

NEWBURY ANGLING ASSOCIATION



Founded 1878

CHAIRMAN - David Marshall

VICE CHAIRMAN – Dougie Hull

SECRETARY – Currently vacant

FISHERY MANAGER – David Prictor

PROJECT MANAGER – Paul Fatcher

MEMBERSHIP SEC - Dave Smith

MATCH SECRETARY – Henry Sadler

TREASURER – Martin Strike

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE EDITOR
- Martin Strike

See permit for contact details

Website - www.newburyaa.org.uk

NAA NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2022

Welcome to this, the fourth in our run of quarterly newsletters.

After the hottest and driest summer on record, the levels of the lakes are very low and the rivers running slowly, but the fish have certainly been coming out. Hopefully Autumn might bring enough rain to top the levels and get some decent flow, but preferably not while I'm fishing.

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Remember we'd like this 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

We hope you enjoy this issue

The Editor

ASHLEY UNTIES KNOTTS FIRST TIME



The Fishery Manager and I were strolling the banks of Knotts one bright August afternoon, and stopped to have a chat with one of the anglers.

Ashley told us he was a new member, and that he'd not caught so far on this, his first trip to Knotts.

The FM suggested that perhaps he'd have a chance swapping his zig rigs and casting a bait right up to the island some fair distance away. Moving on to talk to anglers a couple of swims along, we heard the plop of a lead as it landed some 2 foot from the island - An outstanding cast that we congratulated Ashley for as we walked back. That evening this picture appeared on Facebook. Thinking this would be an inspiration to members new and older, I asked Ashley to send us his fishing story. Over

to you, Ashley - I first started fishing when I was around 14-15 with a few friends and one of their older brothers

on the river Thames, mainly just silver fish. We used to love getting down there on a weekend and we even tried a few nights for barbel.

I got back into fishing about 5 years ago when my father-in-law introduced me to the carp scene and I've been hooked ever since. I still get down the river now and again for various other species but mainly I'm at a carp lake. Whether that be for a little evening or a few days, it all depends how much free time I have with work and family life.

It started with just wanting to spend quality time with my father-in-law, but the more I went the more carp gear I brought until I had my own set up.

I just feel so calm when I'm at a lake - until the bite alarm screams off and then the adrenaline kicks in. 😊 When the stresses of life get tough, nothing can beat a few hours by the lake to just have the time think it over. It's what works for me and I like it that way!

I would love to get my youngest son interested and share some great memories with him, my older children aren't so interested as they get bored and aren't so patient.

It's a hobby I've found that not only entertains me but keeps me balanced with my emotions.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by David Marshall



I am pleased that our membership levels are holding up well which allows us to continue to maintain & improve our fisheries. It also allows us to keep membership subscription at a level which provides some of the best and diverse fishing in the South of England at a very competitive price.

A warm welcome to our new members and those of you who have re-joined. A good number of you have been members for many years which is much appreciated.

You will have seen from the Fishery Management report the good work which is going on and planned around the fishery which the EA & AT grants are helping to fund. This is good news for all of us as are the repairs which were carried out to Muddy Lane.

There are also planned improvements at Brimpton to both the habitat & swims. It is still in early stages of planning but all be well work will start later this year / early next year. Once the plans have been agreed with the various agencies involved full details will be made available to members.

I would like to add my thanks to Rob Allen who has taken on the role of Head Bailiff. Rob has some great ideas for bringing a more professional approach to the bailiffing of our waters and shortly you will see the bailiffs in NAA- logo'd clothing. Please treat the bailiffs with respect as they carry out their duties for the benefit of us all.

On a more serious note, I have stated before that we continue to have problems filling Committee places. This is now becoming a worrying issue. The committee is a dedicated group of members meeting once a month to ensure the upkeep and development of NAA. As with all Associations, without an active committee we cannot function and we rely on members who can spare some of their time to run and shape the future of the Association. Within the committee there are a number of officer roles which we also need to fill. We

haven't had a permanent secretary for many years and the Health & Safety position is also vacant. Next year we will also be looking for a new Treasurer and other Officers will be looking to stand down after many years' service. Without people in officer positions, it makes the association very difficult to run. I am not saying we are at this position yet but there have been a number of clubs which have folded due to not having an active committee.

We certainly don't want to find ourselves in the future to be in this position. If any of you can help to fill officer & committee positions, please let me know. We would love to hear from you & it would help to ensure a continued and successful angling association for Newbury.

Back on a lighter and more positive note it is good to hear how well our waters are fishing and with the planned injection of fish into Willows & Pallett's later this year this will only improve the fishing further.

AROUND THE FISHERIES

(1) SWIM REPAIRS ON THE LAKES

This summer has seen a major project with 66 swims across Dobsons (25), Knotts (17), Collins (13) and Dixons (11) being given complete overhauls. See the Fishery Managers report for details.



(2) AVINGTON



Canal anglers will know that the sloping ramp into our grass car park at Avington has long been a treacherous skid risk for vehicles, particularly in soggy conditions. When contractors looking to undertake non-NAA work in the area asked to have use of the car park for a few weeks in Spring, we assented subject to them laying a permanent rigid plastic mat on the entrance point. This was done, and now allows members even without 4x4's safe access.

As you can see, the main body of the carpark remains grassy, and thus still a potential trap for vehicles when soft. The Committee is looking at the possibility of extending the matting, bearing in mind that the Avington stretch is leased and not owned, and thus the owner's approval will need to be sought.

(3) SIGNAGE AT ENBORNE



A long-standing pledge to improve the signage on the canal at Enborne may soon be resolved.

We have needed permission from the Canal & Rivers Trust before installing the much needed signs. A positive meeting was held a few weeks ago, and after much to-ing and fro-ing about what we would be allowed and where, CRT approval was received, and an offer of their volunteer team made to assist. Thus we like to think that signs will soon be seen by Guyers Bridge, at Egypt point and halfway between. We hope this will deter some of those who choose to fish the stretch without paying for a permit, and help support any member or bailiff who wishes to challenge anyone fishing the stretch.

(4) SPEEN MOORS



Members visiting Speen Moors should be aware that the land owners have erected a substantial barbed wire fence to prevent access to the weir pool at the southern end of the venue.

We know this is a favorite swim for many members, but is also a popular spot for local youths to jump from the bridge in warmer weather. The fence has been built to prevent the possibility of accident, or worse to these impromptu bathers.

We notice that the fence has recently been attacked and trodden down allowing unauthorised access. While the fence was not installed with deterring anglers in mind, we ask all members to honour the landlords intentions and not access this area while the fence is in place.

(5) WARWICKS



In August, the Fishery Management team identified low oxygen levels in Warwicks and quickly brought in one of the Association's two new water pumps and set up this Heath Robinson-esque arrangement to aerate the water. Due to their prompt action, no fish were lost. Well done, Boys. These pumps are gas powered and will run for up to two days unattended, compared to their predecessors which required a refuel every 5-hours. Thank you also to Dougie Hull and Lynn Hawkins for cutting and dragging trailing branches from the water to help make a start on a longer term solution. Lynn in particular, will be known to all anglers

on Willows and Alders, fishing, giving advice to new members or swearing at the cormorants. Thanks Lynn, you do a lot of work, which is much appreciated.

MATCH NEWS & UPDATE

by Henry Sadler

We asked Henry to explain how the match scene works, particularly to our many new members as well as those who have been with us a while but may never have fished one:

We have two types of matches, pegged or rover. With a pegged match, before the start contenders each select a number from a bag which gives the peg number for the swim to be fished while with a rover, the number drawn represents the order in which participants leave to choose their peg. Here, whoever draws number one has first choice, followed by number two etc. All Over 70's and our Christmas Match are rovers, the remainder all being pegged. The cost to take part is just £2 per match which goes to the club, plus *optional* pools of a further £5 for over 70's, £6 for over 60's and £8 for Championship matches. All pools money is paid as prizes, normally to first, second and third.

Matches are held on our lakes at Bellwood, Willows, Alders, Knotts and Dobsons, plus the canal at Enborne and Avington. Draw times for these are one hour prior to the match start time, allowing anglers to walk to their pegs and set up. We also have matches home and away against other clubs, this season for example at Shipston on Stour and Reading & District AA. We also run a charity match in support of *Help for Heroes* which has been running for many seasons and this year will be held on Sunday, 2nd of October.



The Last Match on Avington E

Henry Sadler	Graham Knapp	Steve Myers	Ray Jones	Ken North	Richard Wiggins
			Mervyn Burrows	Dave Smith	

The Christmas match gives entrants the choice of fishing Bellwood, the canal or River Kennet at Hambridge. Contestants make their choice then draw their set-off order for that venue. This match in particular is well worth fishing as included in your ticket cost is a cuppa and bacon roll before the start, plus lots of prizes to be won.

All matches are decided by overall weight, with points being allocated to each angler finishing in the top 10. Included this year was a 'silver fish only' match at Willows, with any greedy carp muscling in not counting!

NAA has a team that competes in the Shires League which is due to start this year in October. Here, teams of five anglers fish against three other teams, the winners decided on section points.

There are also several 24-hour carp matches in the warmer months that are generally entered for via the NAA's members-only Facebook site. Four pike matches are held on different categories of venue across winter, with trophies for the largest fish and best overall weight.

All of these fixtures are contained on your permit. More matches have been added this season at the request of members, but we need to find a few more faces to support the matches to allow them to continue. Come and try a match. We are a friendly, normal (well, most of us) bunch of anglers out for some banter and a day's fishing.

As the Salvation Army would say, come and join us, support your club, have a day's fishing and who knows, you may win a trophy and make some more good mates. We look forward to seeing you soon. For more details or to book your place, please call me, Henry, on 01635 46984.

Date	Day	Type	Venue	Trophy	Meet	Time	Detail
18-Sep-2022	Sat	v Shipston AC	River Stour - Shipston		08:30	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
20-Sep-2022	Tue	RFC v NAA	Child Beale		8:30	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
21-Sep-2022	Weds	Over 60's	Dobsons	Field & Stream Cup	9:00	10.00-15.00	
24/25-Sep-2022	Sat/Sun	24hr Carp match	Bellwood		11:00	12.00-12.00	
25-Sep-2022	Sun	NAA Memorial match	Willows	Keith Scrivener Trophy Norman Unwin Trophy	8:30	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
28-Sep-2022	Weds	Over 60's	Bellwood	Field & Stream Cup	9:00	10.00-15.00	
02-Oct-2022	Sun	HELP FOR HEROES	Enborne Canal (Up)	Charity open match	9:00	10.00-15.00	Advance tickets only
04-Oct-2022	Tue	NAA v RFC	Avington		8.3	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
05-Oct-2022	Weds	Over 70's rover	Dobsons		9:00	10.00-15.00	
09-Oct-2022	Sun	VENUE CLOSED	Enborne Canal (up)			08.00-16.00	Booked by SHIRES
23-Oct-2022	Sun	NAA Club Championship	Avington D		9:00	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
26-Oct-2022	Weds	Over 60's	Enborne Canal (Up)	Field & Stream Cup Sam Buxey Trophy	9:00	10.00-15.00	
30-Oct-2022	Sun	Pike Match	Enborne Canal (Up)	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy	9:00	10.00-15.00	
02-Nov-2022	Wed	Over 60's	Avington D		9:00	10.00-15.00	
06-Nov-2022	Sun	VENUE CLOSED	Enborne Canal (Up)			10.00-15.00	Booked by Reed Thatcham AA
11-Nov-2022	Fri	VENUE CLOSED	Enborne Canal (Up)			10.00-15.00	Booked by Newbury Friday League
16-Nov-2022	Wed	Over 60's	Enborne Canal (Up)	Field & Stream Cup		10.00-15.00	
20-Nov-2022	Sun	NAA Club Championship	Enborne Canal (Up)		9:00	10.00-15.00	Book with Match Secretary
27-Nov-2022	Sun	Pike Match	Bellwood	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy	9:00	10.00-15.00	
30-Nov-2022	Wed	Over 60's	Avington E	Field & Stream Cup	9:00	10.00-15.00	
04-Dec-2022	Sun	Christmas match	Bellwood/Hambridge Canal/Risbys & Civil Service stretch	Dick Taylor Trophy	8:30	10.00-15.00	Advance tickets only

GREEN means open to all members

Note: Match results, reports and league tables are updated regularly on the NAA website.

TENCHING DOWN YOUR WAY – PART 2

by Martin Salter

You may remember that our last newsletter contained part 1 of an article from Martin S, Chief Policy Adviser to the Angling Trust and supporter and member of Newbury AA since the 1980's, describing his love for tench. As promised, here comes the second half...

Big Pit Challenges



There is no doubt that the big Thames Valley gravel pits between Reading and Newbury hold some exceptional fish of many species. The Reading & District AA waters in particular have produced some stunning specimens including the famous Sonning Eye carp, the record bream from Englefield Lagoon and, of course, some monster tench to over twelve pounds. At the time, the specimen circuit had alighted on Englefield in particular so my friend John and I decided to try our luck on two other pits which had form for big tench but which were currently less fashionable. It was the early nineties and the Close Season was still in force but it did give us the opportunity to prepare and pre-bait swims on our chosen venues - Dean's Farm at Caversham and Wellman's Water near Theale.

Dean's was made famous by the catches of Alistair Nicholson and Tony Miles but at the time access issues with the nearby gravel workings had made it very tricky to get on there. As far as I recall only my mate Pete Cranstoun and a couple of other carp enthusiasts were fishing it and absolutely nobody was targeting the tench. Luckily, I knew a guy who owned land close to where the pit joined the Thames and with a bit of hard work, plus a bung to a gravel lorry driver, we were able to construct a temporary track which allowed us to get our vehicles close enough to the water. Our pre-season visits did locate one or two tench but there was also clearly one hell of a head of bream in there which began rolling close to our baited spots. Consequently, we also prepared two or three other swims on Wellman's - another huge pit with lower stocks, fewer bream and hopefully lots of tench potential.

The magic midnight moment duly arrived at Dean's Farm and within minutes of casting out from our baited peninsular on this inland sea it was clear that the fish had found our bait. Sadly they were almost all bream in the five to seven pound bracket which weren't a lot of fun on one and a half pound test curve rods. When we did get a full throated run it was usually an eel - a species I detest - so it wasn't long before we moved up the road to Wellman's. This is the water where our big tench fishing really began and very soon my personal best was creeping ever upwards with sixes and sevens now commonplace in our catches. Feeder fished maggots, worms and casters over groundbait and hemp was doing the business and there were no nuisance species to

worry about. When those alarms sounded it meant tench time, and for a couple of seasons my friends and I enjoyed some of the best tench fishing of our lives. Wellman's wasn't easy by any means and location, as with all these big pits, was key. An added problem was the local water skiers whose boats would slice the top off tonnes of floating Canadian Pond weed making fishing impossible at times on the windward bank. In reality it was a June 16 to mid-July venue but it was well worth the effort. It was here we learned about ultra-short hooklinks and heavy feeders to overcome twitch bites. And, in a time before rubber baits made life so much easier, we even found a way to hair rig casters using two on a small, bent fine wire hook attached with braid to a forged size ten super specialist. These little tweaks could make a difference on tough days when the tench were being picky and I was glad of them when my personal best shot up from 7lb 15oz to an ounce over nine pounds.



With Dean's Farm now firmly off the agenda, we started looking for an alternative to Wellman's and eventually alighted on a smaller pit near Twyford, known locally as Pre-Mix, that had once been part of the Leisure Sport / Cemex fishery. The original stock were still in there and to all intents and purposes it was now free fishing. Even better, very few people, save for a handful of carpers and the occasional local kid, bothered with the place. Dotted with islands and less than fifteen acres in total, Pre-Mix was a much more intimate place but that didn't seem to affect the size of the tench. Multiple catches of sixes and sevens could be taken on a good day, with the chance of the occasional bigger fish. The eights eluded me but I was fortunate enough to bag my second nine pounder, pushing the PB up to 9lb 3oz. Living so close to these waters meant I didn't

have to worry about bivvying up and I could easily drag swims and pre bait the night before, always taking care of course to avoid the carpists. Gravel pit tench are, by and large, civilised creatures and as long as my rods were in the water between 7am and lunchtime, I was happy that the prime feeding spell was covered. In any case an increasingly hectic political life, culminating in my election to parliament in 1997, all but ruled out any long stay sessions.

By the mid-nineties I was feeling confident enough with my rigs and tactics to tackle some of the tougher RDAA waters and, in amongst the blanks, I latched into some nice fish from Sonning Eye, Pingewood Lagoon and, inevitably Englefield which eventually produced my biggest ever tench in both size and weight. At 9lb 11oz and carrying not an ounce of spawn this really was a beast of a tench and, until recently, I wondered if I would ever beat it.

Completing the Circle

I am not, and never will be, a dyed in the wool specimen hunter. As I regularly say to Angling Trust audiences, life is too short and fishing is too enjoyable to become overly obsessed with reducing everything to mere numbers on a dial. That said, I do like to catch better than average fish where and when I can. Especially so when it comes to roach and tench - two species for which I have developed a particular affinity and achieved some success.

I wanted a double figure tench and with more time on my hands following my retirement from the House of Commons it seemed as if it was now or never. The RDAA pits had fallen off the specimen circuit radar but I knew that both Sonning Eye and the Pingewood complex still held the tench of my dreams. I concentrated on Sonning in the spring of 2018 for very little reward but on the other pits we did start to see evidence of tench

bubbling in the margins as the water warmed up. A few nice late season fish came to those old float ledger tactics that served me well as a teenager all those years ago.

The 2019 season couldn't come quick enough as my friends and I scoured the water for signs of feeding tench. As ever, we started fishing a fortnight too early but it all came together once May arrived. My first session of the month found me on the fish at forty yards range in a deeper, siltier section of the lake. Despite losing a couple due to stupidly using some old and dodgy hook links, the best one of the bunch stayed attached and pulled the scales down to 10lb 13oz. At long last the elusive double had arrived.



And like buses, there's always another around the corner. A few weeks later, in the same swim, in amongst much thicker weed I found the fish again. This time I took no chances and rigged up with 20lb braided hook links to a number eight hook and five hair rigged rubber maggots. With marginal lilies as well as a solid wall of Canadian Pond weed to contend with I was taking no chances. The Drennan flat-bed feeders were replaced with the slimmer, taped up, Kamassan black capped versions that could pull through the vegetation without snagging up. A few spombs of hemp and dead red maggots had the tench grubbing around and the indicators twitching. I'm not sure how many tench I landed that morning but I know the best two weighed twenty-one pounds between them and that my new personal best is now 11lbs 2oz.

The circle is complete. As a young angler I would dream of one day catching a huge tench and now, as an angler of pensionable age I've caught not one but two fish of my dreams. But more importantly I've learned a lot about this wonderful and hard fighting species and had plenty of fun travelling the tench trail. And as you can see our very own Newbury AA was very much part of that long and enjoyable journey.

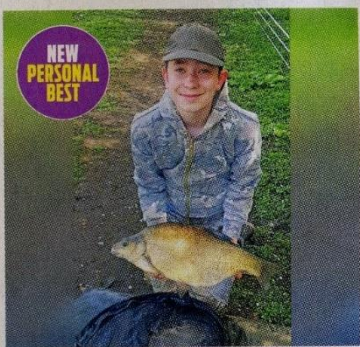
KEEP 'EM COMING, ARCHIE

Congratulations to Junior member Archie Keep for not only landing this fine bream, but getting this photo of the two of them published in the Angling Times as the lead picture in their Kingfisher Club page.

We are very proud of our junior members, and are delighted that their numbers are increasing, and the quality of their catches improving. This can only be to the long term benefit of the NAA and angling generally.

Here in the editor's office, we are always pleased to publicise successes particularly from our junior members. So if you'd like the chance of seeing your name in print alongside your catch, please send them to us at the email address at the top of this newsletter.

The juniors of today are the future of the NAA, so should you have any thoughts about how we could develop the offering to our youngsters, please get in touch.



Archie Keep
6lb 9oz bream, local club water,
Newbury, Berkshire

FISHERY MANAGER'S REPORT

by David Pricor



A major exercise has been undertaken this summer to replace 66 of old, inaccessible or dangerous swims around the lakes. This has included replacing rotten timbers with chestnut stakes, building a wooden frame and incorporating roughly half a tonne of chalk in each swim. Fallen trees have also been pulled out where possible using the digger hired for the work. Members responses have all been very positive so far. The earth on the new swims will need time to compact and settle, so we advise you to use a groundsheet until this happens. Once the levels have consolidated we will be looking to cap each swim with a top surface.

Please note that fishing on all lakes is from designated swims ONLY – no cutting out new swims from vegetation is allowed.

In the pipeline for September/October is the full otter fencing of Pallets. As well giving protection from our furry friends, it will also help retain larger fish from escaping into the Kennet at times of flooding. This is a significant investment by the club, assisted by a £5,000 grant from the Angling Trust. Once installed, we plan to purchase fifteen 12-15lb carp to boost the stock.

Winter working parties will resume later in the year. Dobsons will be a key target for removal of an appropriate level of vegetation. We also plan to stock Willows with fifty 4lb tench and a further fifty 4lb bream to maintain its reputation as our most popular mixed fishery. We have also received a £2,485 Environment Agency grant to improve our disabled swims.

The club has recently purchased two security cameras. One will be fitted to a scaffolding pole overlooking the Bellwood car park and storehouse, the other will be mobile and moved to wherever it may be required. If successful, more cameras may be bought.

Thanks to Rob Allen, who has spent a lot of time devising a set of ariel swim maps for Bellwood, Collins and Knotts, showing peg numbers and the area of water associated with each swim. If approved by the committee, these will be put on noticeboards in key areas and, we trust, settle any territory disputes! An example is shown here, but again, will not come into force until agreed.



Thanks also go to Ken Haines, who as well as being a bailiff, operates the crayfish traps in some of our lakes. Should you find, or reel in a trap, please leave it alone or if dislodged, make sure it is restored to its working position. This is for all of our benefit. Ken has also been cutting back the overgrowth on a number of swims on the Kennet behind Knotts to make them fishable.

The majority of maintenance on our 9 lakes and miles of river and canal is undertaken on a voluntary basis. Bailiff Sam Stockwell used the entirety of one of his days off to brush cut around Dixons in the August heat. I'm sure your efforts are much appreciated by all who fish there.



Sam Stockwell and friend

Please note that the fishery management team will be walking the venues for cormorant control reasons within our licensed allowance. Please don't be alarmed by the sight, or sound of the occasional shotgun.

OWEN'S BIG DAY

by Chris Matthews

On 1st June, I invited 12 year-old Owen to come from Wales and fish Newbury AA Lakes on a guest ticket. I chose Willows to start as it's a favourite of mine and contains a good range of species. I've had carp from there to 21lb 4, plus a 2lb 7 crucian. I hoped he'd get regular bites, whilst giving him the chance of hooking a good sized fish. Alders was another possibility and I'm very fond of this water because it has produced some good catches of tench and bream for me, plus small carp, roach, rudd, perch and crucians. It can be challenging at times probably due to the clarity of the water, but I feel it has the potential to produce something surprising on the right day. The rules allowed Owen's Mum to be in attendance as a non-fishing guest and there would be easy access for her car. It would be quite an experience for Owen in contrast to his local 250-acre reservoir near Merthyr Tydfil, where although small skimmers, roach and perch are abundant, the bigger fish are very difficult to locate. The rest is Owen's story....



"Mam and I arrived early in the morning and we set up on Willows about half-way along the Discovery Centre bank. Before we'd arrived, Chris had already been trickling maggots into a spot about 10 yards out. I have difficulty seeing a float or quivertip, so I use an old fashioned butt indicator which is like a swingtip attached just above the butt ring. A straightforward running leger was used with 6lb line and a size 12 hook with 3 or 4 maggots. Going finer would've been too risky because if I'd hooked a carp, I'd have little chance of landing it. My rod is an 11ft Avon with a small baitrunner reel with the free spool engaged just in case a carp came along.

I started getting regular bites from the start, but they were tiny lifts and twitches that were impossible to hook. I could've scaled down to catch them, but that would be no different to fishing back home and then I'd probably get broken by a bigger fish. This continued all morning, with no fish to show for it. I had to keep patient though and kept feeding a steady trickle of maggots into my swim. At around 11:30, the indicator slammed to the rod and line was stripped off my baitrunner. After a good scrap, Chris netted my fish, a crucian of a fraction over 2lb! That was a double triumph for me, my first crucian and also my biggest fish to date.

After that, the swim went completely dead, with no more bites. An hour later, we decided to move to Alders. We

set up about half-way down the railway bank, where the lily pads are within easy casting range. I changed to a closed feeder and at the start, introduced several balls of black crumb groundbait laced with maggots. As on Willows, I started getting the same small lifts and twitches which were impossible to hook. A couple of more positive bites failed to produce anything, even small perch. At about 3pm, I had a tearaway bite and hooked something large that ran straight into the pads and threw the hook. Exciting, but disappointing to lose it.



However, I didn't have to wait too long before I had a similar bite and this time I was better prepared and turned the fish just in time. It put up a good scrap, several times trying to reach the pads. Eventually it tired and Chris netted a 4lb 12oz tench for me. Twice in a day, I'd caught a new species and my biggest fish.

I left for Wales very happy, with some tales to tell back home. My Mam and I would like to thank NAA for me being allowed to fish there with her in attendance and also to thank all those who liked and commented on the Facebook post. Watch out Willows and Alders, I'll be back!"

HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT

by Rob Allen



We currently have a full quota of 15 bailiffs, who are making permit checks on the lakes, canals and rivers on a regular basis. Some of our bailiffs are approaching the end of their initial 3-month trial, and it is possible that we may be seeking additional bailiffs by the time you are reading this and appeal particularly to those who fish the rivers and canals to put their name forward to me at the number on your permit.

We are in the process of ordering snood hoodies, polo shirts and T-shirts for permanently appointed bailiffs. These will enhance their presence as NAA bailiffs and give greater visibility to members (and any non-members).



A number of rule transgressions have been identified by bailiffs which I have reported to the Committee for possible disciplinary action. I would take this opportunity to remind all members of the most common transgressions we would like to see less of:

- Anglers being away from their rods – you are required to wind in should you be away from your swim. This is for fish safety reasons.
- Leaving gates open. Come on guys, the fences are useless if an otter gets in, and it will be your fish that it may then be penned in with.
- Litter – including 'human waste'. No need to say any more.
- Use of lead core and similar leaders. Still found on rig checks, yet banned on NAA waters, again for fish safety.

Thanks to all bailiffs in the team for their hard work, and the vast majority of members for their appreciation and understanding if challenged by a bailiff doing their job.





Over 100 articles were published in the Newbury Weekly News in the 1800's. We think they're fascinating. This one comes from 21st June 1883, five years after the NAA was formed.

With the of the fishing season the result of the labours of the NAA are brought into public notice. During the winter months the Association is apt to fall into the background, and not till Waltonians resume their favourite occupation are they in the mood to call down benedictions upon the heads of those who have quietly but effectually provided each excellent sport for them. The NAA has been in existence only a few years, but has accomplished good results during that time. The work of the executive, which is wisely composed of true practical anglers, has been no sinecure. These gentlemen have exerted themselves early and late to prevent Sunday fishing and to put a stop to netting, wiring, and all other unsportsmanlike and illegitimate operations. The Association has been eminently successful, and while formerly there were hardly any fish in the river, at the present time the water teems with good fish, worthy of any angler's attention, as well as a number of young fry that promise well for the future. To effect this the back streams and ditches have been netted and their tiny occupants transferred to the main stream. The Association is worthy of the support of the townspeople generally, and the reason is easy to see. The prospect of good fishing brings many anglers into the town, and anglers, as a rule, are not inclined to be niggardly. Money is thus brought into the town, and all in turn reap benefit from the circulating medium. A subscription to the Association gives the right of fishing in one of the best preserved public waters in the county. For five shillings the angler may fish as far as the "White House," (*Ed – this became the Narrow Boat pub and is now a Lidl*) but by doubling the sum he may wander to Aldermaston in search of pastures new, while a guinea entitles the subscriber to splendid trout fishing in the Lambourn. To celebrate the opening of the Kennet season a number of the active members of the Association dined together last week, at the "White House," the fishing head-quarters of Association. Mr. H S. Paice was voted to the chair, and Mr. Evans in the vice-chair. There were also present Messrs H. Dorant, F. E. Walker, Allaway, Turk. Paulin, E Morgan. W. Randall, Freeman, A. Beckinsale, Kimber, Mills, Lewis, &c. With such a fare as duck and green peas, lamb and young potatoes, to say nothing of other delicacies, little time was wasted in conversation. Nature's demands having been satisfied, a lull occurred, and in a short time all were prepared to see the cloth removed, and the weed having been lighted, the company settled down for a social evening.

The Chairman gave the toast of the evening, "Success to the NAA," and expressed the hope that success might attend their efforts in the future, a wish that was re-echoed by all present. The health of the Water Committee was heartily drunk, and the gentlemen responding, remarked that it was their desire to provide good sport for good anglers, whom the Association would welcome and the members would hand out the band of friendship to all well-meaning sportsmen. The health of those who allow the Association to fish their back streams, was heartily drunk, and the same was acknowledged by Mr. Kimber, who expressed the pleasure it gave him now that his grass and hedges were not trodden down by ruthless marauders on Sunday mornings as they were before the Association took over the control of his water. Other toasts, interspersed with excellent songs passed away a pleasant evening. and the company separated with good wishes for the NAA.

While fishing early on Monday morning, Mr. Beckinsale, of Bartholomew Street, hooked a fine trout in the Town Mill-tail, which weighed not less than 9lbs. Mr. Beckinsale played his fish well and carefully, for he was only fishing with fine gut tackle. He obtained the assistance of a young man with a landing net, but the spotted beauty was not to be taken. Feeling the edge of the net, Mr. Trout artfully shook his head and made a bolt. The fish was firmly hooked, but the tackle drawing, the fish regained its liberty, to the bitter disappointment of Mr. Beckinsale, who however still hopes to enjoy the pleasure and distinction of ultimately making this wary beauty his captive.

POLE POSITION

By Peter Constable

The Editor has asked that I put together a few words on fishing the pole, primarily at Willows and I'd like to start by assuring readers that I'm not so presumptive as to pen a "how to" article, this is a "how I" piece.

Now that the majority of the bigger carp have been removed from Willows it is relatively safe to go after them with a pole but it isn't for the faint hearted or for light match-type poles. This style of fishing needn't cost the earth, I use a second-hand MAP margin pole rated to a 20 elastic (which I modified myself to take side-pullers) and mid-price range elastics.

For floats on Willows I find 0.4g & 0.5g floats are ideal, but when I started this pole malarkey I used a 2BB waggler, fished dual elastic, top & bottom. Not conventional, I know, but it's a float, it allows bait to be presented correctly and goes under when a fish takes the bait. Really, what more do you need from a float?



Peter in action

I was requested to write this after a successful evening session where I took five carp for 57lb. Starting fishing at 5pm on a top 2 plus 2 line (about 5 metres out). I would have liked to fish a metre or two further out but didn't want to add another section in case I hit the electric fence behind me when I shipped back. Shocking! I also fed a margin line to my left, because of a protruding dead root I couldn't get closer to the bank than about 3 feet, so technically it was not really a margin line.

A little feed went in, a mixture of corn, very small pieces of meat and a groundbait so sloppy I had to spoon it into the pole-pot (this ensures that the groundbait sinks like a stone and stays in one piece until it hits the bottom). The accuracy that potting in feed gives you means the bait can be fished exactly over this feed, setting a little trap.

I used a line of 6lb (0.17mm) with a 5lb (0.15mm) hook-length – I know, I know, I'm mixing imperial and metric, but hey, I'm just that dangerous kinda guy. Hook was a super-strong Kamassan B91 1x size 14 carrying a piece of meat about 1cm cubed. Elastics were either 15 or 17 Preston Dura Slip.

After missing a couple of early bites the float slid under, the tackle was up to the task and just before 6pm a lovely mirror of 12½lb resided in my landing net. Next I lost a carp to a hook pull then had a fish of just over 10lb swiftly followed by a smaller common about 7lb.

The 5-metre line quietened off after that and I switched to the margin (whilst still feeding both lines, I always feed at least two lines so that they can be rotated to keep the bites coming). Within seconds of putting-in I lost a carp to another hook pull, soon after the float buried again and this time an 11lb mirror was the culprit.

About 7:30 the wind dropped and bites slowed and I went back out to the 5-metre line, I then managed to foul-hook two fish, the second of which was an animal, it tore across the lake, bottomed-out the elastic in seconds and totally trashed my tackle, breaking the main line below the float. With only three-quarters of an hour before the agreed pack-up time of 9pm I didn't re-tackle that rig but went to the margin for the rest of the session. At ten nine to I hooked a big fish, no fast rushes, just a heavy plodding, more than once it nearly bottomed my elastic and I honestly thought a hook-pull would be the result but, no, it stayed on (and on and on). It was finally netted at 9:20 and weighed 17lb 1oz (so not all the big fish have been removed). That was it, five carp for 57lb.

That last fish was the second biggest I've taken on the pole, the top honour is 17lb 15oz from Bellwood a couple of years ago, that was a fluke as I was after much smaller fish and was lucky to land it.



If I can offer any tips it would be these:

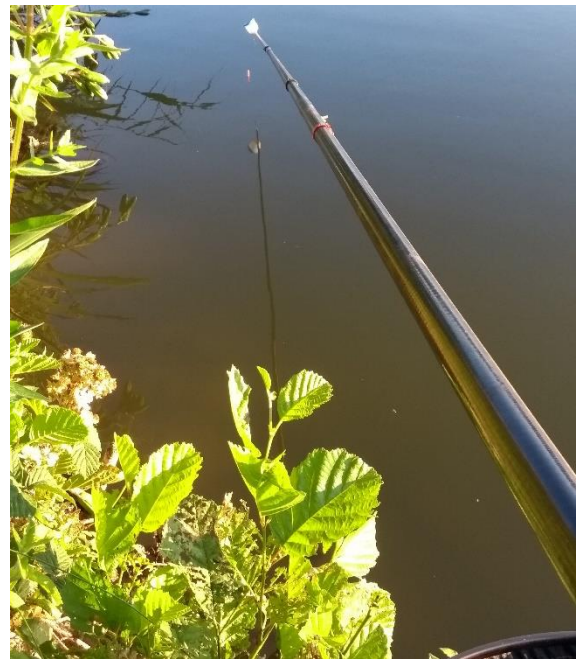
- Use a margin or carp pole, these needn't be expensive (they're not 16m of ultra-fine carbon), they can be bought new for under £200 and much, much less second hand.
- An 8 metre pole is more than sufficient for my needs at Willows
- Personally I use Preston Dura Slip elastic (About £7 per top kit), it is so much better than the cheap stuff but I can't bring myself to spend £15 on each top kit for the hollow elastics.
- If you're not comfortable about elasticating a pole

ask your tackle dealer (or see YouTube)

- Attaching the line to the elastic – YouTube again, but this can be practised in your living room (just use the attachment and a loop of line, no need to have a top kit flying around)

When Fishing:

- Always feed more than one line
- Bait tight areas, this a) sets a trap, and b) stops smaller fish getting in on the act as the carp muscle them out of the way
- If you think a hook pull is likely dip the pole tip, then, if the gear shoots back the friction in the water slows the float down and it won't tangle around the pole top
- When playing a fish, keep the pole tip low to the water. For obvious reasons, never point the pole at the fish but ideally keep a small angle to allow the elastic to do its job
- Don't fear the margins, in summer, if there's just 1 foot of water carp will feed, even one inch from the bank (so long as someone with their size 12s doesn't clomp down the bank)
- As Isaac Walton commanded "*Study to be quiet*" (Complete Angler, chapter XXI)
- Enjoy yourselves – although this one should probably be the top priority



Attacking the margin

Pole fishing for carp is visceral, you are connected from the first micro-second to the last, this is something you'll never experience sitting behind a buzzer. Give pole fishing a go, you might just be pleasantly surprised. Lastly: Remember HT Sheringham: "*The float is pleasing in appearance, and even more pleasing in disappearance*".

Post script:

By putting what I preach into practice I've just had a 5 hour session on Willows where I took ten carp for about 116lb.

I was going for two lines on the pole, one on the five-metre line in front of me and the other to the margins to my left in less than 18” (45cm) of water.



Common carp - 17lb 1oz - Willows

I put some bait in before tackling up and as I did so I saw tail patterns and bubbles to my left. In went a bait and within less than five seconds it was away and the first fish of the day, an 8 pounder, was landed. Going back in I had a 10lb fish in very short order and within an hour of starting I had a third, this one weighed 12lb. In another hour and a half I'd had four more, weighing 12lb, 14lb 2oz, 13lb & 13lb 10oz.

Things quietened down a little for an hour or so then I had three fish in the last half hour, these went 12lb, a “tiddler” at 8lb and another at 13lb 10oz

(not the same as the earlier fish of the same weight, one was a common and the other a mirror).

I switched between the two lines and had six fish from the margin and four from the five-metre line. During the evening I lost a couple of fish, one to a hook pull and the other found a snag – who knew there was a snag in open water on Willows? Well – that carp certainly did, it was hooked in the margins and went unerringly for the snag without stopping, there was a “thud” on the line and I recall that feeling well from chubbing on the Thames, it's when a fish transfers the hook to the snaghad to pull for a break.

I actually weighed four fish during the session, I do this to ensure that my estimating of fish's weights remain reasonably accurate. All in all, a fabulous session, a real red letter day for me.



Photos of our lakes seen recently on 'Newbury & Thatcham Past & Present' on Facebook taken by non-NAA member Steve Cotty Arron.

MEMORIES OF BRIMPTON

By Chris Plumb

Firstly – apologies for another ‘should have been here twenty years ago article’. However chronicling every angling trip I ever made (going back to when I was 11!) has given me a wealth of data to illustrate the changing face of our fisheries, none more so the club’s stretch of Kennet at Brimpton.

I’ve been an NAA member since the 1982/83 season and Brimpton quickly became a firm favourite due to its prolific nature and for nearly two decades was the venue where I started my river season. Paul and I would arrive at last light on the 15th to set up, while away a couple of hours reminiscing over a beer and (in Paul’s case) a cigar (which helped keep the mozzies away!) with both of us casting out on the stroke of midnight. We’d usually even start in the same swim – The Point where the Aldershot joins the main river and frequently we wouldn’t have to wait long for some action! I remember one night where we both had barbel on the bank by 0010!



And this was the reason we’d always start our seasons at Brimpton – it was impossible to blank! My worst return in those two decades was in 1994 when I ‘only’ caught three chub and two barbel. My best return – well take your pick: 37 chub in 1986, 13 chub and 2 barbel the following year, 18 chub and 2 barbel the year after that, or 13 chub and 4 barbel in 1995 and 6 chub and 11 barbel in ‘98 – I’m sure you get the picture, as I said, the place was prolific!

It wasn’t the venue for specimens though. Only twice did I get a chub over 4lb (4.01 in ‘94 & 4.05 in ‘97) and never a barbel over 6lb. In fact one of the reasons I gave Brimpton a miss for a couple of seasons at the turn of the millennium was in a quest to up my then, very modest, barbel PB which had stood at 6lb since the mid ‘70s! (By 2004 I’d got it over 12lb where it stands today).

Tactics haven’t really changed however, and I’d advise anyone tackling Brimpton today to travel light and explore a number of swims. One of the reasons that Paul and I would share our opening day swim was, as soon as it was light, we’d toss a coin for the person to have the first ‘wander’. We’d then have an hour each in rotation exploring other swims while the other stayed back at ‘base camp’. The roving tactics were usually touch ledgering meat or lobs or exploring with a trotting rod.



If we’d started on The Point the winner of the toss usually made a beeline for the fabled ‘Pipe Swim’, this was where the outflow from the long since demolished paper mill entered the Aldershot forming a nice deep pool. (Roughly where the Bailey Bridge crosses the Aldershot today). The pool was the home to some big perch – though invariably first cast resulted in a barbel.

Today, the Aldershot contains much less water – due in part to the loss of said outflow and the only fishable swim is really the weir pool at the top of the fishery and that has to be tackled from below due to fallen branches and tree growth. The pool where the Pipe swim used to be is probably still there as a holding area for fish but, again the banks are too overgrown to access above the Bailey Bridge.



Anyone familiar with the venue will probably realise that all these early trips were to the top of the venue where the river is fast and streamy – and even in those days we often didn't see another angler (least ways on our bank – The Pipe swim and Point were regularly fished from the other bank). Today I still like to explore that section of river – though there are fewer accessible swims.

As the river approaches Brimpton Mill which is just beyond our lower limit, the river becomes deeper and slower and this section of river got a lot of my attention 15 – 5 years ago. Peg 1 was a favourite for trotting and I would

occasionally get some half decent roach from here plus the odd surprise big perch. Peg 3 however was my banker barbel swim had many a great evening's sport from that spot – none more so that Halloween 2011 when shortly after slipping back a 9lb barbel I hooked what I took to be an enormous barbel. Took and age to get it off the bottom – and no wonder it weighed 15lbs 9oz – unfortunately though it was a carp – the only river carp I've ever caught from the venue! Trick or Treat?



It became apparent when I returned to Brimpton after a three season hiatus in 2003 that the size of fish was increasing. My first 5lb+ chub came in 2004 and 2007 saw me land not one but four barbel over 10lb – unheard of a decade earlier. The arrival of the signal crayfish is attributed to this sudden growth spurt and it's true I still catch chub (and perch) which will sick-up a partially digested cray. Signals are not the anglers' friend though – they will eat fish eggs and fry and are VERY bad for recruitment of young fish to maturity.

It was the arrival of another predator which has really put a dent on the fish population – especially barbel, and that's the arrival of otters. I saw my first otter on the Kennet in 2010 – and they are now a regular sight.



Thanks, Mr Otter or Cormorant

However, and somewhat devastatingly, for the next two or three years, I would regularly find carcasses on the bank and they were nearly always be of barbel with the occasional pike and perch. Often and somewhat depressingly there might just be a single bite out of the dead fish. My captures of barbel from the Kennet fell off a cliff and my last barbel from Brimpton was a 10lb fish caught in 2016. The following season (17/18) I put in over 100 rod hours on the Kennet fishing for them without so much as a bite!

All is not lost – thankfully! In the past couple of seasons I've caught barbel (small ones admittedly) from 3 different locations locally on the Kennet – one of which is immediately upstream of Brimpton. I still harbour dreams of them making a comeback. Today's

Brimpton should now probably be considered as the clubs premier chub water. Since 2017 I've caught 77 chub over a pound from 30 trips. Of those, 27 have been over 4lb and a third of those over 5. My venue best chub is a 6lb 4oz fish caught in December 2018. (For comparison – over the same period I've fished Speen Moors 19 times for 49, 11b+ chub. However only four of those have been over 4lb and none over 5).



I find it really pays to stay mobile in hunting these fish – I have a few 'semi-reliable' swims which usually have chub in residence with a number of other spots where they occasionally turn up. My 6lber for example was from a spot which hardly ever produces chub (well to me at least!) – but is usually good for a few silvers. There's a lot to explore and a rarely see another angler on the bank – so why not give it a go!

ANTHONY GARSIDE REMEMBERED

We were advised of the sad passing of one of our senior members, Anthony Garside His widow, Helen, wrote to us explaining that, 'from an early age my husband was a committed and passionate coarse and fly fisherman. He used to drive from Essex to Hambridge before the M4 and M25 were built, so determined was he! Very sadly, he died in May, but he told me specifically to donate his collection of fishing books for the NAA to find suitable homes.'

We thought that the best way of thanking her and honouring Anthony's memory was to auction the titles to members, with all proceeds being used to bolster whatever is raised from our annual Charity Match in aid of the *Help for Heroes* charity.

Each book will be sold to the highest bidder for each volume received by the date of the match, ie 2nd October 2022. Details will be put concurrently on our members Facebook page, members Forum and website. Please submit your bids for your chosen book(s), or any enquires via enquiries@newburyangling.org.uk. All of the books are in very good condition, and given the good cause, and careful ownership by a respected and long-standing compatriot, we would like to think members will bid generously.



THE DARKSIDE OF THE MOON?

by Martin Strike

Who knows if Pink Floyd were thinking of carp when penning *'Darkside of the Moon'*, but if they had, they would be joining generations of fishermen who believe that its phases have no effect on their chances of catching fish. Mind you, there are probably just as many anglers in the Waterboy's *'Whole of the Moon'* camp who swear that fish feed better when the moon is in their favour and may even plan their trips by the lunar calendar.

Whatever your view, the influence of the moon on our tidal systems on our seas is undoubted. Here's the science bit. The moon rises and sets just as the sun does, but not in a nice, simple 24 hour cycle, but one of approximately 24 hours and 50 minutes.

The least tidal movement (i.e., the least vertical difference between high and low tides) occurs during first and third quarter phases when the moon has least gravitational pull on the earth. The biggest 'Spring' tides (i.e., the most vertical difference between high and low tides) occurs during new and full moons when the sun and moon are nearly aligned, so simultaneously exert their gravitational pull on Earth. Complicating this further, theorists say that fish activity is slowest for approximately 1½ hours before and 1½ hours after moonrise and moonset. What's more, believers say major feeding periods occur for approximately 2 hours before and 2 hours after the moon is nearest to the earth at its high point and lowest orbit.

With other influences, such as wind, water temperature and air pressure undoubtedly having an influence on fish behaviour and feeding patterns, surely it would be strange if the position of the moon did not have an effect? If you think about it, most things in the natural world move, grow and evolve around moon cycles. Deer for example, are said to be at their most active during the few days before and after a full and new moon.

But there is precious little in the scientific literature about how fish react to changes in the lunar cycle, though some reputable marine scientists endorse a negative view: "I think there is little empirical evidence from statistical analyses to support the many hypotheses regarding fishing success and moon phase," says Kurt Schaefer, a scientist with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission. "Tunas feed day and night during all phases of the moon. They don't need additional lighting from a full moon to capture their prey."



As with all fishing talk, where science doesn't give a conclusive answer, folk law, superstition and speculation can thrive. In 1926, John Alden Knight Jr. devised 'Solunar Tables' from his observations of fishing behaviour relative to the sun and moon's position. These predicted "major" and "minor" times for fishing, positing that fish and other organisms were at their most active when the sun and the moon are either both overhead or low under the earth. Today, many calendars based on lunar positions are available on-line – usually for a monetary subscription - to inform gardeners, for example, when to best plant their seeds or harvest their crops. Others are geared to telling us which days to fish, and



those to avoid. For example, the Farmers' Almanac believes that fishing can be especially productive if the moonrise or moonset coincides with the sunrise or sunset, and thus predicts that for September/October 2022, catches will be influenced as follows:

Date	Time	Fishing Prospects
September 15, 16, 25, 26, 30 October 1,	Evening	Poor
September 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24	Morning	Poor
September 18, 19	Morning	Best
September 27	Evening	Fair
September 28, 29	Evening	Good
October 2,3	Morning	Fair
October 4	Morning	Good

Maybe you should give it a go? Let us know if you do.

But is this moon lark an inevitable force of nature that we have lost sight of in the modern world, or utter hocus pocus bunkum? To put this to bed for the benefit of NAA newsletter readers, the Editor first sought the thoughts of captains running big game fishing businesses.

Kevin Nakamura, who runs his boat *Northern Lights* out of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii enforces the uncertainty:

“Big fish seem to like to bite for a few days before full and a few days after. I’ve caught the majority of my granders during the full-moon phase,” But he hastens to add that big fish are caught anytime, and that dark nights might produce the best fishing days: “I’ve had some record-setting days for numbers during the new moon.”

Meanwhile, Damon Olsen with Nomad Sportfishing out of Cairns, Australia, says fishing for big black marlin off the Great Barrier Reef is “exceptionally good” from seven to two days before a full moon. However, he adds, “on the actual day of the full moon, the bite is usually terrible.”

Bermudan big-game captain Allen DaSilva seems to be in two minds. “I’ve found the day of the full moon and the whole week after to be the best time to get more bites, and more-aggressive bites, from blue marlin That’s the time to be dragging some plastic!” But, he adds, for big fish, go dark: “My years of fishing in Bermuda show that most of my big marlin (800-plus pounds) are caught on the new moon.”



Others are more certain: “Good captains adapt to accommodate the lunar situation”, says Luke Fallon, out of Cairns, who specializes in Australia’s giant marlin. “If the fish are there, you’ll catch them no matter the moon phase.” Nick Stanczyk, one of the world’s best-known swordfish captains of Bud ‘n Mary’s Fishing Marina in the Florida Keys agrees: “I don’t worry about moon phase when swordfishing. I’ve had good and bad trips on every moon phase.”



Hmm, you can pick what you like from that lot on the sea maybe, but could it really have an influence on small, shallow inland rivers and lakes? Although there are no true tides on rivers or lakes, freshwater fish hunt similar insects and small creatures. This prey can emerge in hordes during a full moon, so it makes sense that the fish that hunt them will be present too, eagerly snapping up the bugs and small crustaceans feeding on zooplankton near the surface of freshwater lakes. Some species maybe triggered to hatch by a particular moon. This would give predator fish good reason to go on a feeding rampage, harvesting as much of

the now visible pupae as they can before they make their way to the surface and fly away, thus reacting to the light rather than a possibly non-existent tidal force.

The increase of activity of our own beloved Red Signal Crayfish is affected by the position of the moon according to local trapper and friend of the newsletter, Andrew Leach of the Artisan Fisherman Ltd of Thatcham. Andrews says that, ‘a full moon has with the large crayfish are on the move, as I have said to everyone fishing for barbel - fish off the moon!!! We trap crayfish in 10 - 15 miles of the Kennet and find we catch the big crayfish on the half-moon to the full moon and just over. After that, the fish move more and we only catch the smaller crays/deformed crays (obviously their time for feeding), Presumably the crays out compete the barbel/chub etc. on the moon. I presume the fish don't/can't be arsed to compete the crays for your luxurious bait. If we set our traps in the middle of the river we would catch more, but we try and work in harmony with you fishermen!!’

So, with the suggestion that fish behaviour could be influenced in lakes and rivers by the moon either directly or indirectly through the availability of food, I turned to the source of all knowledge - the internet.

A quick online search will flag up a lot of experienced and hardened carp anglers claim believe that daytime fishing is poor for a couple days around a full moon as the fish feed in the comparative security of moonlight. This could be explained by a belief that fish are largely visual feeders. Should this be the case, one thought is that fishing in the daytime during a new moon is very productive as fish haven't had much food during the night.

But what would the internet know? I canvassed a number of NAA members. One member who does believe in the effect of the moon is Andrew Rolfe, shown here with a Bellwood catch in August 2022 at just under 25lbs. As it happens, it was caught the night after a new moon. ‘Yes I do think the moon phase makes a difference,’ says Andrew. ‘I’ve always done well on it for some reason especially with common carp.’



Other members share different views:

- “ I’m guessing fish don’t really care where the moon, sun or stars are, but the tides affect them.”
- “I reckon that it’s b*lllocks! Sorry!”

- “I’ve never given it any thought.”
- “I’ve read that there are links between weather cycles and moon phase also and this would be worth looking into.”
- “You ask a barbel angler – they definitely believe in it – though I’m not telling you what they think!”
- “A lot is said about the moon, but I think it gets lost in the other ‘noise’ such as air pressure and temperature etc”
- “I’ve heard that a lot of fish come out on a full moon, but it’s never worked for me”.
- “I used to think that a full moon improved my fishing, but that all changed. Now I think that a bright moon has the same effect as the sun which makes fish wary.”

So there you go. A definitive answer? Hmm, maybe not. I had one option left to work this one out, and that was to check the opinion of some celebrity anglers. I wrote to many, but only had two replies – but what insightful responses they were. The first came from from Wigan Athletic, Soccer AM and *Celebrity Masterchef*’s very own Jimmy Bullard.

Jimmy sent me a hilarious video message. I’m delighted to paraphrase this to you as follows. You should bear in mind that we’ve never met... yet!

“Martin, me old mate. How are you, son? Listen, look, I’ve just got your lovely letter - you do make me laugh, son. First of all, I love me fishing as you do, as I can tell in your letter. I wanna meet you, that’s another thing. But this moon on catches, following the moon about - I don’t know what you’re on about...is the moon not consistently up in the sky of an evening? We need to get together, we need to get to the bottom of this. I love your letter, and I love anglers alright, Martin. So lovely to speak to ya via this, so tight lines, cos that’s what we say, and I’ll be in touch with ya, see ya later, son.”



Brilliant -What a legend you are, Jimmy. If you want to hear more of Jimmy’s views on fishing along with chats with other former professional footballers, then I thoroughly recommend his ‘Off the Hook’ podcast.



Then TISWAS and *Who Wants...hero* Chris Tarrant was also kind enough to come back to me with a pic of his good self with a fat old 64lb fish.

(Chris told me I was being ‘rather dismissive’ when I suggested that it was a gudgeon).

“Dear Martin

I was actually a member of Newbury AA for a few years but with the demise of the Kennet I dropped out of most local clubs. Maybe next year I’ll re-join.

“I’m not at all convinced that the moon influences fish feeding. I’ve caught some very big carp in pitch blackness, I’ve also caught when it’s been so bright you could read a book by the light of the moon. I’ve also BLANKED

in both. I think wind direction, especially a NEW WIND, and big changes in temperature are far more reason for fish feeding, or not, than moon cycles. In the end you just fish when you can anyway. Best wishes – Chris Tarrant.”

Sage words, Chris, and that’s pretty much where my investigation has left it. Although the moon and its lunar phases seems likely have an impact on the fishing, it’s probably small, so for the average angler the influence the moon may or may not have on your fishing should definitely not be the difference between fishing and not fishing.

So whether your karaoke choice is ‘Blue Moon’ or ‘Fly Me to the Moon,’ the most important thing to do as Chris says is to get out there, regardless of the lunar cycle. Maybe keep a fishing journal and work out for yourself, but at the end of the day, any time on the water is better than none, no matter what the moon is doing.

THAT’S ALL FOLKS!

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Don’t forget to tell us what you think, what you want in future issues and to send in your email address to ensure you don’t miss future issues.

(Even) more importantly – the chairman’s plea for more committee members is an urgent one, so please, please do your bit if you can. Thank you.

I’m off in the autumn rain now, hopefully to catch more crucians like this 2lb 10 ounce from Willows last night. Just for clarification, I’m the less good-looking one at the back.

See you in the winter time. Martin Strike – Editor

Footnote: I sent Chris Tarrant a pre-production version of this newsletter to check he was happy with my use of his submission in my article and offered to bring him as a guest to our waters. This was his emailed response:

‘Morning Martin. I enjoyed the newsletter, it really is well put together although your in depth research about moon effects on fishing basically proved the square root of toss all... I think I may well rejoin Newbury next year but I won’t take you up on your kind offer of a day’s fishing with you because I can’t possibly fish with a man who wears CAMO BRACES!!!! CAMO BRACES OH MY GOD!!!! Regards and good fishing. Chris Tarrant.’



