

Patrick Lydon's NoreVision Diary

Before getting back to Tales of the Tributaries and their good people, it is a pleasure to report on a great NoreVision online meeting about the next stage of strategies to control Invasive Species.

Zoom meetings can work quite well or fall flat, but NoreVision seems to make them super-successful.

Expecting a dozen or so participants, there were 29 screens with interested and committed people, with a mixture of expert contributions and active participation from beginners. So, join the next one - they are informative and inspiring!

It was well observed that one of the challenges of NoreVision is that the catchment covers so many distinct geographical areas, including four local government authorities. This makes the task of management and governance complicated but it creates interest - so back we go to the little streams that are the living sources of the catchment - and we'll stray from Co. Kilkenny this time...

Michael Barry is a young farmer with lands beside the King's River between Ballingarry and Mullinahone.

A go-ahead dairy farmer, Michael's lands join the river where

it turns 90 degrees and is joined by a stream that almost doubles its size. Considerable damage was being done by strong waters flooding the fields and eroding the bank.

Valuing his lands and also the life of the river, he came up with a plan with the careful help of Inland Fisheries Ireland and he stone-armoured the bend. With expert advice, good cooperation and attention to detail, the flooding is controlled, the river is protected and everyone is happy.

Mark Robertston, with his beginnings in Dublin, lives about two minutes from the Nore in Co. Laois. But his most stimulating contact with the river is through leading the Scout group in Mountrath, on the White Horse river. It's said that the White Horse name dates from a time when there was a brewery and a distillery in Mountrath that let out liquids that made the river run with a white bubbly foam.

The Scouts were in a premises right beside the bank, near where there had been a ford, and it was a favourite place for adventure activities, arranging stepping stones and rope bridges and home-made rafts. A canoeist from his Dublin days, now Mark can take extensive paddle trips starting from



Castletown or join the keen kayakers in Durrow.

Through Scout leadership and paddling, Mark has realised the treasures on his doorstep and is becoming a local champion of the rivers. In conversation with neighbouring farmers, he feels there is a lot of positive interest in

river walks that could bring more and more people into contact with the unique habitats of the riversides.

Back in Ballingarry, Jimmy Maher has rich memories of growing up in a farm where a spring ran through his family's yard, providing family and livestock with

drinking water, making its way under outbuildings and through to join the King's in the lands of their neighbours, the O'Shea's.

"In summertime during my childhood there was great craic and excitement on the river. The O'Shea's diverted the river, dammed it and used it as an amenity for locals to swim in.

They came from far and near in large numbers to enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Instead of going to Tramore, people came here for a swim and a picnic by the side of the river. What a sight it was for a young lad to behold."

But surely the best tale of all is from Jim Kennedy, a heritage treasure of Clonakenny, near the rising of the Nore itself. In spite of the small size of the river, there were a number of mills and a Quaker family created a lake for the sake of boating.

And a skilled engineer constructed a channel to drain a lough at Shanacloon, leading into the Nore. And wait for this -- the stream flows uphill! Jim says it's unique - very well engineered and it can be explained - but you'd really want to see it.

Yes, you surely would - but it's flowing right uphill into the Nore!

The Nore Catchment

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The Nore Catchment

