

Outfall Safari Action starts

Following the outfall safari training on May 21st, organized by Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust in conjunction with Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency, volunteers have started surveying the full length of Oak Beck and Bilton Beck for any flow from storm overflows **in dry periods** .

- When there has been considerable rain, it is possible that the sewerage network can become overwhelmed, and emergency combined sewer overflows allow the discharge of sewage contaminated water into our rivers. This may happen because the network or the storage capacity is inadequate, or blocked, or because surface water gets into the pipes, reducing their capacity.
- **When there hasn't been any rain** for a while, polluted discharges into a river are likely to be the result of a **misconnection** by an individual at a particular location of a sewage pipe into a surface water pipe. *This is why we do Outfall Safaris.*

The group of four NAG volunteers that I was working with has so far been able to report on the status of **9 outfalls** in our 400 metre section of Oak Beck that includes Jennyfield Storm Overflow (pictured) in Harrogate.

- At this outfall a high concentration of ammonia was found. Previously reported pollution at this location had identified a specific misconnection from sewage systems into surface water systems, and YW are investigating.
- Eight of the nine outfalls were discharging into the river during this dry period, and four of them were found to have raised phosphate levels. The sources of phosphates are being investigated.
- As a contrast we found a couple of outfalls that were running but were 'squeaky clean', probably from natural springs in the area.

There are many more outfalls to be located and investigated, after which we will have a much better understanding of the sources of pollution in these becks.

It is only by collaboration between citizen volunteers providing 'intelligent boots on the ground' and the agencies with the power to investigate the sources of any pollution and make the necessary changes that we will get the clean and healthy river Nidd that we all seek.

