

# Running the River Thames

**A Greenwich Maritime Institute research project  
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**Project Newsletter**

February 2012

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Welcome to the first newsletter on our progress in researching *Running the River Thames: London, Stakeholders and the Environmental Governance of the River Thames, 1960 – 2010*. Work on the 24-month project started in August 2011 and in this twice-yearly short report we aim to keep associates and supporters up to date with our work.

*Running the River Thames* builds on our two previous GMI research projects *Public Policy, Stakeholders and the River* and *Thames Governance: Oral Histories 1960-2010*.

To find out about all these projects please visit this website:  
[www2.gre.ac.uk/about/schools/gmi/research/case\\_studies](http://www2.gre.ac.uk/about/schools/gmi/research/case_studies).

## **Appointment of Project Advisory Committee**

Professor Roger Knight (GMI), Professor Yvonne Ryden (University College London), Dr Sue Tapsell (Middlesex University), Visiting Professor David Walburn (London South Bank University) and Professor Ken Young (King's College London) have agreed to act as 'critical friends' for the project. Meeting with the researchers every four months, they will provide additional policy, planning, development, environment and project management expertise. The Advisory Committee met for the first time on 9 November 2011.

## **Archival Research Activity**

We have identified several strands for our research. These include alterations in the governance of port and river; the shift from metropolitan institutions to river-basin level management; transfers in responsibility for pollution control, sewerage and water supply; environmental issues in the lower Thames; the role of stakeholders and interest groups with competing visions of the river's role.

An extensive range of documentary sources, public and private, is available for investigation of these issues, but we recognise that selecting, recording and analysing such material within the project timeframe is a challenge. The national importance of London's port and river means that government records in the National Archives at Kew contain much potentially relevant information. It therefore made sense to start work on these as soon as possible, so this is where Sarah has mainly been researching. Meanwhile Vanessa has focussed on the Greater London Council records in the London Metropolitan Archives relating to pollution control and waste management, an area only briefly touched on in our earlier research.



Researchers Dr Vanessa Taylor and  
Professor Sarah Palmer

## Thames Stakeholder Workshop November 2011

The first of two stakeholder workshops was held on 21 November. A sample group of seven campaigning organisations connected to the Thames, its tributaries or the river basin, reported on their practical experience of seeking to influence decision-making. The discussion gave us valuable insight into the methods used, and challenges encountered, by Thames campaigners. We are grateful for the help of those who attended, including participants from: Creekside Forum, Essex Wildlife Trust, Friends of the River Crane Environment, Group against Reservoir Development, New Lammas Lands Defence Committee, Quaggy Waterways Action Group, Thamesbank.

## Past Papers and Presentations

Last September Vanessa gave a presentation about the project's background, aims and localist dimensions at a Localism Workshop organised by the University of Greenwich School of Architecture and Construction. In January she spoke on "Running the River Thames: oral history and the environmental governance of the Thames, 1960-2011" to the Institute of Historical Research Metropolitan History Seminar.

## Forthcoming Papers and Presentations

On 29 March Vanessa will be giving a paper on "Whose river? London and the governance of the Thames, 1960-1992" at the Urban History Group Conference on *The Living and Liveable City: Health, Lifestyle and Sustainability*, St. Catherine's College, Oxford, and Sarah will be lecturing on "The Old and New Life of the London Thames" on 21 June at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Vanessa will also be presenting a paper on cohesion and fragmentation in governance and stakeholder communities for the River Thames, at Bangor University's September conference on *Community, Cohesion and Social Stability: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*.

## Events Attended

Vanessa has attended several interesting events relating to the Thames since the project began. These include: Better Thames Network's Workshop on Diffuse Urban Pollution run by the University of Westminster; the Annual Stakeholder Forum of the Thames Estuary Partnership; and a seminar series organised by the Centre for London at Demos, as part of their current project on The Thames: Making More of the Heart of London.

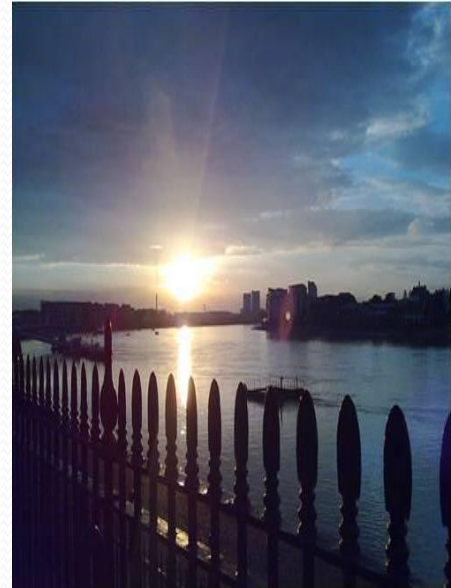
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