

Post-flooding changes/hazards on River Dee

Observations by Pete Turner and Jonny Muir 11th January 2016

Jonny and I walked the lower part of the river at low tide this morning. The river was still roughly 1m above normal levels at Garthdee and this meant no meaningful observations could be made of the island opposite Duthie Park and upstream of there.

We will do the upper part of the river on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, as soon as the Garthdee measurement has returned to near normal levels.

Cheers,
Pete

Observations...

- 1) Inside (City) bend upstream of the railway bridge. A quantity of additional sand looks to have been deposited, so the river is probably a little shallower here than previously. There is a 2-3m long (very heavy) section of steel pipe which may or may not have been there before. With a few people, some rope and levers I'm sure we could move it if we wanted to. However, taking a line on the bottom of the normal three blocks on the railway bridge we think there is still adequate clearance around the normal line of the bend. Suggest we take an old four and a launch to check this area at the earliest opportunity.
- 2) Railway bridge. Arch 1 looks clearer than before, the part of the tree that had been wedged there for some time has disappeared. There is plenty of depth below the normal three blocks. No problem seen on the other arches or piers; we think the stream would have been too strong through the bridge for anything to have been deposited.
- 3) City side beach downstream of railway bridge. This area looks a lot cleaner. We believe more material has been deposited here and we think it goes out further into the stream. It is very unconsolidated where we walked into the water so probably a lot of sand and small pebbles that wouldn't catastrophically damage a boat, just scratches. It won't cause a problem when the river is high enough to go through the railway bridge but will potentially restrict the turning area near the railway bridge when the water is low. We should advise coxes to turn earlier than they are used to until they get a feel for the depth; we suggest downstream of Bon Accord Glass.
- 4) City side by the gates to Bon Accord Glass. There is a rocky outcrop, pipe and brickwork which hasn't changed. However, it presumably sets up an eddy behind it and the river is deeper – deep enough for a car. The roof of a red hatchback was just above the waterline at the 0.8m tide. The car is close to the bank and effectively in water protected by the aforementioned outcrop – advise coxes of its presence but it's probably too deep when the river is rowable and it's not an area we'd normally take a boat. We expect it will be removed from the river in the next few days anyway.
- 5) Boathouse side, railway bridge to Wellington Bridge. This looks like it's had a bit of a scouring, there's evidence of a few landslips but overall we doubt there will be any increased risk in a part of the river that has always had submerged boulders. Usual drill, keep away from the bank by a couple of blade lengths and it should be fine.
- 6) City side, railway bridge to Wellington Bridge. A little bit of extra sand amongst the outcrops but the old seaweed is still visible along the shore so we believe this is relatively unchanged.

- 7) City side, Wellington Bridge to Victoria Bridge. No sign of change, just a bit of a clean up..
- 8) Boathouse side, QE2 Bridge to ABC. This area is characterised by massive erosion of the sand and smaller pebbles. Larger boulders, rocks, consolidated sand and clays and concrete slabs (with or without mooring rings) are now proud of the surrounding beach material. The profile of the shore has changed from a gentle, fairly consistent gradient to something far more variable. Crews will need to pick their launching site a little more carefully and ensure there are no just-submerged rocks in the vicinity. Landing is more problematic and should be undertaken slowly. We recommend use of jetties and, ideally, ask someone on shore to give an "all-clear" whilst we get to grips with the new environment. Perhaps overshoot the landing site a little further out into the stream and then use a combination of slow manoeuvres to effectively come in sideways with the whole crew able to keep an eye on the river bed.
- 9) Boathouse side, ABC to Victoria Bridge. More erosion. As before, keep a couple of blade lengths away from the shore.
- 10) Victoria Bridge. No problem.

Suggestions...

ABC

- 1) Build one or two more steps to protect against more erosion under the bottom of the current last step and to avoid the difficult clamber up from or down to the beach. Until then, replace the breeze blocks and/or ask for help from additional club members.
- 2) Generally declutter and smooth the shore profile.
- 3) Be very careful about the area immediately downstream of the steps.

ASRA

- 1) Smooth off the steep but short drop that has been scoured just below the grass between ASRA and ABC.
- 2) Try and destroy the concrete slab (we made a start today) and move the one large boulder just upstream of it.
- 3) Declutter shore of larger rocks and smooth off the consolidated sands and clays that are standing proud as we get used to the bits that are getting in the way.
- 4) All kids to be wearing boots.

All ???

- 1) No night time rowing until we get used to launching and landing – maybe just a couple of weeks.
- 2) No rowing above the island for a few days until we've seen it at low tide/stream.
- 3) No rowing outside of high tide +/- 3 hours for a few days until we get a feel for whether our low tide restrictions are still ok in the area around the boathouses.
- 4) Railway bridge – three block rule still applies.
- 5) Launches – no additional restrictions on top of the above, just normal practice, get familiar with a clear path into and away from shore.
- 6) All coxes to be made aware of launching and landing risks plus possible shallower water downstream of Arches 1 & 2 on railway bridge.
- 7) Use jetties where possible. Ask for guidance when landing. Approach shore slowly and with extreme caution.
- 8) Paint some white lines on the pier of the QE2 Bridge so we have a new reference for unrowable low water.

PS Below are the comments that **Dan Davidson** attached to his email of 13/1/16;

Apart from the obvious destruction on the boathouse bank between Victoria Bridge and the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, there are a couple of other things to note:

- There are rocks poking out of the water close to the island.
- There is something new near the surface in the middle of the river between the Bothy and Ruthrieston Burn.

The water level at the Garthdee gauge was 1.7m, so there is really too much water still coming down to be sure what's going on above the railway bridge.