

Weir Today, gone tomorrow!

I've knocked out some weirs in my time but not many with such a bizarre composite of engineering innovation as the old summer weirs down on Cam Brook. Railway sleepers, logs, rock, plastic sandbags, chicken wire, wooden stakes, scaffold poles, angle iron, you name it, it was in there! There were certainly well built. After trying hand pulling, levering with bars and even an agricultural high-lift jack we resorted to a tirfor winch to pull the ironwork out on day one. Day two we managed to get the Land Rover to the riverbank. Even the most fervent weir-builders are no match for an industrial forestry winch!



Luke and Alex kitted up and ready to go



After trying sledge hammers, pry bars and a high-lift jack we resort to a winch



Enough mucking about. Call in the big toys!

Day 2 went quickly and we were done by early afternoon. Standing back we could already see the bed adjusting. There was a huge volume of gravel held up behind some structures. Getting this redistributed will make a big difference in the next spawning season.



River free and flowing



Gravel already on the move. Spawntastic!



Faster flowing and ready for some habitat features



Figure 1: Weir today, gone tomorrow!

With six weirs removed we can now stop thinking about what to take out and start thinking about what to put in. Allowing the bed to move freely means that with a bit of flow deflection, the occasional pinch-point and some extra cover habitat we should get this reach fishing really nicely. The aim is to get a greater number of pools and runs forming and to make the reach a little more drought-resistant by forcing the bed down (rather than holding the water up). Bouncing the flow around will help mitigate for the historic straightening of the channel. Letting a bit of light in will also really help.

It's just my luck that after postponing the habitat work due to the recent wet weather its looking like a nice week. Never mind, we'll get in and get the rest of the project done later in the year. Maybe after the mayfly have come and gone.