

NEWBURY ANGLING ASSOCIATION



Founded 1878

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NAA NEWSLETTER WINTER -2021/22

Thank you for reading the second of our planned quarterly newsletters.

Christmas and New Year are behind us now for another year, and we hope this newsletter will inspire you to dig those long johns out, fill up the flask and get to the waters – there's fish to be had!

Remember we'd like it to be YOUR newsletter, so please send in ideas for content, brags about your catches and photos old and new to us at enquiries@newburyangling.org.uk

You can also ensure your copy of what is probably your favourite Newbury fishing- themed newsletter comes straight to your device by emailing a request to the same address

River Kennet Gets a Seasonal Boost



On, or about New Year's Day each year, the Kennet gets a boost when the water table at its source at Swallowhead Spring near Avebury rises and overflows into the Kennet. The spring is said to have been as a site for worship of the Celtic Goddess Brid or Bridget, who presided over fire, art and beauty, but it should also be revered by us anglers as this wintertime surge increases the depth and speed of flow, which can get fish feeding and less inhibited. Not convinced? Then have a word with Dave Taylor, who landed a 3lb perch and this amazing p.b. 6lb 4 chub from a NAA water. Dave's cold weather hot tips are to keep an eye on the weather forecast and fish after dark in the milder spells. He adds that a 'flask of tea is a must' You can

follow this year's surge on the EA measuring station at Winterbourne Monkton via <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/7112>

WINTER MATCHES

Every winter brings four pike matches scheduled across the venues. Members are invited to enter any or all of them and compete for the Buckingham Cup, for top overall weight and Ben Smith trophy for the biggest pike caught across the four matches.

The first was held at Speen Moors on November with the following three fish caught.



Kevin Richardson
7lbs 4



Nathan Wheeler
5lbs 9



Dave Taylor (organiser)
3lb 6

You may have read about this first match on Newbury Today - if not, you can read it on <https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/sport/kevin-takes-victory-to-open-new-season-9225022/>

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Newbury Angling Association hold first pike match of the new season

By Liam Headd - liam.headd@newburynews.co.uk
Published: 11:00, 13 November 2021

Kevin Richardson also won the second match at Collins lake, where conditions were terrible, with bright sun and sharply dropping temperatures after initial heavy rain. The only fish caught between just five doughty anglers who braved the conditions was this 5lb 12 specimen, which came in the last half hour of the match. Well done, Kevin.

So, both cups remain very much up for grabs as we wait for some of the big girls to show. The remaining fixtures are on the following Sundays:



23rd January - Bulls Lock (10am til 3pm). Draw to be held at Widmead car park at 9am –

20th February – Speen Moors (10am til 3pm), Draw at 9am again. Meet and park at the car park by the Moors over Guyers Bridge, accessed via Enborne Road along which the normally locked gate will be open.

No prebooking required – just turn up on the day. The more the merrier and the more pike we might see - so please come along.

IN OTHER MATCH NEWS

We lent our stretch of the K&A at Enborne to our neighbours, Reed Thatcham Angling Association for thirteen of their members to fish their ACA Cup Match on 21st November. NAA members might be interested to see the result (I did email them asking for more details of fish, swims, etc but did not receive a reply)

1st - Dave Clark 19lb 1oz

2nd - Ray Riggs 8lb 8oz

3rd - Dave Smith 7lb 4oz

OTHER FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

| DATE | VENUE | CATEGORY | TROPHY | MEET | MATCH TIME |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|-------|-------------|
| 23-Feb-2022 | Enborne Canal (Up) | Over 60's | Field & Stream Cup | 9:00 | 10.00-15.00 |
| 16-Mar-2022 | Avington D | Over 60's | Field & Stream Cup Silver Trees Trophy | 9:00 | 10.00-15.00 |
| 19-Mar-2022 | Dobsons | 24hr Carp match | | 11:00 | 12:00-12:00 |
| 09-Apr-2022 | Bellwood | 24hr Carp match | | 11:00 | 12:00-12:00 |
| 21-May-2022 | Dobsons | 24hr Carp match | | 11:00 | 12:00-12:00 |

HALF-PRICE-HALF SEASON-PERMITS

Inspired by this newsletter to get your neighbours to join you in the NAA? Have pals whose wives are missing out on the pleasure finding escapee maggots in their fridges? or work colleagues frittering their time away spending time with their families when they could be on the lakeside? Then show them the following...

| Category | Half Season (1 st January – 15 June 2022) |
|--|--|
| Senior including ladies | 50% off – Now £35.00 |
| Junior (aged under 12) | Free |
| Junior (aged 12 to 16 inclusive) | 50% off – Now £5.00 |
| Pensioners (Concessionary rod licence) | 50% off – Now £20.00 |
| Associate (living more than 12 miles from Newbury) | 50% off – Now £45.00 |
| Associate Concessionary (Disabled and OAP) | 50% off – Now £35.00 |

To join, download an application form from the membership section of the NAA website at <https://newburyaa.org.uk/index.php/en/membership>. Complete the and submit with two passport photos and payment to the Membership Secretary at the address shown on the form, or take it to Tony at Thatcham Angling Centre, Sagecroft Road, Thatcham.

SWIRLY AND ME (THIRD TIME LUCKY)

By Rob Allen

After joining the club at the start of the season in 2020 I decided to throw myself in the deep end and start my NAA campaign on Collins. I'd heard on the grapevine that the lake held some stunning carp that could do big weights, it is a relatively low stocked lake for its size and is classed as a challenging specimen water.

The campaign got off to a good start and I hit the ground running. After a lot of walking round, watching the water like a hawk at all hours and chatting to a few people on the bank (as you do), I decided to focus my efforts where I'd seen the most fish activity on my travels.

Following on from a two-night blank, and after seeing showing fish I moved peg and settled in for a three-night session. On the 30th of July 2020 at 05:30 I had a take and an incredible fight under the tip stripping line in powerful bursts, proper beating me up as I'd fast learned the fish tend to do in Collins. I'd met Swirly for the first time.

After that epic battle, she weighed in at a very respectable 35lbs 2oz's and was in cracking condition considering the time of year.

I'd fished various pegs around the lake with some awesome captures along the way before I returned to the same peg as I'd caught Swirly from before and on the 28th of October 2020 at 16:45 on exactly the same spot using exactly the same rig and baiting tactics, she graced my net again. She had obviously been on the munch and weighed in at an impressive 37lbs 4oz's.



Fast forward a year and a bit to the 9th of November 2021, I'd been getting around the lake and had fished all but four of the 18 pegs so decided to fish a peg that I hadn't fished in before as one of my personal goals is to fish all of the pegs on the lake.

I was staring a four-night blank in the face as it had been really cold with some brutal weather conditions and low pressure. Thankfully knowing the fish in Collins like high pressure weather, on the fourth and final morning of my session a warm weather front moved in and the fish started to feed. I had a 28lbs 8oz common at 01:00 using the same tactics as before but with the addition of some naturals in the mix due to the cold conditions and after continually baiting a spot near the island for four days the bobbin smacked the rod blank fishing locked up and Swirly filled the net for the third time bang on 7 o'clock in the morning. She looked massive in the net but I was blown away when the scales tipped over the 40-pound barrier and she weighed in at a colossal 40lbs 10oz's. This time round she was showing off her winter colours and was in mint condition. A massive thank you to Head Bailiff Chris Fox for coming to the rescue and taking some cracking pictures.



I didn't know at the time but was informed shortly after that Swirly was the new lake record so you could say third time lucky, however given the fact that she loves to feed hard and is a big-framed fish with room to grow I don't think the record will stand for long. I'd say whoever's lucky enough to catch her before spawning this year may be in for a big surprise.

Simple rigs on a stiff boom with a strong set up, big hooks, small baits and fishing the 7ft zones have served me well so far along with the ever-faithful corn, corn and more corn.

Collins is a fantastic lake, an absolute gem with a vast variety of under water and visual features to fish on or to, such as silt gullies, marginal shelves, gravel bars, plateaus, two islands, three sets of pads, a few snags and stunning bulrush and reed margins.

Good luck and tight lines to you all.

Rob

Thank you to Rob from the Editor and, I'm sure, the members for his inspiring description. May you have many more dates with your good-looking lady friend.

THE CRAYS (PART 2)

You may recall from the last newsletter, that Andrew Leech, of The Artisan Fisherman Ltd, Thatcham, estimates that he removes in the region of 1,000 adult crayfish every week during their active season from our Brimpton stretch alone.

Here are few more facts Andrew shared with me over a beer (or was it two?). In 2020, the Artisan Fisherman Ltd took an incredible 24 tonnes of Crays (approx. half a million crayfish), across the south of England mainly from the Kennet, including NAA sections, a large proportion of which were exported by the truckload to the likes of Eastern Europe for selling live or cooking before sending to Scandinavia and Russia!

However, the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 then came in to force in an attempt to control the spread of Reg Signal crayfish amongst other problem species, which made it an offence to release, transport or sell live non-native crayfish. With the food industry only interested in buying live crayfish, many customers have turned to the less litigious China for their supplies meaning The Artisan Fisherman Ltd lost much of its market. As a result, only 1.2 tonnes have been taken this year, mainly for zoo food. The remainder, inevitable, remain in our waterways, where their epidemic breeding rate will continue to rise.

The Artisan Fisherman Ltd has eleven 9ft tanks each can hold up to 350kg (ie around 7,500 crayfish per tank). The new law banning live sales means a processed route is the only option, which adds considerable cost and means the business has had to become food approved. Thus it must follow the associated strict guidelines all of which push up the price to a point where no mass outlet has currently been found.



In these days of concerns about food production, food miles and sustainability, it seems monstrous that this cheap and nutritious food source is being legislated against, while, the ethnically-cleansing impact that the crays have in the water, dining on fish, fish eggs and all native species continues.

But it isn't only the crayfish's voracious and unfussy diet that should concern us all, in the autumn the crayfish breed before they tunnel up to two metres into the bank for protection including cannibalism from other crayfish. This inevitably weakens the banks as seen in recent weeks locally with the canal breach causing damaging water loss at Calcot. Though the Canal & Rivers Trust reported the cause of the bank damage as heavy rainfall, this would surely have been compounded, and not for the first time, by the mass tunnelling of crayfish. It has taken weeks of dropping in 100 tonnes of material per day to

reinforce the area at a cost probably over £1M.

Andrew's rough figures estimate that 1 crayfish multiplies to 600 crayfish in 10 years!! No wonder this is a massive problem!

Wouldn't it have made sense to have been pre-emptive with a mass netting programme to keep crayfish numbers under some sort of control? You'd have thought so, yet the CRT actively bans crayfishing on canals including the Kennet & Avon as it says this activity would damage the tow paths!

While the effects of fish predation from cormorants (suggested in the Angling Times recently that each adult bird eats 2lb of fish every day) and otters is more visible to us anglers, personally I think it is this unseen enemy within that is the biggest threat to stocks. What can be done? I will report next newsletter of a gene-modifying project being developed at Edinburgh University which aims to render invasive species infertile – but this is estimated not to come live for another ten years, and then may take another thirty to render the whole population as sterile. Until then, Andrew Leech's belief that we should be trapping the s*hit out of them, which he says if done in anger works! He believes an organised/fully traceable mass culling program needs to be put into place (possibly with all crayfish used as animal food or even turned to fertiliser) before it is too late for the UK's rivers! He believes it is the only viable option under current guidelines and it would be cheaper in the long run!

We are lucky to have him trapping our waters as there are currently no other legal crayfish trappers operating in the South of England, for the sake of our rivers let's hope a solution can be found and his business can survive.

But don't take Andrew Leech's word for it: it's worth taking a look at a 2015 Youtube clip from naturalist, Chris Packham on <https://youtube.com/watch?v=qimssqyh928>. Meanwhile we look forward to spring/early summer when once the temperature warms up the females release their young, both males and females moult shedding their shells before they resume their cycle again!



SOME MEMBER TIPS TO AVOID THE WORST OF THE CRAYS

- Keeping your baits off the deck popped up or using a paternoster rig helps
- Use artificial corn/maggots as hook bait
- With boilies, stick to hard baits only.
- Avoid using tungsten putty – they love the stuff!
- Instead of boilies use cork balls soaked in flavouring
- Beat them at their own game: use crayfish-shaped lures and twitch them across the bed for perch on the canals

Newbury Angling Association Members Official Group



Lee Stonell Author

3 of the buggers on my bait!!!!



Check out our Facebook page to see the Stonell family bringing in three crays on a single deadbait in November 2021

100 THINGS YOU WANTED TO ASK TONY OF THATCHAM ANGLING CENTRE BUT WERE TOO AFRAID TO ASK!

We all rely on Thatcham Angling Centre for our maggots and Arlesey bombs, but did you know that February brings 20 years of Tony's tackle shop. We thought you'd like to find out more about the man without whom, we'd all have to turn to golf or, heaven forbid, supporting Reading FC, Over to you, Tony.

How did you first get into fishing? As a boy we had the river Kennet flowing at the bottom of the garden. As soon as I'd learned to swim, I was allowed to fish there. I must have been about 6.

Did you always dream of owning a tackle shop one day? Absolutely not! But the opportunity came up a few years ago and the circumstances were right – and the rest is history!

February 2022 brings up 20 years of Thatcham Angling Centre. What changed have you seen for the better? The materials they use to make tackle now are so much better, such as carbon fibre etc, The advent of commercial fisheries has also been good for a lot of anglers.



... and for the worse? I regret that the match scene has changed so much. In the day, many matches were very well supported, I remember some held at Willows where pretty much every peg was taken – and that's a lot of swims. Also the slow decline of the rivers. There's a number of reasons; predation of course, but also the amount of bait going into the river has fallen, and much of what there is are pellets, which don't appeal to all species.

How has Covid changed your business? Well, it increased massively in lockdown as fishing was the only thing people could do. Business is still seasonal, but it's probably still up a bit from pre-Covid times.

Have the maggots ever escaped? No, I've been lucky so far! A few near misses maybe. Fridges used to contain copper which deteriorated with the ammonia the maggots gave off, but they use aluminium today which is far better.

Do the lobworms really get imported from Canada? The night crawlers? Yes, they do. It's just how it is. Sometimes they get delivered in packaging straight from the airport.

What's your favourite type of fishing? I like all fishing, but mainly I fish the canals these days. You don't need to carry so much kit! Some days I fish the pole, others the feeder, sometimes the waggler: whatever the water requires on the day.

What is your favourite NAA water? *All of them; as long as I'm catching fish...*

What do you consider to be the best fish that you've caught? *That's a tricky one. I did catch a 20lb pike as a kid, a 3lb 4oz perch at Avington, and four bream for 44lb 7 at Willows once. But really, I fish for the day – the best fish is always the next one!*

Give us some tips for winter fishing *Keep your feet warm, keep your head warm and take a hot flask. Don't throw much bait in or you'll fill the fish you're trying to catch, and be prepared to wait: sometimes the fish will all come on a short flurry. Remember: no two days are the same,*

When ARE you going to get that door fixed?? *Ah, that's a job for the future!*

Finally, tell us something that we don't know about you *No comment! But I do like listening to classical music.*

A big thank you to Tony for being such a good sport, and here's to the next twenty years!

A TRIP TO SPEEN MOORS

A description of one of our more challenging and exciting waters by long-standing and revered angler, Chris Plumb:

I love Speen Moors – unfortunately, it is often not reciprocated! Speen can be a capricious and fickle suitor often slow to reveal her piscatorial charms. Spend time exploring though, and you will be rewarded for your efforts to get to know her!

When I first joined Newbury AA in 1982 Speen was the venue I made a beeline for. My first trip was on 20th June of that year – I took my then girlfriend with me and caught a gudgeon and a 1lb grayling – I went back a couple of weeks later (minus girlfriend) and caught an even bigger grayling – and whilst modest by what I expect to catch today – it was at the time a p.b. Over the next 20+ years Speen would provide me with a string of PBs though, alas, none of my current ones are from here. Chub are now my primary quarry when I visit the venue – though in that first ever season I would have to wait until December to get my first and it would prove to be the only one I caught in 8 visits that season!



Over the following years I got to know the venue better and it has produced some spectacular Red Letter days for me. I caught my first ever 3lb+ perch from there at the end of the 98/99 season and followed it up with a PB chub of 6lb 3oz in the October of the 99/00 season (my PB prior to this having stood at 4lb 13oz!).

The next decade probably stands as the high-water mark for the venue (at least from a personal perspective) and I could



pick out almost any trip from my diaries during that period and report some eye watering returns – for example 2 X 6lb+chub in a morning (with 2 X 4lb, 3 Bream over 4lbs and a 2lb 12oz perch as backup!) or 10 perch over 2lb (on a day when it snowed!) both these trips coming a couple of months apart in the autumn/winter of 2004.

Whilst these halcyon days may never return – there's enough water to still

throw up surprises – especially as it is lightly fished. Access to the venue is from the north and the south. The nearest parking is next to the bridge by the back carrier. To get here turn left off the A4 immediately after the northbound (2nd as you come out of Newbury) A34 roundabout heading west. Follow the track down the hill and under the Newbury bypass until you come to the bridge – where you can park up. (see What3Words: lucky.notice.guess) This route can be problematic in wet winters as the track under the A34 can get flooded (and is very slow to drain away). As I will often combine a trip to Speen with a few hours at dawn or dusk (or both) on the canal I usually park up by the railway bridge on Bone Mill Lane (insist.could.punt) – though the walk is much longer from this direction.

I usually concentrate my efforts on the faster, streamier sections of the venue – ie all the water upstream of the Green Bridge and the back carrier – though access along the full length of this is somewhat restricted by fallen trees at present – something the estate has said they will remedy. The first field (as you access from the south) wasn't on the NAA book when I joined and it was here that the opening scenes of the Midwinter Madness episode of A Passion for Angling were filmed in the early 1990s. The weir pool is hardly recognisable today since many of the trees were cut down a couple of winters ago – and the swim at the bottom of the field in the right hand corner is still referred to as the APFA swim. It's where Chris Yates ledgers sweetcorn for chub and fires up the Kelly Kettle for a cuppa. On a separate note the swim in the left hand corner – where the 2 carriers merge produced that very first 3lb+ perch for me and in the 2 decades since I have never caught another perch from this spot – of any size!

Continuing our walk through the venue, along the permitted path away from the weir pool we come, eventually, to a locked gate (which can be opened with your NAA key). This gives access to a stretch of river know as Parliament Draft – so named – as it was said to have been dug by Parliamentary prisoners during the English Civil War – or so the legend goes! Regardless of its etymology it's a stretch I will pretty much always visit when I go to Speen as I can usually winkle out a chub or 2 from it! It also used to be excellent for perch – until all the fallen trees and cover was grubbed out a few years back – alas.

Downstream from Parliament Draft the river does a left turn and the stretch here is known as Greenbanks (I know not why). Again, this has been somewhat 'tidied' up in recent years to the detriment of the fishing – though, again, I still usually run a float through it – if only for old times' sake – it is after all where I snaffled that first 6lb chub all those years ago.

Downstream of the Green Bridge the river is deeper and slower – I rarely fish here though have had the occasional decent perch when I have ventured down this far. The beat often produces some good pike and there are some big river bream if you can find them.

As for tactics – well for me - it's always float rod and centre pin – well nearly always, if I'm worming for perch I may have a fixed spool strapped to my float rod! I like to stay mobile and explore – so often end

up walking several miles when I fish here and I rarely see another angler doing likewise! Most anglers I meet are usually after the Pike either lure fishing or dead-baiting if they're brave enough to run the gauntlet of Signal Crayfish. The venue is excellent for pike – I rarely fish for them – but even so have had them over 15lb on trotted worm!

Whilst I've got a bit misty eyed in this article about the Speen of old – today's water is still worth the effort – I have had numerous chub in the 4-5lb bracket in the past 2 winters – some stonking dace of over 12 oz, roach to nearly a pound this autumn and there's even some half decent perch showing up again. And if none of that is to your liking then there's always the Pike!

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello All.

I wish you all a Happy New Year and thank you for continuing to be members of the Association I feel I have to write to remind all members of two key rules and regulations.

Firstly, I have received an increasing number of reports of litter being left in the bankside, or thrown into undergrowth. I really shouldn't have to be writing in what is intended to be a light-hearted newsletter. As well as being unsightly, we all know the dangers to wildlife and the fish as well as the potential to encourage even more rats. We cannot and should not have to install bins, so please do the decent thing and take your rubbish home. I remind you that we operate a no-tolerance policy to those found to be leaving litter and members deemed to be breaching this rule run the risk of having their membership withdrawn, but more than this, it's about just doing the decent thing.

Please note that under Rule 8.1, "Anglers must remove from the fishery any litter, hooks, line or spent equipment, in or adjacent to their swim whether it is their litter or has been left by others and dispose of it correctly."

Secondly, Regulation 4.9 includes, "Fish must be returned to the water from which they are caught. It is illegal to move fish between waters without authorisation. Any unauthorised fish movement will be reported to the appropriate authority." This applies to both match and pleasure fishing.

I know there has been practise to move fish between waters (for example, the moving of carp caught in Alders to Willows etc). Please understand that this and any other practises to move fish between waters is not supported by the NAA and must cease. The Regulation exists for good reasons regarding fish health and our legal responsibilities. There will be occasions under our disclosed Fishery Management Plan that will require fish transfer, but these will have been approved in advance. I trust all members will adhere to this and all other Regulations as provided to you upon taking out membership.

Thank you.

David Marshall
Chairman

ON THE BANKSIDE

We like to bother anglers while they're out trying to get some peace and quiet to get views of how some members are doing and gauge their views,

(1) DAN – We found Dan and his glamorous partner fishing the canal at Enborne as darkness approached one December evening'...



How long have you been an NAA member?

On and off for years. I was a member as a kid. My latest stint is about 2 years

You've just missed me catching a small perch on a ned-rig worm lure. We live a short distance away so often come down for short sessions. Mind you, I did fish Speen Moors yesterday with smelt and mackerel deadbaits. I swapped swims every half hour or so and had three pike. I don't weigh my fish, but reckon one was easily into double-figures. On the downside I did manage to drop my landing net in dog mess!

(Dan was kind enough to send us pictures – see below)



What is your favourite fish?

It must be the roach. The biggun's are really hard to get and are just stunning, whereas even the small ones are pretty fish.

Best fish from a NAA water?

That must be the perch I caught in the summer on a spinner. Again, I didn't weigh it, but I'm pretty sure it was a P.B.

What changes would you like to see with the NAA?

I'd like to hear of recent catches, stocking levels and maps showing the depths of all of the lakes. And more bailiffs – I know it's a tricky issue, but you see plenty of lure anglers on the Moors, many without landing nets or mats and I'm pretty sure they're not all members.

(note: Thanks, Dan. Noticeboards with this information are currently in production, and the comments re bailiffs will be raised at the next committee meeting.)



(2) A MIDWINTER MEETING

January 2nd. Unseasonably high double-figure temperatures, favourable air pressure and a south westerly wind that had been blowing for days, the carp in Willows just had to be queuing up and ravenous in the north corner. Or maybe not. After 4 hours of watching my bobbin rocking in said wind, I turned to the standard default of a waggler and maggot blank-buster. It worked too, if three roach for a few ounces counts as working. Then the un-forecast rain moved in and drenched everything for half an hour. I packed up and squelched back to the car at which point, naturally, the rain eased and I walked to see how the two other anglers were getting on.



“I’m a new member,” said Mat, “and this is my third visit. I’ve had a Common of maybe 4lbs earlier, which is better than the blank I had the other day. It was in great nick too. My other session was at Alders. If I’d had a keepnet it would have made a nice bag of perch, bream and roach. I’m looking forward to pole fishing there when the weather improves.” Turns out Mat lives in Harwell where, “there isn’t much in the way of local fishing. I looked at a few other clubs, and discovered NAA on an internet search and their website looked the most appealing. I only wish it was more up to date, particularly with maps. An up-to-date PDF for each venue would be my suggestion. I can’t see it would be difficult, and would make a big difference. Oh, and though I’ve tied a few times, I’ve not been able to get on the forum.”

At this point, the other angler had wound in and came over to join the chat. “I’ve been a member of Newbury for two years,” said Dan. He lives in Marlborough having not fished for over ten years while doing “other things, like learning to ride a horse! My wife loves them but it does mean I get a ready supply of worms!” Dan chose NAA because, “the website was friendlier than other clubs. It struck me as being the site of a well-run club and what’s more, there was none of the bitching I read on other forums. Also, it’s a big bonus to be able to park my vehicle securely and not in a field somewhere.”



Dan couldn’t pick a favourite venue as he likes to mix it up. “I really enjoy fishing Warwicks. Sometimes I use my 15ft rod as a whip. There’s plenty of fish of all sizes in there, and I’ve had tench of over 5lbs there. I wish something could be done to improve Dixons as it is so overgrown with fallen trees. My best fish on Newbury waters are probably a double-figure bream at Willows where I’ve also had Crucians of 2lb 12 and 2lb 14. I also enjoy trotting at Speen Moors and fishing the river at Brimpton, but though I’ve had a 6lb chub there, I’ve also suffered plenty of blanks. Sadly, the Kennet is not the river it once was. A lot of it is because of the otters that were illegally released: there was a natural population, but now there’s just too many. I

guess the numbers will sort themselves out, but in the meantime, it's the fishing that's taking the hit. Also, the crayfish. We've got to try and do something. I'd be happy to help if the NAA organised something: maybe feed the river with pellets to give the crayfish something other than fish eggs to eat. All that seems to be doing well are the trout, which I think is that they spawn when the crayfish are less active."

Both lads said they wanted to fish more matches, but though the fixtures were on their permits, they weren't in the habit of looking at them and often missed them, as was the case today, when neither were aware of the river match taking place at Enbourn while we fished. They also queried why some matches were age-restricted, and couldn't see why they would be excluded. They both said they would like to see more matches on different venues.

We commended Mat having watched him make another pinpoint cast to the edge of the island. "I was taught to cast by Steve Ringer (*Feeder World Champion*). It's quite a story: I wrote to *Improve Your Coarse Fishing* magazine when I was posted to Afghanistan asking about fishing courses I could book. They were very helpful and asked me to contact them when I returned to the UK. I did, and they put me on a Daiwa-sponsored course where over four days, Steve Ringer taught us how to fish the feeder, the pole and pellet waggler. It was amazing, didn't cost me a penny and I even got given free tackle!"

I asked the boys for any top tips they might have to share with other members.

- Dan - Always have a pot of worms in your tackle bag. No matter how hard the fishing gets you've always got a chance with a worm.

- Mat - I do the same with maggots. I always have a few reds to turn to if it gets tough.

- Dan - Having stabbed myself with treble-hooks many times when pike fishing, I've changed to catfish hooks. These are single-point and curved. I've hooked no less pike, and it's so much easier to unhook pike quickly and therefore more safely for the them.



- Mat - With casting a feeder, chuck out an empty feeder with no hook, just to get a sighter. Without the weight of bait you will scare less fish, If you keep the rod vertical and feather it down, you will make less splash, and create enough slack so that when you clip-up, you will have around 15ft of 'extra' line should you hook a fish that wants to make a dash for it. I tend to clip-up when casting to an island as a hooked fish can't swim away from you.

- Dan- Talking feeders, at Alders I chuck out three large feeders of bait about 10ft short of the lilies where the water is deeper, then switch to a smaller feeder so I'm not crashing over the fish's heads so much. It seems to work for the bream; and they do love a worm!

- Mat - At the grand age of 49, I finally worked out that when float fishing, it is worth spending ten minutes plumbing my swim before starting. Before then, I just plumbed the spot I was planning to fish, and so ran the risk of missing out on any shelves or deeper holes.



Even without the excuse of putting together the newsletter, I am never disappointed when talking to members on the bankside. Without exception I find them friendly, knowledgeable and keen to share tips with others. Cheers to Mat and Dan, who certainly were all of these things on a wet and 'orrible midwinter day. I will ensure the points raised are brought up at the next committee meeting.

WORKING GROUPS - THE TUESDAY CLUB

The Tuesday Club was started to provide an additional resource for assisting in the maintenance of the fisheries. We started up in September and have already worked on a variety of locations. In my opinion the most notable being the considerably improved access along the Kennet at Speen Moor but we have worked on many other locations such as Dobson's, Willows, Alders and Warwick's Water. In addition, river stretches at Brimpton and Aldermaston have also been improved.

We chose a Tuesday to predominantly target retired members, though all are very welcome. It provides a form of light physical exercise for individuals attending, who work at their own pace. It is also rewarding in that you see the fruits of your labour and that members are putting something back into our sport and our club. However, the most important point is that it acts as a social event as well, where anglers can chat and generally socialise. Something that sometimes is an issue for people when they retire.



Notifications are placed on Facebook and in the Thatcham Angling Centre advising of upcoming locations and start times which is usually 9am and last until approximately lunchtime. All tools are provided but anyone interested in helping out please wear appropriate footwear and bring sturdy gardening gloves. Having said the above anybody is welcome on our Tuesday Club sessions if you have any spare time.

Dougie Hull

If Tuesdays don't work for you, please join Fishery Manager Dave Prictor's team, who do brilliant work on alternate Sunday mornings, advertised in the same way. **YOUR FISHERIES NEED YOU!** Ed,

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

There, that's it, everyone. I hope you found this issue informative. Please send any thoughts, comments or suggestions to enquiries@newburyangling.org.uk We'd be delighted to hear from you. We welcome any submissions, but in particular extend the invitation to any of you lure anglers out there, as all the editing team (ie me) know enough lure fishing can be written on the back of a crank bait.

Happy fishing to you until the Spring Issue. Don't forget to tell us all about it!

