

Restoration of Mersey River (UK)

Mersey River was polluted as the industrial revolution proceeded, and for two hundred years, it had been deemed as the most polluted river in Europe. Its water environment started to improve in 1960s. The financial and environmental restoration activities were started for the Mersey River basin that had the problems of declining economy, devastated cities, and environmental issues.

From 1980, as a project to clean up the river mouth, a 15-year investment plan (170 million pounds or 34 billion yen) for cleaning the sewage wastewater was started by the government. From 1985, this effort was continued as Mersey River Basin Campaign, run mainly by the environment ministry. It is a 25-year program with the total budget of four billion pounds invested by the government and companies. It is a “world-encouraging advanced example” and is highly evaluated in EU as well as in UK.

◆ Key to Restoration

- Restoration of Mersey River basin
- Restoration of waterfront and economy
- Partnership spirit

◆ Overview of the River

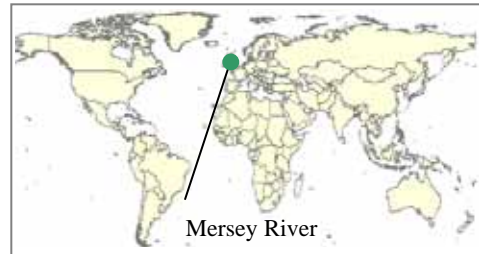
Mersey River flows along Manchester and Liverpool, the origin of the industrial revolution in UK. The basin's dimension is approximately 5000 km². From 1800 to 1900, its water system was continuously destroyed due to rapid industrialization and urbanization.

The Mersey River area had the problems of declining economy, devastated cities, and environmental issues like other cities in the developed countries in the world.

In UK, they came to recognize the limitation of a system in which the government took care of everything, as the

experiment of model social welfare state represented. There was a structure of conflict between the “public sector”, the “voluntary sector”, and the “private (enterprise) sector.”

Under these circumstances, Thatcher Administration was born to make a breakthrough to the situation. Privatization policy started, and the Mersey River basin's environmental restoration efforts started together with the efforts to revitalize the local economy.



◆ Project Efforts for Restoration

[Restoration of Mersey River basin]

Mersey River had been deemed as the most polluted river in Europe after the industrial revolution. From 1980, as a project to clean up the river mouth, a 15-year investment plan (170 million pounds or 34 billion yen) for cleaning the sewage wastewater was started by the government. The water quality was improved in the river to make it appropriate for fish inhabitation, and in water channels and canals. The sewage system was also improved.

[Restoration of waterfront and economy]

It aimed at forming an attractive waterfront environment good for business, housing development, tourism, cultural heritage, recreation, and wildlife.

[Partnership spirit]

The coordinated public sector, voluntary sector, and private (enterprise) sector, together with the partnership among the three NPOs, over 600 NGOs, and private enterprises, support people to recognize the waterfront environment's value. Various activities including events of waterfront experiencing and environment learning, waterfront cleaning, and initiatives based on basins of each tributary stream, are in operation.



Regain people to waterfront

Source: "On Mersey River Basin Campaign in England," Katsuhide Yoshikawa, "Rivers," No.612, Japan River Association, p.61.

"Toward human-nature symbiotic basin for urban Restoration -- people, water, land, and environment --" Katsuhide Yoshikawa, Gihodo Shuppan Co., Ltd., 2004.2.

JICE Report Vol.4, 2003.11. International forum "Basin's total management, and partnership and consensus building among residents." (http://www.jice.or.jp/jice_report/pdf04/jice_rpt04_14.pdf)