

# Fish health comes under the spotlight

by PHILIP JENKINS

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**A TEAM from the Environment Agency has carried out a survey in the River Churnet to establish the health of fish stocks following a devastating pollution incident which killed more than 700 fish.**

In December 2008, it was discovered a corroded metal clip at Severn Trent Water's Tittesworth treatment works had caused deadly levels of chlorine to leak into the Churnet.

Following an investigation by the Environment Agency, Severn Trent was fined £15,000 with £3,492.54 prosecution costs.

The EA said that in total 740 dead fish were found, including 344 brown trout, and claimed that it could take five years for the fish population to recover.

The survey was carried out yesterday upstream of the road bridge on Abbey Green Road, in Leek, to find out whether or not the trout population is showing signs of recovery and to estimate the population of brook lampreys.

Fisheries officer Mick Buxton said: "This stretch of the River Churnet was affected by a pollution incident in December 2008, and we need to know what long-term impact, if any, there has been.

"A healthy population of fish and inverte-

brates is a good indication of a healthy river so this survey will tell us how well the river is recovering."

To conduct the survey fisheries officers lightly stunned the fish in the river with an electric current for long enough to catch them in a net.

They were then placed into oxygenated water until they could be measured. A sample was then taken of the scales of each trout captured.

These samples have now been sent for examination at the National Fisheries Laboratory to find the age and growth rate.

All fish were returned to the river unharmed.

Mr Buxton said the Environment Agency was calling on more "stringent" measures in wake of the incident.

He said: "Generally, our rivers are the healthiest they have been for 20 years, but we need to do even more to meet stringent new standards under the European Water Framework Directive.

"We're working with farmers, businesses and water companies to reduce pollution and improve water quality."



HOWZAT: Councillor Gill Heath hands over a cheque to Alstonefield St Peter's Cricket Club for the new training facilities

## Bowled over by £1,000 grant

A CRICKET club in the Moorlands has received a welcome financial boost to provide brand new portable practise nets.

Alstonefield St Peter's Cricket Club can now improve its training sessions thanks to a £1,000 grant from ward county councillor Gill Heath.

With more than 25 playing members ranging from 14 to 70, the club's batsmen and bowlers were struggling to get in the practise they needed to compete with the area's top clubs.

Ian McKay, club chairman, said: "The new portable net now forms a fundamental part of the club's cricket practise, allowing our players to

improve their game through regular net sessions.

"The equipment allows more intense training and provides the opportunity for one-on-one coaching."

Councillor Heath said: "It has been great to see the difference the new portable practice nets has already made to Alstonefield St Peter's Cricket Club, which has such a valued presence in the community."

The cricket club are also on the lookout for new members. Anyone interested in joining should telephone 01335 310309 or go to [www.alstonefield.org](http://www.alstonefield.org) for more information.



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### ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

## Bag yourself a brand-new look

**A GIRL can never have too many handbags and these days there is an abundance of fabulous new designs available in the high street and on the internet.**

One of the latest designs to appear on UK soil are Bam Bags®.

Until recently — and I mean recently as in last week — this innovative bag was only available in America but, thanks to Emma

Voss who is the sole UK distributor, us English Roses can keep up with our Uncle Sam counterparts.

I was lucky enough to get my hands on a Bam Bag® black and silver totebag a couple of weeks ago and was simply blown away by the design — a continuous length of high-strength zip, hence known as the original Zip Purse in the US.

Available in some fantastic colours, the totebag, which retails at £74.99 has



detachable handles (although I'm not too sure why but no doubt there is a very good reason), an interior zipped pocket for keeping loose change, a mobile phone pocket and a clip to attach car/house keys.

The latter is always an advantage in any handbag, and saves having to rummage around in the bottom of the bag for said keys. I was surprised at how much I could fit into the tote bag but definitely not surprised at the reaction I received from my friends.

They, as I do, love it. The bag is versatile, durable, lightweight and keeps its shape. I have put the bag through its paces and it still looks as good as it did when it was brand new.

I predict Bam Bags® will be the fashion hit of summer and to view the full compliment of Bam Bags® visit the website at [www.bambags.co.uk](http://www.bambags.co.uk).

Review by Caroline Kay

AS I have already announced, I love bags.

It doesn't matter how large, how small or for what purpose the bag is intended, a person can never have too many.

So, when I saw Urbanz were promoting its Beach Holiday Bag, I was intrigued to say the least. So what makes this beach bag so special?

The transparent bag is a decent size and ideal to carry beach towels, swimwear, flip flops and suntan lotion.

The strap is the perfect length to either carry as a shoulder bag or to be hand held without dragging along the floor, something which needs to be taken into account when you're only 5ft 2in. I love the fact the bag is transparent which means I can check to make sure I have all I need for a day out without emptying the contents every time.

But the real feature which sets this bag apart from its run-of-the-mill beach bag competitors



is the speaker which is tucked away in the bottom, thus allowing me to listen to my iPod, MP3 or the radio from my mobile phone

without my headphones.

Although the speaker is quite small, the quality of the sound is really rather good.

On a busy beach I'm not too sure whether the rest of the holidaymakers will be enamoured with me sharing my choice of music, but it is ideal for festivals where everyone's a music fan, and for my walk to work.

Available in pink or blue, the beach bag is packaged in a handy matching zipped carry pack, which doubles as a make-up or sunscreen bag, or is ideal to seal wet swimsuits in.

The beach bag, which comes complete with four AA batteries and built-in speaker retails at £17.99.

For more information visit the website at [www.urbanz.co.uk](http://www.urbanz.co.uk)

Review by Caroline Kay

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