration initiatives, the Development Corporations have used a mixture of funding sources – central government moneys, European structural funds and private capital – to establish a strong record of economic and environmental regeneration.

Some £500m of European Regional Development Fund money has been secured for infrastructure, regeneration and economic development projects in the Campaign area over the past twelve years, a significant number of which are directly and indirectly water-related. Grants typically provide 30-50% of funding for projects which range from the major flagship regeneration schemes such as Albert Dock, in Liverpool, and Castlefield, in Manchester, to a host of local authority-led projects such as canalside improvements in Wigan, and a riverside walkway in Bury.



*Quay West from the Manchester Ship Canal*

## Central Manchester Development Corporation

The network of rivers and canals in central Manchester became the focus in 1988 for bold proposals to regenerate some 187ha of land, disused and derelict buildings, many of which were listed as of architectural and historic importance. The waterways were envisaged as corridors of activity and opportunity, using their unique character as both physical and cognitive links to set Castlefield apart from other areas competing for investment. In essence, the waterways were seen as providing the image through which attention could be drawn to the area.



*Renovating a derelict warehouse at Castlefield, Manchester*

Over the eight year life of the Central Manchester Development Corporation, over £50m was injected into capital projects, including new build, refurbishment and environmental improvement, and some £430m of investment generated. Castle Quay – a disused cotton warehouse dating from 1830 on Castlefield Basin – for example has been converted into offices, retail units and 44 apartments at a cost of £6.5m, of which the Development Corporation contributed £1m with £750,000 spent on wider environmental improvements. These create the atmosphere for further investment and today the Castlefield area is the location for a variety of leisure venues for which the canals are a vital backdrop.



Castlefield formed a key area of Central Manchester Development Corporation's activity and almost £13m was put into office, environment, residential, leisure, arts & community and access schemes. The Rochdale Canal which runs from the Castlefield Basin to the centre of Manchester is a key part of Central Manchester's 13km of canals and received almost £2m from the Development Corporation for access improvements and another £2m on wider environmental improvements.

#### Trafford Park Development Corporation

The proposed footbridge from the Lowry Centre over the Ship Canal to Trafford Wharfside provides a physical link between two of the most significant regeneration schemes in the Mersey Basin area. Trafford Wharfside is a 39ha site located between the Manchester Ship Canal and the Bridgewater Canal which capitalises on the waterside location to create a prestigious mixed commercial development, and has involved the complete reconstruction of the derelict wharf edge between Trafford Road and Quay West. Environmental improvements such as landscaping, seating, lighting and public art have been made. The site represents an important part of the 170ha reclamation programme of the Development Corporation.

Further waterside improvements include a new walkway, pagoda, sculptures and landscaping adjacent to Barton Swing Bridge as part of the aim to encourage use of both the Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal for leisure. During 1997/98, the 10 ha of the derelict Pomona Docks will involve site preparation for redevelopment with assistance from English Partnerships, with plans for commercial and leisure development.

All these developments are contributing to the enhancement of the waterside environment and in turn benefit from improvements to water quality; the attention to be paid to the Ship Canal in the near future, especially in the harbour area will be significant in this regard.



*The waterfront at Trafford Park*

#### Merseyside Development Corporation

Merseyside Development Corporation was established in 1981 to regenerate 350 hectares of the Mersey waterfront, subsequently extended to 960 hectares in 1988. Starting with the now hugely popular Albert Dock complex (the largest group of Grade 1 listed buildings in Europe), the revitalisation of the waterfront has spread to the South Docks and the Riverside area, Birkenhead and Wirral waterfront, New Brighton and North Liverpool. To date, some 28 hectares of derelict docks have been restored, a 400-berth marina created and a 3.5 hectare Marine Lake revitalised at New Brighton.

The waterside regeneration schemes have been the focus for considerable derelict land reclamation. Over 380 hectares of derelict land and waterspace on the Mersey waterfront have been reclaimed thus far. The Twelve Quays site, between the Woodside and Seacombe ferry terminals on the Wirral, for instance, is now the location for an 11 hectare £40m International Technology Campus and a leisure village is planned.

On a smaller scale, the Leeds - Liverpool Canal in North Liverpool has been the focus for regeneration, improving and creating towpaths and restoring traditional canal architecture. Along with the creation of Canalside Park, the canal now provides the setting for new housing development as well as being a greatly enhanced recreational and environmental asset for the whole area.

#### Derelict Land Reclamation

Derelict land has been a serious and persistent problem in the Mersey Basin area as the traditional industrial base of the economy has declined.

Over £150m has been spent by central government to reclaim derelict land in the Mersey Basin over the past twelve years, this usually being one element of a range of funding sources.

Land is reclaimed to a wide variety of end uses: residential, industry, agriculture and forestry, public open space, and sport and recreation. Bury MBC, for example, has received almost £2m Derelict Land Grant for water-related projects, this being complemented by European and private money for a variety of amenity-related redevelopment projects such as the 20 hectare Burrs Country Park. The Country Park has been developed through 21 separately designed and implemented schemes over the course of a decade, including an interpretation centre, activity centre for a local canoe club and the base for the Croal - Irwell countryside warden service. Burrs Country Park is now an integral part of the Irwell Valley Way and sculpture trail which has recently received a lottery grant of some £2.3m for its development.

#### Local Authorities

Local authorities at County, District and Metropolitan Borough level have long been actively involved in environmental enhancement, often using water as a focus for the enhancement of landscaping and leisure opportunities, capitalising on redundant commercial assets such as the region's extensive canal network. The diversity of funding sources available to local



authorities: European money, Derelict Land Grants, and Central Government money (through the Single Regeneration Budget for example), is widely tapped into. Over the last ten years, Cheshire County Council, for example, has initiated a range of water-related projects costing almost £9m, with a variety of purposes relating to industrial development, recreation, access, tourism, and nature conservation.

The opportunities presented by the availability of European Development money are well illustrated by the renovation of the Leeds - Liverpool Canal through Wigan. Commercial traffic ceased over forty years ago and has since been replaced to an extent by leisure traffic. Many of the canal walls and towpaths had, by the 1980s, fallen into disrepair. The Promenade Project was devised by Wigan MBC to address these problems of decaying canal infrastructure in the vicinity of the well-established Wigan Pier tourist attraction. The scheme is novel in its use of labour from the Youth Training Scheme (which has been publicly and privately sponsored) and has provided opportunities for subsequent employment.

The potential of the Canal as a leisure and tourist attraction has been recognised throughout its 200km length and the Promenade Project is an important component of this widespread revitalisation. Over the past 5 years a range of works at three main sites have been completed, ranging from bridge installation to the laying of some 5km of paving and boundary fencing and walling. At around £40,000 per annum, the project has cost some £2.25m with 40% coming from ERDF, 45% from the Challenge Fund and 15% from British Waterways who also provided considerable in-kind funding through materials and equipment. The scheme well demonstrates the need for, and value of, a partnership approach to the renovation of the waterside environment. Some 10km of the Leigh branch of the canal is now the subject of a 4 year project to relay the towpath under the third round of the Single Regeneration Budget.

Much of the canal has been renovated throughout Lancashire under the Lancashire County Council 'Canal & Countryside Project' and individual authorities such as Wigan MBC and Sefton MBC have secured valuable environmental improvements to stretches of the canal through their areas. These improvements are often expensive in both time and resources; some 2km of the towpath and its environs have been improved over ten years in Sefton, for example, at a cost of some £2m, using Derelict Land Grants, ERDF moneys, Urban Programme and City Challenge grants and private sector funding. There remain significant stretches of canal in the Campaign area which would benefit from extensive restoration, a good example being the St Helens Canal through Warrington. Work has been ongoing since 1982 with the assistance of Derelict Land Grant.

Increasingly, such schemes will have to seek funding from such sources as the National Lottery and many innovative strategies are resulting. A recent bid



*Leeds - Liverpool Canal at Wigan Pier*

to the Millennium Commission by Warrington BC – Regenesi – for the revitalisation of the River Mersey through Warrington used 13 local community groups in the development of the vision. Although the bid was unsuccessful, the strategy remains alive and a focus for the realisation of opportunities for riverside land reclamation and the creation of new assets for the community.

Many projects, although not carried out directly under the Mersey Basin Campaign, nevertheless contribute to the Campaign objectives of revitalisation of watersides. A good example is the Sefton Coast Management Scheme which, since 1979, has been reconciling nature conservation and sensitive recreational use of the extensive dune systems, with their own hydrology, and groundwater-fed 'marine' lakes at Southport and Crosby for example. Much of the area is designated as being of high, often internationally important, nature conservation value and the improvement and maintenance of water quality is central to its long-term health.

### **The Trans-Pennine Trail**

The Campaign is an active supporter of the development of the Trans-Pennine Trail, a recreational route traversing the Pennines from Liverpool to Hull. Much of the route follows watercourses in the Mersey Basin, providing a safe and accessible route for walkers, horseriders, cyclists and people confined to wheelchairs. In 1996 the Trans-Pennine Trail was opened as the first British section of European Long Distance Footpath No. 8. Developing such recreational opportunities in the vicinity of waterways will help to increase public awareness and encourage further improvement and maintenance.



*Cyclists, walkers and horse riders all joined in a River Mersey journey from source to sea along the Trans Pennine Trail during the Campaign's 10th Anniversary in 1995.*



### Salford City Council and Salford Quays

The stimulation of private sector investment through environmental improvement has been an important element in the revival of the economic fortunes of the Irwell/Manchester Ship Canal corridor of Salford. Almost £3.5m has been spent over seven years on riverside access improvements to the River Irwell, for example, using a mixture of funding from the Derelict Land Grant, Trafford Park Development Corporation, the Urban Programme and private moneys. The early 1990s saw significant investment of European Regional Development Fund money in recreation and tourism facilities such as at Clifton Country Park. Of late, there has been considerable private sector investment in housing with almost 25 ha of new houses built between 1993 and 1996.

The £230m regeneration of 50 ha of the disused Manchester Docks at Salford Quays over the decade 1985 - 1996 in many ways epitomises the potential for using water as a focus for redevelopment. The scheme has used a mixture of funding sources: European (£6.4m), Central Government (£22m), Local Government (£8.6m) and Private (£191m). Over 12,000 jobs and 300 homes are now located at the Quays and the development is to be completed by the £127m Lowry Centre, one of 12 Millennium Fund flagship projects. The Centre, to be constructed in a prominent location on a 16 ha site at the end of Pier 8, will help to act as a catalyst for adjacent office, retail and leisure developments worth hundreds of millions of pounds. Some 6,500 jobs will be created, 2.5 million visitors a year attracted and a revenue of £4m per annum is likely to be generated.

Improved water quality is inextricably linked to the success of the project which is the most prominent element of the continuing regeneration of the area, and forms a vital component in a series of developments which include the Lowry Centre, plaza and access roads, a footbridge across the Ship Canal, commercial development and a national centre for virtual reality.



*The Lowry Centre is being funded as a Millennium Fund flagship project*

Recently established under the umbrella of the Central Catchment Group of the Campaign is a partnership of key agencies concerned with water quality problems in the harbour area of Salford Quays comprising:

- the Environment Agency;
- Manchester City Council;
- Manchester Ship Canal Company;
- North West Water;
- Salford City Council;
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council; and
- Trafford Park Development Corporation.

The notion of active partnership between diverse organisations with a common aim exemplifies the approach of the Campaign. The proposed solution to the problems of water quality - dredging and oxygenation - is planned to be implemented by the year 2000. Central to sustained long-term improvements are both ongoing management, reflecting the physical nature of the Canal, and upstream water quality improvements.

### Canal Societies

The Campaign area has a long and rich association with canals; indeed the St Helens Canal of 1757 and the Bridgewater Canal of 1761 are Britain's oldest commercial canals. The work of canal societies in restoring and conserving the rich architectural and engineering heritage of the canal network has been central to their revival as thriving leisure and tourism attractions. The 200-strong Macclesfield Canal Society for example, undertakes canal maintenance work such as bridge repair and painting, publicity for the canal and tree planting using a combination of Society moneys, and grants from British Waterways, Macclesfield Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. The restoration of the Manchester, Bury and Bolton Canal is being co-ordinated by the 450-strong Manchester Bury and Bolton Canal Society. A bid is being made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, using the in-kind contributions from Bolton, Bury and Salford Councils and British Waterways. A similarly close working relationship between statutory and voluntary sectors is found along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal where the Lancashire County Council Canal & Countryside Project has been long-established and forms an umbrella for tree planting, access and other canal-side improvements, in turn funded from a wide variety of bodies including local authorities, the Forestry Authority, British Waterways, and the Mersey Basin Campaign.

### Conclusions

**These examples illustrate the partnership approach to environmental improvement that characterises the Mersey Basin Campaign. The past twelve years have seen a burgeoning of redevelopment activity in the vicinity of the Basin's watercourses, and this has come to a peak with the gradual winding down of the Development Corporations. Their legacy is a strong one, and the work of local authorities complements this; their record of landward regeneration will serve as a solid foundation for the future.**



## Education & Awareness

*The third objective of the Mersey Basin Campaign – the encouragement of people living and working in the Mersey Basin to value and cherish their watercourses and waterfront environments – involves securing the continuing commitment of both local residents and the public in general. This means developing an understanding of, and respect for, the water environment, a process which often starts with the education of children. The Campaign has put much energy into securing these changes of attitude and awareness in a number of different ways. Encouraging direct community action through stream and river clean-ups, for example, is a very visible example of what is developing into a varied and robust array of activity.*



*Manchester youngsters tackle a clean up during the Mersey Basin Weekend*



*Building a dipping platform thanks to a Waterside Revival grant*

Over 1000 organisations – schools, community groups and residents' associations for example, of which almost 600 are Mersey Basin Trust members – throughout the Campaign area have received direct assistance over the past twelve years. This has taken the form of grants for environmental improvement, and advice and other assistance. Schools have been particularly prominent, with half of the 4,000 or so in the Campaign area having received stream survey information and over 200 having undertaken projects under the guidance of the Campaign.

### WATERSIDE CARE AND IMPROVEMENT

#### Stream Care

Stream Care, sponsored by the Environment Agency and North West Water is a core Campaign project. It encourages local communities to take responsibility for their watercourses and address the issue of neglect. This means not only clearing litter and other debris, but actively improving the watercourse through tree and wildflower planting, access improvements and publicity, and nurturing a sense of ownership. Stream Care supports schemes and groups with help in cash and in kind, through tools and equipment. The Community Project Officer gives advice to community groups on project planning and other grant applications (such as Waterside Revival). Over 100 projects have been helped by Stream Care over the period 1994 - 1997, with grants totalling some £25,000.

#### The Stream Care Approach

- investigations by the project officer into the watercourse: water quality, wildlife, land ownership;
- details for a specific task prepared, matching the demands of the task to the capabilities of the group;
- provision of materials and equipment;
- arrange practical support e.g. Groundwork, BTCV, countryside service; and
- guidance on health and safety.



### Atherton Heritage Society & Atherton Environmental Projects

The work of Atherton Heritage Society, and latterly Atherton Environmental Projects, on watercourses around the Atherton area of Greater Manchester exemplifies the Stream Care approach: building on local enthusiasm, combining with other interested organisations and helping to ensure that the project carries on after the initial work. As part of the objective of local environmental improvement, Colliers Brook, in the heart of Atherton, was cleared of rubbish in the summer and autumn of 1994 and 1995, along with a clean-up of Chanters Brook in the autumn and winter of 1994 and 1995, under the guidance of Stream Care (who supplied equipment and a grant) and the Wigan People & Places Programme.

The formation of Atherton Environmental Projects in 1996 by Derek Bullock has continued the activity around Colliers Brook with tree planting (with help from a Campaign Waterside Revival grant) and an expansion of the clean-up programme to local footpaths. There has also been continuing maintenance of Colliers Brook and Chanters Brook. The sustained efforts of Derek Bullock have been recognised through a Campaign Kingfisher Award in 1995 for an outstanding contribution to the local environment. Work in the Atherton area now totals almost 35 projects over 3 years and this is now taking on a broader aspect with the establishment of a River Valley Initiative for the River Glaze, of which Colliers Brook is a tributary.

Derek comments that: "Without the initial support and enthusiasm of Stream Care and the project officer our work would have been a lot more difficult. The continuing support has enabled us to become more ambitious in our vision for the improvement of Atherton's, and now the River Glaze, environment. We look forward to a continuing close working relationship with the Mersey Basin Campaign".



*Cleaning up Colliers Brook*

### Waterside Revival

Waterside Revival is the successor to the Improve Your Waterside Grant scheme which ran from 1987 to 1994 with sponsorship from ICI. Waterside Revival has been sponsored by BT over the period 1994 to 1997 and a round of grants has been approved until 1999 sponsored by Bechtel Water Technology. Grants of up to £1,000 have been available aimed at projects carried out by local community and voluntary groups to improve the

appearance, use and management of publicly accessible watersides. As with the Stream Care projects, local 'ownership' and a sense of continuity is particularly encouraged, as is collaboration between groups. Grants are aimed at benefiting watersides in the areas of:

- nature conservation;
- recreation and tourism;
- tackling pollution, eyesores and neglect;
- improving access;
- conserving the built environment; and
- increasing public involvement in waterside improvement.

There have been 105 applications for Waterside Revival grants over the period 1994 - 1997, with approval of 77 of these, and grants totalling £60,000 allocated, with individual grants ranging from £170 to £1,000. On average, the grant covered from one third to one half of the total cost of the scheme, but the full cost of the scheme was covered in many cases. The vast majority of work was carried out by volunteers directly associated with the grant applicant, but alliances were formed with other bodies such as Groundwork and local authority countryside rangers, The Waterside Revival grant was commonly one element of a range of grants sought, from local authorities, business environmental grants and government bodies such as English Nature.

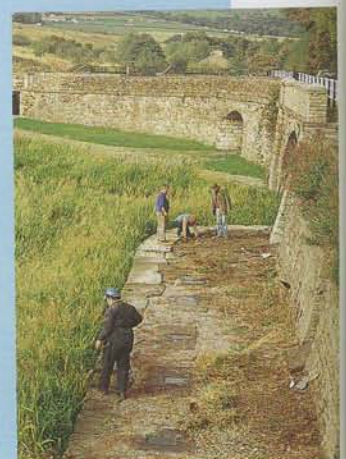
Naturally, the works undertaken were of a diverse nature: bank renovation, tree and hedge planting, footpath creation, fencing, landscaping and pond clearance, for example. Two examples are:

### Bugsworth Basin

The momentum which can be generated by local enthusiasm is well illustrated by the regeneration of Bugsworth Basin at the head of the Peak Forest Canal at Buxworth. The only remaining Tramway/Canal Interchange and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Basin was abandoned in the 1920s, soon became derelict and filled with silt and rubbish. The Inland Waterways Protection Society Ltd. started this major restoration project in 1968 and as activity speeded up, a series of grants from the Mersey Basin Trust have enabled work such as the rebuilding of stone retaining walls and landscaping.

A £120,000 grant from English Partnerships will secure the relining of the leaking entrance canal and matching funding from European sources will fund the design and construction of a new facility block, a management study and interpretation scheme.

"Funding from the Campaign has been a vital catalyst in securing further grants helping to sustain faith in the project".  
*Ian Edgar, Chairman of the Society and Hon. Site Manager, Bugsworth.*



*Vegetation control at Bugsworth Basin*



### Broughton Angling Club

Broughton Angling Club applied for a £1,000 Waterside Grant in 1995 to help with the construction of disabled access to one of two newly-leased derelict reservoirs in the Crumpsall area of Manchester. The total cost of works, which include landscaping, fencing and fish stocking came to around £15,000, of which £1,800 was for disabled access. The paths and fishing pegs were constructed by laying some 60 tonnes of brick in three separate courses and topped by concrete. They now provide a safe and accessible route from the car park to the lakeside. The project took about a year and, of course, hundreds of volunteer days to complete and the particular commitment of Brian Whitworth, leader of the work party. It is now regularly used by the disabled and elderly in the club. The Club is planning to take on more waters such as the demand among the 400-strong membership.



*Improving access for disabled anglers*

"The grant enabled us to complete a lot more work, and to a higher standard than would otherwise have been possible. The assistance and advice of Gwen White at the Trust was invaluable and we are keen to apply for grants in the future to help us with further work." *Dave McIntosh, Club Secretary*

Medlock and the Rochdale, Manchester Ship and Bridgewater Canals. Following completion of a full survey of the project area, four key themes were pursued:

- 'getting the message across';
- improving the cleanliness of waterway corridors;
- influencing the behaviour of occupiers of waterside sites; and
- influencing the decision makers to take action.

Relaunched in 1995, Water Watch now covers the whole of the Campaign area and has broadened its concern from floating litter to debris in the whole of the water environment. It is currently supported by the Tidy Britain Group, the Environment Agency, Manchester Ship Canal Company, Manchester Airport and British Waterways, Water Watch is largely project-based, and targets problems



*The problem of litter occurs throughout the Campaign area.*

### Water Watch

The problem of waterside litter is a recurring one throughout the Campaign area, and ranges from domestic and general litter to fly-tipping of commercial waste. Not only is this litter unsightly and causes blockages, it can also be dangerous. The Environment Agency is given discretionary powers to clear obstructions from main rivers, primarily to prevent flooding, but responsibility also falls on the Riparian Landowners to keep rivers and streams clear of large rubbish or debris under the Water Resources Act, 1991.

Though clearance will inevitably be needed (after flood conditions for example), a longer-term solution which addresses the causes of the problem is needed to resolve more persistent problems. Water Watch was initiated in 1990 by the Central Catchment Group of the Mersey Basin Campaign, with the aim of reducing the amount of floating rubbish in both canals and rivers. The project has two main methods of achieving its aim: first, to raise awareness of problems caused by rubbish in water and of responsible waste management and disposal; and second, to bring about solutions to specific local problems.

Within 4km of Manchester city centre there are 25km of waterway, including parts of the Irwell, the Irk,

at the request of public, private and voluntary bodies, providing information, advice and guidance on how to tackle a litter problem (both its clearance and source), current legislation, and the co-ordination of community-led clean-ups. Each project lasts for some six months with the aim of leaving a network of 'carers' in place. A philosophy underlying the Water Watch initiative – the education of the public to respect and care for their watercourses – is a vital complement to the broader efforts to reduce waterside tipping. Over the last two years, Water Watch has given advice or had practical involvement on over 23 waterways throughout the Campaign area.

Through the efforts of Water Watch, it is hoped that benefits of investment in improvements in water quality can be sustained, benefits which can be all too easily lost through careless misuse.





### Pond Life Grants

The North West has around a quarter of all England's ponds, though these are rapidly disappearing both naturally and by infilling. This demands the active management of those remaining. The Pond Life Project is a £1.1m, four year demonstration project funded from the Life Programme of the European Union, part of the drive to interpret and apply the concept of sustainability. The project closely ties in with the objectives of the Campaign and covers the whole of the Campaign area, including the remainder of Lancashire. It has strong links with the Netherlands and Belgium. Commencing in 1995, grants of up to £500 were available for practical work to protect, manage or create ponds. Up to the finishing of the grant scheme, sponsored by Unilever and English Nature, in March 1997, some 40 organisations (schools, village groups, Groundwork, and Parish Councils, for example) were awarded grants worth almost £15,000. An audit of ponds has been undertaken and a Geographic Information System (GIS) used to build a sustainability audit model. Pond restoration is proceeding at around 200 per annum, and pond creation at around 40, thus helping to address the rapid decline in pond numbers due to agricultural intensification, urbanisation and neglect. A Regional Pond Strategy is being developed and, in conjunction with the GIS-based Pond Information Network will become a significant input into the Local Biodiversity Action Plans now being produced.



*Pond life grants helped groups protect, manage or create ponds.*

### ICI Green Action Grants

Green Action Grants are part of ICI's contribution to the Weaver Valley Initiative in the Runcorn and Northwich areas. Grants of up to £1,000 have been given for some 40 projects including pond creation, building footpaths and tree planting, carried out by schools, residents' associations and youth groups.

### EDUCATION

The third principle objective of the Campaign – getting people to 'value and cherish' their local rivers and streams – has been addressed in part through involving children in using watercourses as a focus for their environmental studies.

### Water Detectives

The Water Detectives project helps teachers to raise awareness of rivers, their problems and potential, among young people and their families. This takes the form of:

- assistance for teachers in planning and carrying out stream surveys from the Education Officer or a volunteer Schools Liaison Officer;
- training groups of teachers to study rivers;
- providing teaching materials (a study pack and aerial photographs) giving information on planning a rivers topic and a Stream Survey as well as ideas for follow-up work;
- helping schools not within walking distance of a suitable study site with the costs of transport;
- producing a termly newsletter to keep schools updated on Water Detectives and other complementary services.

Water Detectives started in 1993 with a 3 year sponsorship of £45,000 from Shell UK and The Royal Bank of Scotland and matching funding from the Department of the Environment Environmental Action Fund. In the 3½ years of this phase of the project some 800 schools contacted the Mersey Basin Trust with many receiving advice on contacts or further information. Of these, 230 received visits to plan rivers topics and 99 were helped with a stream survey. Stream clean-ups or other practical work was carried out by 35 schools with the help of the Trust's Community Projects Officer under the Stream Care scheme.

As part of the Water Detectives initiative, resource packs containing maps of the Mersey Basin system showing water quality and detailed information aimed at helping teachers to plan a rivers topic, carry out a stream survey and do follow-up work, are distributed to participating schools. More recently a River Mersey 'Source to Mouth' Aerial Photo Pack has been produced to provide a cheaper alternative to on-site visits. The pack includes eight photos and ordnance survey maps and sells at £20 to cover production costs. To date almost 650 have been sold and a reprint has been necessary.

### Green Generation Grants

Under the aegis of the Water Detectives project, the Green Generation grant scheme, sponsored by Shell UK, was developed to help schools nurture pupils' environmental awareness and encourage them to take responsibility for their environment through practical



*A Water Detectives stream survey*



study and projects. Available to all schools in the Campaign area, the grants of up to £500 were used for visits to industry, fieldwork visits, and equipment for practical projects such as pond creation. £33,500 was made available over 3 years to June 1997. About 200 schools received grants with over half of these funding transport to streams and fieldwork equipment.

## AGRICULTURE

### Farming 2000

Farming 2000 is a 3 year project, sponsored by Manweb and the Environment Agency, with the aims of addressing environmental and conservation issues and improving farming economics. The concept originated



Water sampling with help from a Green Generation grant

as the Campaign Rural Areas Initiative and trials took place in the Moberley/ Birkin Brook area of the Bollin RVI. It was led by the Agricultural Development Advisory Service ADAS - with the support of the Environment Agency, Cheshire County Council and Macclesfield Borough Council.

The project links in with the Campaign's River Valley Initiatives, and the first phase of the 3 year programme, launched in October 1996, focused on the River Alt area of Merseyside and West Lancashire. Some 23 visits were made to farm businesses in the catchment and farmers were provided with a confidential report outlining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on both the business and its environment. Each farm report builds on the farmer's own objectives and nurtures the link between economic development and environmental health. To this end, sources of funding are identified, such as Countryside Stewardship, the Woodland Grant Scheme, and assistance for agricultural-based projects under European Objective 1 status (of which the Alt catchment is part). Funding from this source is made on the basis that complementary environmental gains are an integral part of economic development.

A second phase concentrating on the Weaver Valley commenced in September 1997.

### Code of Good Agricultural Practice

Regulations which came into force in 1991 set new minimum standards for farm waste storage facilities in an attempt to reduce the number of farm-related pollution incidents. There are over 9,000 farms in the Campaign area, many of these are livestock farms with some of the best pasture land in the country. Unsafe storage of silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil poses a significant threat to both groundwater and watercourses. A leaflet explaining the regulations was published by MAFF, ADAS, the National Rivers Authority and the Campaign.

## PUBLICITY & COMMUNICATIONS

### Campaigner

'Campaigner' has established itself as a prime means of communicating the aims of the Campaign and the results of its work. With a print run of some 8,500 and a far higher circulation, the quarterly newsletter reviews all aspects of the Campaign's work, enabling all partners to feel involved. Campaigner is sponsored by Unilever, North West Water and the Environment Agency and the Department of the Environment through Mersey Basin Campaign Administration Ltd.



### Little Green Book

The Little Green Book is a directory of more than 300 organisations who can offer advice and expertise in environmental work in the Campaign area. These range from local voluntary groups to statutory sector partners in the Campaign. Now in its second edition, the Little Green Book is an excellent example of the Campaign reaching out with practical guidance to the voluntary sector which forms the core of regeneration activity at the local level. An update of the Little Green Book in 1997 was sponsored by NatWest and Manchester Airport.





## Waterside Safety

Designed as a handbook for leaders of voluntary groups undertaking water-based and waterside projects, advice on how to carry out a site safety visit, an explanation of the risks of waterside work and working with children is given.

## Mersey Basin Weekend

The Mersey Basin Weekend, held annually in October, acts as a focus for the work of the Campaign, with events such as river and stream clean-ups, general environmental work, guided walks, watersports and education. Between 1994 and 1996 British Gas has supported the event through grants. In 1997 Transco supported 23 projects. Stream Care provided support for clean-up events. Over 2,000 people are typically involved in well over 100 projects which span the whole Campaign area, and for the 1997 event, it has been calculated that more than 1,000 took part in clean-ups and other environmental work.

The Weekend serves to generate a high level of publicity and awareness in a short space of time, helping to encourage existing supporters and develop the commitment of new ones, both volunteers and sponsors. A special Business Foundation day is held as part of the weekend where employees of sponsors' companies come together to work on environmental improvements.

The Weekend also serves as a particularly valuable means of focusing attention on the River Valley Initiatives and includes the presentation of the Kingfisher Awards during a social event to thank volunteers' efforts.



*A team from British Gas make a dipping platform for school groups during the Mersey Basin Weekend*

## Wake-Up to Your Watersides

Aims to encourage greater awareness amongst the general public about the opportunities – practical, educational and recreational – offered by local rivers, streams and canals. The 1996 Mersey Basin Weekend was the first event of the campaign. The Campaign caravan is a central element of the publicity effort, attending a variety of fetes, shows and canal events over 60 to 70 days per year.



*The Wake Up to Your Watersides alarm clock and a team of clean up enthusiasts*

## AWARD SCHEMES

### Kingfisher Awards

The annual Kingfisher Awards, launched in 1994, recognise outstanding contributions to the ideals of the Campaign. Sponsored by Unilever, the award winners have £500 to donate to a Campaign-related project of their choice. To date, more than 20 individuals and organisations have received awards for a vast range of environmental work, often part of a long-standing commitment to environmental activity and improvement.

### Business and the Environment Awards



This newly launched award scheme, sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland, aims to encourage and acknowledge good environmental practices which are proved to be sustainable by improved business performance. Thus entrants must be able to demonstrate a linked improvement in both environmental and business performance attributable either to changes in working practices and/or processes, or the application of technology. Awards are made to large and medium/small organisations.





*His Grace the Duke of Westminster (r) launches the "Business and the Environment" Awards*

## COMPETITIONS

### River search '95

Run as part of the Campaign's 10<sup>th</sup> year celebrations, schools were invited to send in examples of their river survey work. Prizes of river survey equipment were awarded to 6 primary and 4 secondary schools whose entries were made into a display to give other teachers ideas on what they might do.

### Conclusions

The diverse array of activity which has been developing around the third aim of the Campaign reveals great demand both for the Campaign's existence and further development. The strong degree of co-ordination of public, private and voluntary activities and interests through the Campaign is striking, and the water environment is clearly proving to be a common focus for a range of environmental activity. The potential of this activity, without the raising of awareness and understanding, would probably go unrealized; the Campaign has nurtured this latent interest and is now well placed to substantiate and build upon it.



# The Campaign Future

*When the Campaign was launched, the concept of partnership between public, private and voluntary sectors was new and concern for the environment nothing like as wide-spread as it is today. Those involved with the start of the Campaign took some pride in their innovative way of working which has been maintained ever since - new ideas and perspectives regularly emerge aided by the networking which keeps the centre of the Campaign in touch with the wider partnership.*

*We believe this approach to be a major reason for the continuing success of the Campaign and have no doubt that the future is in the hands of those who will ensure that the effort, commitment and initiatives will be every bit as strong in the second half of the Campaign's life as they have been in the first.*

## Water Quality

All the added value the Campaign can bring is based on the strength of improving water quality. Waterside developments, habitats, access, usage and awareness can only be maximised if the water quality gains are achieved.

Approximately half way through the Campaign we know that half the necessary improvements have been secured as a result of the substantial investment by North West Water and other key industries as directed by the Environment Agency. It is essential that this level of commitment and investment is maintained, or even increased, over the second half of the Campaign if the overall water quality objective is to be met.

The Campaign therefore intends to make sure that the awareness, commitment and determination which the partnership has put into the first half of the Campaign is continued through to the year 2010.

On the basis of existing investment plans which run until the year 2000 we can expect that eighty percent of the river system will have achieved the overall water quality objectives by then. This will be a huge achievement but, as the Campaign starts to reach the most difficult of the problem areas, it will be vital to maintain the drive to deal with: combined sewer overflows, the issue of domestic washing and dishwasher machines plumbed into surface water drains instead of into the sewerage system, water quality in the Manchester Ship Canal and investment in new and enhanced wastewater treatment works.

## Waterside Development

The Campaign has recently assembled a Corporate Plan in order to reflect and respond to its changed status as an independent organisation, grant aided by government. The 'rolling' Plan sets a series of objectives and targets for the next three years, on the basis of which Department of Environment Transport and the Regions grant will be approved and Campaign activity monitored.

River Valley Initiatives have proved highly successful as the means by which the Campaign can best achieve its objectives on the ground through local community partnerships. For the foreseeable future therefore the

Campaign will concentrate on these initiatives as its local delivery mechanism.

A target has now been set of creating 21 such initiatives traversing the whole basin and linking into the Environment Agency 'Local Environment Agency Plans'. The whole RVI process will soon be absorbed into a programme to be known as River Valleys Action, partly to ensure the launch of such a large number of RVIs but also to co-ordinate and build strong networks between them (exchanging expertise and good practice) as well as to set and monitor Campaign related targets and to optimise links with initiatives such as Welfare to Work. River Valleys Action will allow the Campaign to make sure that the RVI programme moves forward in the most effective way whilst maintaining the essential ingredient of local ownership and priorities.

In addition the Corporate Plan guides the implementation of the wider Campaign, including:

- the maintenance of a full range of projects (including Waterside Revival, Stream Care, Farming 2000, Water Watch) especially within RVIs in order to further the achievement of Campaign aims;
- the organisation of a Millennium event in celebration of the River; and
- increasing the membership of both the Mersey Basin Trust and the Mersey Basin Business Foundation.

There also exists considerable potential for the strengthening of links to other organisations in the Basin now that the Campaign has a more targeted approach. This potential will be followed up with Mersey Forest and Red Rose Forest, Sustainability North West, Regional Groundwork and others as well as the Agencies which have close connections with Campaign action or management.

Waterside development for hard end uses such as housing, commerce or industry will also remain a Campaign theme. Encouraged by water quality gains and an increasing awareness of the value of rivers we hope to see Campaign partners maintaining their programmes of new build and refurbishment throughout the second half of the Campaign term.



## Campaign Awareness

One of the reasons for the Campaign's growing success has been its ability to develop new ideas and ways of working. Listening to our partners, innovating, adapting and building on success has brought us half way - we believe that to continue this attitude through to 2010 is the best way forward.

It has long been recognised that a strong and credible Campaign identity is the key to attracting the support and partners which are needed to deliver our objectives. As part of the drive to increase awareness in the coming years, the Campaign is developing new initiatives in line with the recommendations voiced at the 1996 Conference. Greater involvement of young people and a less technical, more general presentation of the Campaign across the basin are the main targets.



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**Tony Jones**  
Executive Director  
Mersey Basin Trust



**John Millett**  
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Mersey Basin Business Foundation

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## Glossary

ADAS	Agricultural Development Advisory Service
AMP	Asset Management Plan
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
DO	Dissolved Oxygen
CMDC	Central Manchester Development Corporation
CPG	Catchment Project Group
CMP	Catchment Management Plan
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
DLG	Derelict Land Grant
EA	Environment Agency
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GQA	General Quality Assessment
GIS	Geographic Information System
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution
LEAP	Local Environment Agency Plan
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MBBF	Mersey Basin Business Foundation
MBC	Mersey Basin Campaign
MBT	Mersey Basin Trust
MDC	Merseyside Development Corporation
MEPAS	Mersey Estuary Pollution Alleviation Scheme
NRA	National Rivers Authority
NWC	National Water Council
NWW	North West Water
OFWAT	Office of the Director General of Water Services
RE	River Ecosystem
RVI	River Valley Initiative
TPDC	Trafford Park Development Corporation
UWWTd	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
WQI	Water Quality Index
WwTW	Waste Water Treatment Works





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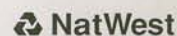
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