

River Tame, Middleton Hall

Technique: To enhance a uniform, straight channel by creation of central islands

Project location: River Tame, Middleton Hall

River: Tame

County: Staffordshire

Project start date: August 1998

Project end date: September 1998

Length: 500m

Cost: £25,000

Upstream grid reference: SK 206 001



The Tame soon after restoration works, with the central islands

Site background

The Tame is a lowland river flowing to the east of Birmingham. At this section the Tame flows in a straight, featureless channel through a gravel workings and is flanked by gravel pits on both sides. Under normal practices a 30m stand-away strip from the riverbank would mark the limit of gravel extraction. However, the Environment Agency relaxed its normal approach to allowing mineral extraction close to the river to provide an opportunity for restoration.

Objectives

To create a braided river channel from a uniform, straight section of river

Design

The stand-away strip was excavated using a digger to leave a 15m wide channel bounded by a central strip of land of 1-2m wide which originally formed the bankside of the former channel. The central strip was then broken up to form islands of material while retaining the original vegetation on top. The entire section was then left to adjust and stabilise. The works resulted in the doubling of channel width from 15m to 30m.



View of islands in centre of channel, December 2008

Subsequent performance - RRC's views (2008)

This pioneering project has resulted in a much more diverse river system. Gravel shoals have developed at the top end of the section, both in between the islands and upstream of the works. The river channel diversity has improved and this will benefit wildlife. Upon completion of gravel extraction, 20 hectares of wetland has been created in the former gravel pits as part of an RSPB reserve, which will attract wetland birds such as lapwing and redshank.



View of widened river channel looking upstream, December 2008



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This site was last visited by RRC staff on 18th December 2008

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