



Welcome to the February issue of the National Flood Forum Bulletin. Among the topics, you will find articles from two different Flood Action Groups, asking “Is Our Government Listening?”, an article from a newly formed Flood Action Group and news of two new members of staff. We are always keen to hear your stories please get in touch with us at bulletin@floodforum.org.uk. Don't forget we are here to help and the help line is 01299 403055.



The National Flood Forum has been included in the correspondence of two letters from two different Flood Action Groups. We thought you would be interested in having a look. What are your thoughts? Have you the same problems? Is there something else you would like to add?

We are always interested in hearing the issues you are facing. It maybe you have found your way around barriers or that you are still trying find solutions. Frustrated or elated we want to hear at: bulletin@floodforum.org.uk

NEWS FLASH

MBE For Paul Cobbing

We are delighted to announce that our Chief Executive, Paul Cobbing, has been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for Services to Flood Risk Management



CATERHAM FLOOD ACTION GROUP ASK, “IS OUR GOVERNMENT LISTENING”?

To our and all M.P.'s – Please push for change;

We, Surrey's Caterham Flood Action Group, representing flood victims of Chaldon, Caterham on the Hill and Old Coulsdon, have become aware that guidance is in place to advise on planning applications in flood risk areas, yet due to objectively assessed needs, we believe recommendations are being overlooked to meet this housing quota.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is quite clear, *'Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.'*

Development must be sustainable the NPPF defines sustainable as *'ensuring that better lives for ourselves doesn't mean worse lives for future generations'*.

Common sense must be applied, and loopholes closed to enable the UK to build, BUT ensure developments are sustainable and that the country becomes flood resilient by 2039 (as specified by the Gov.). For this to happen, we need joined up thinking and a multi-agency approach to planning, the time when responsibilities were fractured must end. A catchment-based approach to planning can be the only way forward, to consider cumulative development, this would be a preferred option to the current method of two here, six there, year after year after year!

Residents of Caterham on the Hill (Surrey) have flooded four times in the last twenty years, yet development has continued (sewers NEVER increased to suit) and in the event of a storm, rivers have been permitted to flow through the streets and discharge across the 'border', into the London Borough of Croydon.

Croydon is the 4th worst surface water flood risk area in England (Defra), a shocking statistic for a London Borough (the capital of England, in the 21st century) and consequently a great place to start planning for the future, utilising innovative design, following the rules to the letter and leading the way in flood resilience.

With that in mind, we would like you to consider how the six questions below can be delivered to and discussed at parliamentary level.

Surface water and SuDs

Croydon's local plan has been revised and going forward ALL developments will be required to have SuDs (we welcome this move), but elsewhere only developments of ten and over are obliged to include SuDs, to avoid the additional cost and work, developers are building multiple nine's.

We ask that ALL proposed planning applications within a surface water flood risk area (as defined/agreed by LLFA's) utilise SuD's to provide betterment, thus reducing surface water run-off from site and NOT inundating the sewers during a storm event. This must also include modifications and extensions to existing i.e. retrofitting, for it is important to remove surface water connections from the foul sewers to ensure the network has the capacity for population growth. The use of properly designed and constructed SuDS will promote strong, resilient, sustainable communities and reduce flood risk.

Question 1

What are DCLG and DEFRA doing to address the matter of SuDS in minor developments?

- a. How and when do they propose to implement any changes?
- b. How do they propose to upskill the Local Government and EA workforce to meet the increased demands?

Question 2

Where communities are adversely affected by surface water connections to sewers, what powers does the regulator or minister propose to provide the utilities companies with to require appropriate disconnection?

Waste

Waste utility companies are obliged to make connections regardless of the consequences; anyone has the right to connect. At present local sewers are NOT a material planning consideration, BUT and to quote the National Planning Practice Guidance, "Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development". This is contradictory advice, going forward the ability to remove waste from site and dispose of it carefully must be guaranteed. New developments should be co-ordinated with the infrastructure it demands and take into account the capacity of the existing infrastructure (NPPF).

Decades of cumulative development without increase in sewer capacity must be addressed if we're to build flood resilient properties. We ask that utility companies be made consultees on ALL planning applications, and they be granted the right to approve OR deny connection, if the latter, an option to engineer a solution (at a cost to the developer) that will ensure the build can progress without putting homes 'downstream' at risk of sewage flooding.

We feel sure this will have industry backing.

Question 3

Do DCLG intend to make the utilities a statutory consultee? If not, why not?

Question 4

Where sewer capacity is deemed to be insufficient, what powers does the regulator or minister propose to provide the utilities companies with so safe disposal of waste can be guaranteed?

Question 5

How does this government propose to implement changes to planning to create the conditions for sewer infrastructure to be built in time to meet the demands of new development?

Planning

ALL Local plans (LP) and Neighbourhood plans (NP) must revisit and reflect the NPPF, to reiterate, inappropriate development in a flood risk area, be it river, sea or surface water should be avoided but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere, the above mentioned would reduce that risk. Local planning authorities should work with other authorities to assess the quality and capacity (this is NOT happening locally). As LPs and NPs begin to emerge, we're in a great position to enforce regulations and get class leading flood resilience policies in place for the future.

Question 6

How do DCLG and DEFRA propose to ensure that local planning authorities or Risk Management Authorities have the capability (staff) to enforce planning policy?

Please lobby parliament on behalf of flooded communities to amend planning policy and improve statutory guidance to protect all homeowners, existing and new.

United Flood Action Groups in Lancashire

SEND A MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT

We would like the Government to consider the following important issues and M. P's to voice our concerns: -

1. The present Government Planning Guidelines to be investigated as to whether they are 'fit for purpose'. Currently, it appears that the same Flood Risk Assessment criteria are used throughout the country regardless of the wide variation in annual rainfall. The calculations used by developers to determine Flood Risk set out in the Government Planning Guidelines are not robust enough to protect the flood vulnerable from flooding in higher rainfall areas
2. Re-instatement of Schedule 3(SuDS) (Sustainable Urban Drainage systems) of the FWMA (Flood and Water Management Act 2010) and machinery being established to supervise the standard of SuDS design, implementation of the system, maintenance and inspection. This must involve house builders having a continuing liability or paying for a statutory authority to take it over. The present system leaves new house owners with no proper machinery for enforcing the collection of money to carry out maintenance and repair and exposes those downstream to the effects of the installed SuDS not working or working insufficiently. We would ask that this lack of responsibility changes.
3. House-builders and developers should be held accountable for both establishment and ongoing maintenance of attenuation on their building sites. It may be a condition of planning approval that attenuation tanks or ponds be installed but when the builders leave the responsibility for maintenance is not always clearly established or enforced. There is no statutory obligation for any agency to inspect and enforce maintenance, indeed Planning Authorities do not routinely inspect for compliance with conditions imposed on grant of permission. This system is insufficiently robust to protect either the new builds or others made vulnerable to flooding downstream of the development. There is evidence to suggest that once permission has been received no inspection of the attenuation takes place. The practice of dissolving companies post build, to avoid responsibility, should be audited and Directors prosecuted.
4. There should be consideration of the required notice period for planning applications and the time allowed in hearings for local opinions to be represented in order to create a more even playing field. Local people need time to make a considered assessment as they are not usually professionals in the area of planning. They have to debate the suitability of applications with people whose job it is on a daily basis to obtain Planning Permission. Those most affected by the development have to build a case in a very short time and are often required to present it in as little as a 3-minute slot at the Planning Committee Meeting and/or appeal. This does not create a fair and just situation.
5. During the recent November 2017 floods, the flooding victims of Lancashire were denied the opportunity to apply for funds to help them over the crisis or install flood resilience into their homes. After Storm Desmond, the Bellwin scheme was applied and the victims did receive grants. Clearly the pain and devastation suffered by each individual flood victim is the same and not modified by the number of others simultaneously affected. Therefore, we ask Lancashire MPs and others to press for a scheme to be set up, similar to other government schemes but specifically for all flood victims.
6. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The recent EFRA Committee report confirms that many of the provisions of the Pitt Committee Report of 2007 were not fully implemented. It is particularly important that the situation is revisited and advice made statutory, as the Pitt recommendations are being widely ignored.

7. It is not compulsory for either flood resilience equipment or installers to comply to British Standards of either production or installation. This leads to a situation where flood victims have experienced problems and there is no machinery in place for redress. Robust statutory standards need to be urgently introduced to protect Communities vulnerable to flooding.
8. Many Lancashire towns and villages have combined drains (surface water and sewage in the same system) despite the systems only being designed to cope with sewage. Water Companies state that their responsibility is only for the sewage component and that any contribution of surface water resulting in flooding or discharge of untreated sewer content into the rivers at times of high precipitation is not their responsibility. Water Companies have no responsibility for any redress and according to OFWAT 'they are more concerned for their shareholders than their customers' (2014/15 Annual Report of the Water Services Regulation Authority). There needs to be a clear designation of responsibility for every type of drain nationally and particularly in vulnerable communities.
9. It has been reported to local Flood Action Groups that despite Flood Re and the recent (Oct 2016) Government Flood Resilience Action Plan, insurance companies are taking the opportunity to increase the premiums of flood victims. Sometimes by as much as 50%. It has been stated that they are in some instances refusing to insure previous flood victims at all!

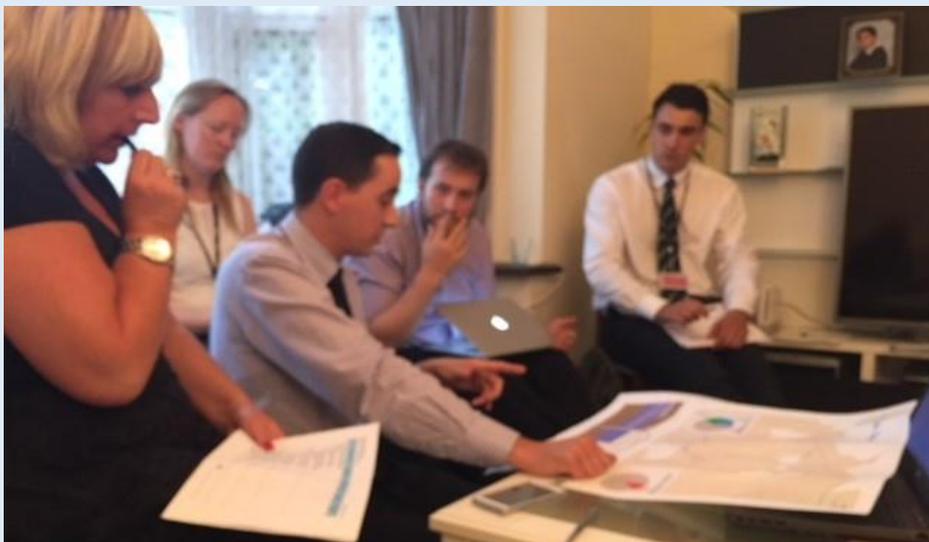
Kenton Rec. Flood Action Group

The Kenton Rec. Flood Action Group was set up in April 2016 with the support of the National Flood Forum

"We are a group of residents that regularly flood, causing disruption to our lives and much stress and anxiety. We found it difficult to get comprehensive information and what we did obtain was inconsistent.

Harrow Council offered us the support of the National Flood Forum and that's when we formed a Flood Action Group and started to work in partnership with those that manage flood risk collectively. This has helped us enormously to understand the issues we have, along with who has responsibility for each structure. We continue to hold partnership meetings to identify key issues and reduce flood risk"

Kenton Rec. Flood Action Group keep their wider community informed by producing newsletters and have made a resilience plan to help their at-risk neighbours understand what they could do to avoid losing precious items, how to keep themselves safe, and who can help.



Did you
know?

FACT

THINKING OF RESURFACING YOUR DRIVE?

Following a change in the law in England in October 2008, planning permission is now required for homeowners who wish to pave a front garden with a hard standing of more than five square meters if they are not using a permeable material. One of the main reasons for the legislation is that the conversion of gardens to driveways in urban areas has increased the amount of water that goes into the storm drains when it rains, and this has contributed to an increase in flooding.

NFF WELCOMES

Joining us as Project Officer for Staffordshire and Shropshire Debbie Hall...

Hello, I'm Deb Hall and I have just started working with the National Flood Forum.

Armed with plenty of theoretical knowledge on flooding causes, risks and control measures, it wasn't until during my first job after graduating that I had my real encounter with flooding, and began to understand the actual impact and devastation that flooding causes. I was working as the Area Scientist at the time for the West Somerset and Taunton Deane area of Wessex Water when the floods of 2000 hit the area. I'd seen flooding in various areas on the news many times before that event, but I'd never witnessed first-hand how much heartbreak, stress, devastation, damage and loss flooding causes to residents. Words could not describe the despair and anguish that I saw on people's faces as they were throwing out their personal items that had been destroyed in the flood water. Skips that lined the streets were overflowing with ruined household objects, many of which were items we collect and hold dear through our lives and with one devastating, weather event, lost were these irreplaceable belongings. It was overwhelming for me to witness such upset.



I live in a small rural village that has a neighbouring hamlet dramatically effected by flooding such that they have their own boat to check on people and to get supplies in and out of the area. Many people suffered deep flooding in their properties and although I have not witnessed the flooding there, the stories heard in the community are still vivid in people's hearts and minds.

So, as you can see, when the job position came up at The National Flood Forum, I was so excited to get involved and was over the moon when I was offered the position. I now work as a Community Project Officer covering Shropshire, Staffordshire, and I am also supporting a project in Wales.

When I am not working my passion is horses, in fact most animals. I have several horses and ponies and many cats and dogs. All opportunities to get down to the stables to tend and ride the horses are embraced along with my twelve-year-old daughter Ellie-Mae. In the summer, we will be off to dressage and jumping events that Ellie competes in and enjoy mixing and socialising with others who have the same interest.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2018

WHAT

Staffordshire Drop In Event

Flood and Coast Conference

Flood Expo

Emergency Services Show

WHEN

9th March from 8.30 a.m.
to 1.30 p.m.

20th, 22nd March

12th, 13th September

19th, 20th September

WHERE

Dove Room, Burton Town Hall,
Burton on Trent, DE14 2EB

Telford International Centre

NEC, Birmingham

Hall 5, NEC, Birmingham

AND ...

Michelle Steele Project Officer for Norfolk

I have recently joined the National Flood Forum team (January 2018) and will be initially supporting communities in the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston areas within Norfolk.

Having lived in Gorleston for many years and now living in a Norfolk Broad village close to a river means that I have been affected by flooding and seen first-hand how it significantly impacts, and the devastating effect on individuals and communities. I am therefore very excited and proud to be part of the National Flood Forum and supporting Norfolk communities.

My background is in Social Care, Education and Museums. I am an experienced project manager and love working with communities and individuals. I have a hons degree in English History and specialised in the Norman Conquest of 1066. I play an active part of the community I live in by being part of the various social groups including the writers group. I am also part of the fete committee and have been a school governor and parish councillor.

The project I will be initially managing is part of an Interreg European programme known as FRAMES (Flood Resilient Areas by Multi-Layer Safety Approach) www.northsearegion.eu/frames the National Flood Forum is working with Norfolk County Council and Anglian Water to support communities in Norfolk, particularly the Gt Yarmouth and Gorleston areas to reduce their risk of flooding.

The project, is a pilot, we believe the first to be carried out in the UK. I will be working with communities and agencies in the Northgate area in Gt Yarmouth, and Claydon and Lowestoft Road, areas in Gorleston and Lords Lane in Bradwell, to reduce the risk of flooding to properties by fitting measures such as water butts and raised beds to properties. We aim to install approximately 1200 water storage features which will protect up to 70 properties by September 2019.

Evidence shows that features such as installing water butts, raised beds or porous driveways (often referred to as SuDs – Sustainable Drainage Systems) can dramatically reduce the amount of surface water flowing on the roads, pavements and into the rivers. By reducing surface water, this helps prevent or reduce excess water entering people's homes.

I am presently liaising with community agencies with a view to contacting households, businesses and schools in the affected areas about the installation of water butts and similar small water storage features in their gardens.

If you are interested and would like further information, please contact:

Michelle Steel, Project Officer
National Flood Forum

Email: michelle@floodforum.org.uk



PRESS RELEASE

Flood & Coast 2018 puts UK flood challenges under spotlight

The UK's readiness to meet the challenges of flood and coastal erosion will come under the spotlight at a major exhibition and conference in March.

Flood & Coast is the major annual gathering of UK flood and coastal erosion risk management professionals. Convened by the Environment Agency, Flood & Coast takes place at the Telford International Centre from 20-22 March. Registration is now live on the event's website: www.floodandcoast.com

Delegates will include representatives from the Environment Agency, local authorities and related agencies, water companies, research academics, businesses, manufacturers and communities affected by, or at risk from, flooding.

Speakers will include the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, senior executives from the Environment Agency, the Chief Executive of the Met Office, Rob Varley, and Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change. One eagerly awaited address will be by guest speaker Jeff Lindner. A Director with the Harris County Flood Control District in Houston, Texas, he will speak about the response to the devastating floods that accompanied Hurricane Harvey last August.

Flood & Coast is the authoritative event for flood and coastal risk management in the UK, says Clare Dinnis, Deputy Director Strategy Deliver with the Environment Agency.

"It offers a single opportunity for individuals and organisations to come together from across so many different geographical and technical areas.

"It's where they can share ideas, learn about and discuss developments and innovations," says Clare, Chair of the Flood & Coast 2018 Advisory Committee, which comprises leaders from across the flood risk and coastal erosion community of professionals. The three-day event has been organised under the general theme of 'Risk, resilience and response in a changing climate'.

Conference delegates will explore how organisations and agencies involved in managing the risk of flooding can work in partnership with each other and with communities. They will consider ways of making homes and communities more resilient to lessen the impact of flooding.

Looking ahead, the conference will also consider the impact on flooding of challenges such as climate change and how the UK needs to respond.

A further strand running throughout this year's event will be sessions dedicated to the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy. These sessions will consider the direction the next strategy should take, the challenges it is likely to face and what it will need to achieve.

The conference programme is now available on the Flood & Coast website: www.floodandcoast.com

The Flood & Coast exhibition has a central role as an industry showcase, with some 80 exhibitors attending from all sectors of the industry. It offers a cost-effective medium for sourcing new suppliers, researching new products and benchmarking existing partners. The exhibition is also a crucial networking space, adds Paul Cobbing, Chief Executive of the National Flood Forum charity and a member of the Flood & Coast 2018 Advisory Committee.

"Flood & Coast brings together a rich concentration of flooding and coastal risk management experts and a mix of commercial companies, product manufacturers, community representatives and academics," says Paul. "Bringing together so many people from such diverse backgrounds and perspectives create a much more interesting event. The opportunity for networking is one of the most valuable aspects that Flood & Coast provides"

Flood & Coast 2018 will also host a gala dinner, on 21 March, where the winners of this year's Environment Agency Project Excellence Awards will be announced.

The awards celebrate best practice in project areas such as programme and project delivery, partnership working, asset management, innovation, value for money, sustainability and community leadership.

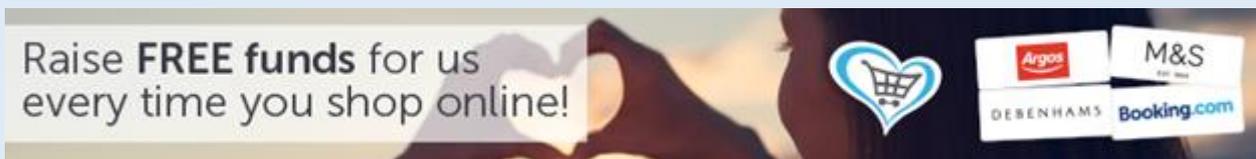
Flood & Coast's association partners include the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the National Flood Forum, the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA).

Flood & Coast is kindly sponsored by Van Oord, Black & Veatch, Jacobs, Flood Modeller, AECOM and VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins (VBA).

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM

Our purpose is to give support and help to grassroots communities at risk of flooding, we are committed to giving our time, energy and focus to these communities. Unfortunately, because we are not supported by any core funding we are always struggling to survive as a Charity. We really appreciate any support that can be given, maybe in the form of a fundraising event, or donations or any other ideas that you may have. We do have in place some ideas already as follows:

1. We now have a fundraising pack with lots of ideas on how people can raise funds.
2. The Give-as-you-live facility allows you to make a donation to the National Flood Forum every time you shop online, at no cost to you. What is more, we can use the funds to match against some of the other projects we are working on and double up the value. To sign up, please click on the link in the graphic below ...



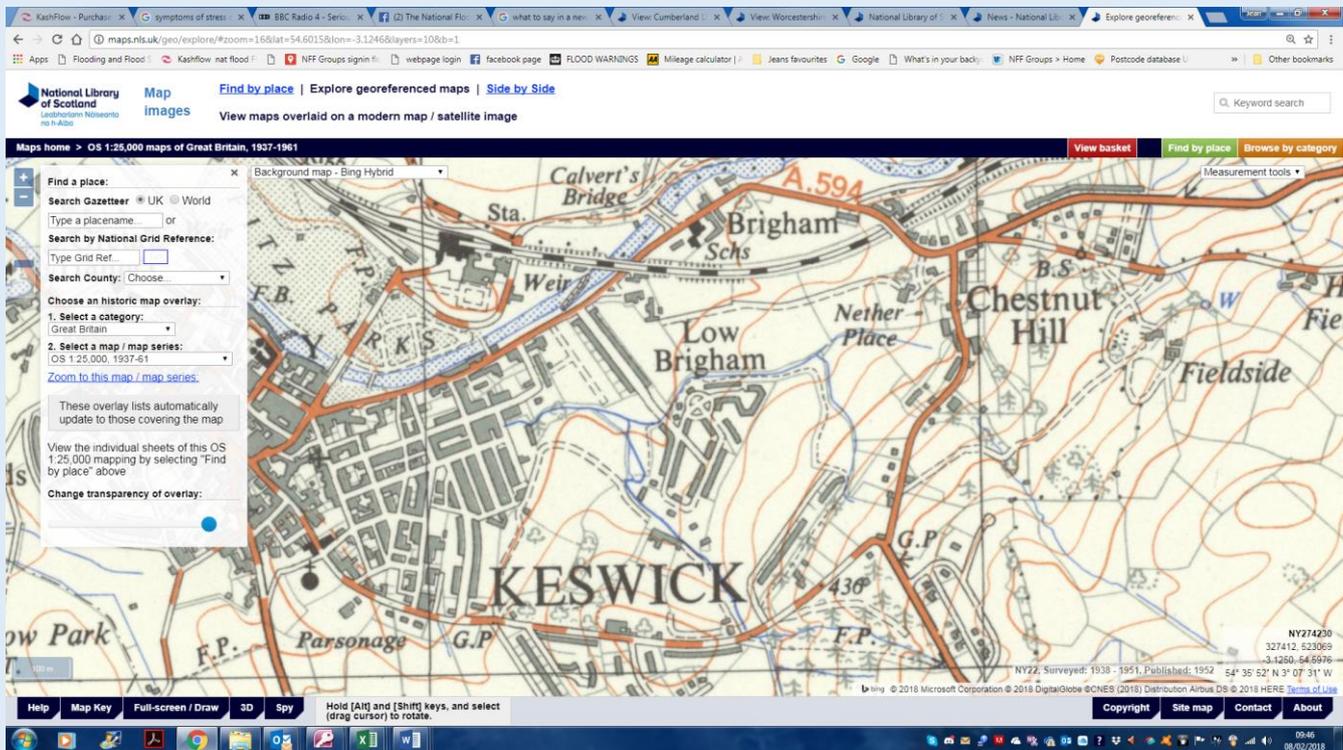
3. You can also text **RAIN07 £5* to 70070** to donate via your mobile directly or through our website at www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk **Suggested donation. Your chosen** amount comes from your pre-paid credit or is added to your bill and the National Flood Forum receives 100% of the donation.

Booking Holidays for 2018 ?

An advertisement for the 'Give as you Live' fundraising facility during holiday bookings. The background is a blue swimming pool with two women on inflatable rings. Text on the left says 'Escape to the sunshine...' and 'Even if it's just for a week! Raise FREE funds for us when booking your holiday and travel plans online'. At the bottom, there are logos for Expedia, Booking.com, flybe, Hotels.com, BRITISH AIRWAYS, trainline, lastminute.com, Thomson, Virgin trains, and Thomas Cook. A heart-shaped shopping basket icon is on the right, with the text 'Give as you Live®' below it.

CAN THE OLD MAPS HELP?

Could the old maps of your area help you research and locate old watercourses or see the historical flow of water from brooks and streams before modern developments arrived? Lynne Jones of Keswick Flood Action Group has sent us a wonderful resource for this in the National Library of Scotland www.nls.uk This site has a huge number of maps of England and Wales catalogued on its site.



Lynne and Mary from the Group gave us some examples. It really is great resource and could be useful to you.

Have a look at the example below;

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17&lat=54.6015&lon=-3.1246&layers=10&b=1>

The search panel on the left of the screen allows you to find a place, there are zoom options but importantly this site allows you to overlay one map on another by using the blue dot ● slider on the search panel, which overlays the old map on to a current google earth style current view. Some other links allowing different ways of accessing the maps.

<https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-england-and-wales/index.html>

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/marker/>

Be warned, it's an absorbing pastime!