

NEWBURY ANGLING ASSOCIATION



Founded 1878

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Steve Pallett

CHAIRMAN

Dougie Hall

VICE CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

MATCH SECRETARY

All Currently vacant

FISHERY MANAGER

Paul Futcher

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Dave Smith

HEAD BAILIFF

Rob Allen

TREASURER

NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE EDITOR

Martin Strike

See website for contact details

www.newburyaa.org.uk

THE NAAN Autumn 2023

Welcome to our latest quarterly newsletter.

Well, summer was a bit of a damp squib wasn't it, the sun only arriving with the start of the school term, but the fish didn't seem to mind with plenty of catches shared on our members-only Facebook site with some given more detail within.

Our roving reporter has, as ever, spoken to a number of the very good anglers within our ranks, some of whom have shared their tips with you.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of the NAAN. 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 comms@newburyangling.org.uk

Dig those fleeces out once this September heatwave has passed and have a fishy Autumn.

The Editor



AROUND THE FISHERIES

Clubmate



As you will know, in line with many other clubs, NAA elected to use Clubmate to administer its permits and guest tickets. It's fair to say that this has not gone as smoothly as we'd hoped, so thank you to all those who came to our website, Facebook and Forum for help with renewing their permits. For the time being, all existing members can ONLY renew their tickets via Clubmate, while new memberships and all guest tickets MUST be purchased via Tony at Thatcham Angling. In the long run we remain convinced that the vast majority of members will find the ability to purchase tickets instantly on-line and have their permit available on their smart phones beneficial and simple to do. We trust that by next season the whole process will be as smooth as the flanks of Dean Butler's recent Willows tench.



Speen Moors



Members will not need reminding that with much overgrown vegetation, fallen trees and broken banks, the condition of the fishery is a way off the time that *A Passion for Angling* was filmed there in 1993 (if you haven't seen this wonderful TV show you can watch it [here](#)). Unlike many of our waters which are owned, we rent the fishing rights to Speen Moors (and the canal at Enborne) so are wholly in the hands of the landlords with when it comes to maintenance. NAA are in dialogue with the landowner's current management team over what improvements we would wish to see, as are ARK (Action for the River Kennet) who take an interest in the wider issues at Speen Moors. We recently accompanied an EA survey of the

river bed profile, which used GPS technology to measure water depths to a very exact degree. While we are unsure as to what actions (if any) this survey will drive, we understand its purpose was to assess and potentially alleviate the effect that the river condition has in the Kennet's floodplain at times of flood water.

ASH DIEBACK DISEASE



There are a number of dead ash trees across our venues. Most parts of the country are now experiencing the impacts of ash dieback. The disease is causing widespread decline of ash trees in some areas and this is expected to continue. It is likely that the majority of our native ash trees will exhibit symptoms of ash dieback, but not all that do will die. A small percentage of ash trees will have a degree of tolerance to the disease and others will exist in locations where they escape the worst impacts. A list has been prepared of trees on our lakes which need immediate attention and future attention. The Forestry Commission and Natural England will be consulted prior to any work for permission to remove these.

Talking trees, we have also identified a number of mature trees that could potentially pose a threat from dropping limbs or falling, particularly in high winds. These are to be professionally surveyed and any subsequent recommendations approved prior to commencing work.

Two committee members are booked to attend chainsaw courses later this year to help with the removal of dead/dying trees where authorised.

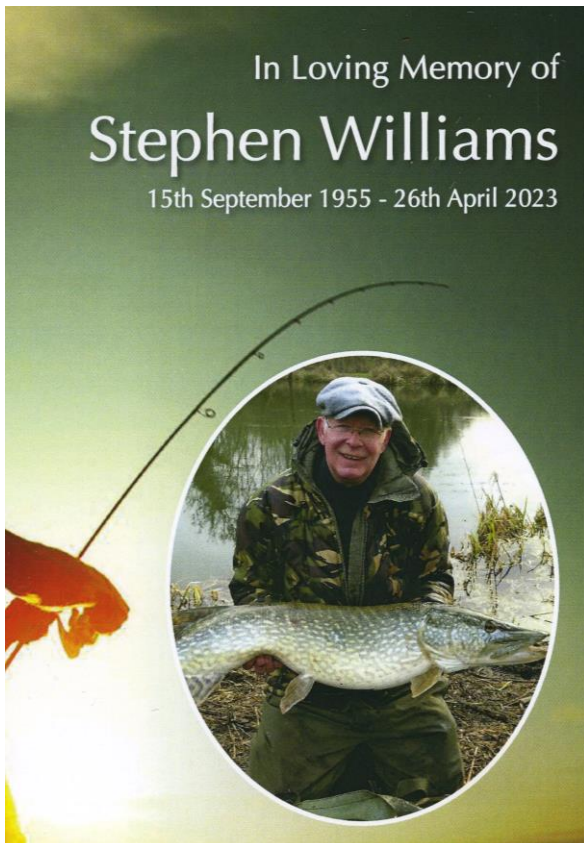
Consultation is also scheduled with the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust to discuss a number of issues including the gate at the top of Muddy Lane, the trees adjacent to the path from the railway to Dixons, and the sluice at the back of Alders by the railway. While there are a number of improvements we'd like to see, as ever, it is a balancing act of negotiation with landowners and stakeholders with competing interests while keeping to SSSI requirements.

MOWING



With nine lakes and miles of river and canal, keeping banks mown is always going to be a constant battle that we will struggle to compete in. Anglers might not always have appreciated the cool wet summer this year, but the vegetation certainly did, with the nettles in some areas getting close to ten-feet tall. A big thank you to those who attended Paul Fitcher and Rob Allen's work parties, and for the patience of members who might have not always found their preferred swim accessible. To help this big and on-going problem, the club is close to agreement with one of our membership to assist by mowing and strimming for 6-hours per week during the growing season. If taken on, this will initially be doubled to improve the current situation. This should also free-up working groups for other projects, such as capping the swims rebuilt last year. Please bear with any noise from mowing when taking place and maybe thank him if you see him in action.

STEPHEN WILLIAMS



In April 2023, Stephen Williams was found tragically drowned near his peg where he had been fishing alone at Dobsons. At the subsequent inquest the coroner's verdict was that Stephen had met an accidental death with no conditions placed on NAA.

Stephen was known around the venues and was a popular face and character. Fishing was clearly a very important part of his life and he is probably best remembered catching barbel on the Civil Service stretch. Everyone who knew Stephen was shocked, and his funeral was attended on the club's behalf.

The circumstances surrounding this tragedy will never be fully know. This sad event brought into focus the need for members to please take care and be aware of the potential dangers of falling into cold water and ensuring someone knows where you are.

The club are also saddened to hear of the death of Andrew Rolfe from natural causes. RIP, Gents.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

by **Dougie Hull**

A warm welcome to our new members and to those that have rejoined for the current season.

One issue that I must bring to your attention straight away is that the Brimpton Habitat Enhancement work is due to start on Monday 11th September and will carry on until at least the 15th. This work means that this fishery is closed for the duration of the work and signs will be posted on the gate of the fishery. The purpose of this enhancement work is to create a better environment for juvenile fish and invertebrates. This should in the medium to long term improve fish numbers naturally, provide more natural food and give the young fish somewhere to hide from the strong flow when the river is in flood. Thus, preventing fish being flushed down stream.



One issue that regularly appears in the Chairmans Report, and this one is no different, is the number of Officer Roles on the committee that remain vacant. Currently we have the positions of Vice Chairman, Health & Safety Officer and Match Secretary that are vacant. Next year further vacancies will probably be available as long-standing committee members review their commitments. So please do not be shy if you believe you could add value to the committee, please make contact. Without people in officer positions, it makes the association very difficult to run and may end up in the Club shrinking to a more manageable size which would be a very sad thing to happen considering Newbury Angling Association (NAA) has been in existence for approximately 150 years. Please contact me via comms@newburyangling.org.uk if you would like to know any more or have any questions.



NAA is being asked to participate in the Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) by the Angling Trust. Local clubs such as Twyford & District and RDAA signed up to the WQMN with regular samples being taken from the Loddon, Blackwater and Lower Kennet. On the Kennet the RDAA reading have already identified the impact on water quality of the trout farm at Aldermaston. It would be beneficial to take water samples from all our flowing water fisheries but in particular Bulls Lock section of the Kennet and also the middle ditch which are all adjacent to the sewage plant. Additionally, it would be beneficial to get a baseline for phosphates etc. in Bellwood each autumn prior to the autumn/ winter floods and compare these results each spring after the water levels subside. So, if you have the time to take water samples on a weekly basis please step forward.



Bulls Lock

That's probably enough from me for the time being. Hopefully you will enjoy reading this quarterly newsletter/magazine and catching up on issues affecting NAA. Tightlines till the next time.

FISHERY MANAGER'S REPORT

by Paul Futcher

It was agreed that the swims at Willows, Alders, Widmead & Bellwood should be considered for re-building this year. It was noted that some swims around the fishery are getting dangerous and these will be closed off. It should go without saying that should you find a swim sectioned off, please do not fish there. I can assure you it will be closed for a reason based on member safety and not to spoil your fishing.

A standby aerator pump has been purchased for Bellwood and an order made for two Sportyak 245 dinghies for bailiffs to access the lakes to help with the saving of tethered fish or fish in distress when required.



Up to 35 carp were lost in Knotts during April through to July. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science & the EA took the fish and water samples for analysis. The lake was closed and a planned carp match cancelled, but we reopened it again when the



testing all came back negative. In recent weeks no further fish appear to have been lost apart from, regrettably a couple of pike. We are obviously monitoring the situation closely and are keeping everything crossed that this will be the end of it.

Unbelievably, we are still getting reports that otter gates are being left open. We have installed three padlocks on the Widmead Otter Fence gates to try and make people think twice. Guys, it's not difficult and it's YOUR fishing the gates are there to protect. Cameras will be erected at suitable points and you will notice CCTV warning signs popping up in key areas.

We are aware that the padlock on the green bar into Widmead complex is proving difficult for some members to open. Users will know from the number of locks on the chain that we share use of the gate with a number of other stakeholders and services. We do, like all locks, act to keep them lubricated and in good working order, but we do not own the land the gate stands on, so there is little more we can do but tell the landowner of the issues and ask for their assistance in keeping the gate accessible for all.

The bank on the Canal at Enborne up is becoming undercut in places and holes are appearing on the bank. A repair was carried out by NAA recently using chalk, but it was noted that the water in the run off was turning white after this was done. This bank will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Please contact us if you notice any significant changes or potentially dangerous areas.

HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT

by Rob Allen



Rob with A-Team member known as - The Male

Currently we have a total of 15 official bailiffs, all have been issued with bailiff warrant cards and are set up as bailiffs on Clubmate. Permit checks are being recorded via the bailiffs Clubmate app, random rig checks are being performed by our bailiffs and are being recorded in the notes section of the bailiff clubmate app across all of our venues. A bailiff can check a members notes to see if they have been rig checked before or if the member has been reported for any previous issues. Please be polite and courteous to our bailiffs at all times.

We also have eyes and ears on our venues all the time as many of our bailiffs are on the banks fishing or are just walking round, unrecorded reports of who's out on our lakes and any issues are also posted in the bailiffs WhatsApp group on a regular basis which allows us to monitor our venues for any issues, ascertain how busy the lakes are and report it back to you guys on the Facebook page when it is requested.

Bank Holiday Fun in the Sun on Willows

A last-minute decision to swerve down to Willows for some bank holiday afternoon fun in the sun with the kids paid off as the carp were feeding hard.

We started the session off by Spombing out plenty of bait to the corner of the island and fished dark coloured 12mm dumbbell wafers on a size 6 Korda Krank hook with PVA bags of boilie crumb and small pellet, spodding in five large spombs every hour or so which kept them feeding all afternoon giving us some hectic action.



The little one had a great time getting involved with the carp and also had some fun with the whip and float rod thanks to a kind member who gave us some much-needed worms which the perch loved and kept him occupied and happy.

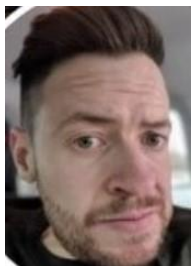
They certainly do love a good hit of bait and pellet on Willows for sure as we managed 15 runs and landed 12 carp to around 12lb, great fun in the sun with the family, highly recommended and it was nice to see the little one enjoying himself in the great outdoors.

Peg 13 on Collins. A very large limb of a willow tree to the left of the peg snapped off and narrowly missing a members bivvi. Myself, Dougie, Maca, Josh G and Carl dealt with as much of the tree as possible and made it safe but it needs further work via a professional tree surgeon. Let this be a warning to all members – the willow was in good health and with no visible signs of weakness, so please be conscious of potential branch drops when setting up, particularly in windy conditions. But don't just take my word for it... please see the next article below from the member who had a very lucky escape...



A CLOSE SHAVE – A WARNING TO ALL

By Chris Smith



It was a nice peaceful Saturday morning, a beautiful Collins sunrise with hardly any breeze. I was waking up in my tent watching the fish bubbling away in the silt like they do every morning.

There was a small cracking sound which I took hardly any notice of, followed shortly after by a second larger crack which got my attention. It was loud enough to tell me that a tree was about to fall over and it sounded very close.



I thought to myself I'd best get out of the tent and into my wheelchair just in case I needed to get out of the way. Staring at the trees on my way to the wheelchair came another crack which told me it was the one right above my head. Before I had time to get to my chair there was a mighty crack which could be heard over the whole lake and the branch started to fall! My last instinct as I watched it fall towards me was to raise my hands like somehow going to stop it.

It was pretty terrifying because I knew I was too slow to get out of the way. My guardian angel was looking over me and thank god the branch splintered and swung into the trunk of the tree, its leaves just brushing my tent. I was so lucky as I'm pretty sure a direct hit would have at least caused injury – or worse. Angers on the lake very kindly came to check on me and help break some of the branches that were now blocking the path. Every gust of wind was freaking me out after that, so I quickly packed up and went home.

The silver lining is that it is now a lot easier to cast on that peg, so I'm actually kind of happy that branch fell down – even if it did try to kill me!

MATCH NEWS AND UPDATE

By Dave Smith

Hi All. Here are the fixtures for Autumn. Please be aware that fixtures for the whole year are available on the match fishing section of the club's website. You can also find league tables there, though some people find problems opening that page up – It might be worth using a different browser (such as Edge, say or Safari etc) as it seems to affect some folk and not others!

DATE	VENUE	MATCH TIME	COMPETITION	TROPHY
September 2023				
Wed 13 th	Enborne canal (up)	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sun 17 th	River Stour	10:00 – 15:00	Shipston AA v NAA (0800 Draw)	
Wed 20 th	Alders	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's rover	
Fri 22 nd	Enborne canal (up)	08:00 – 16:00	Venue Closed - Booked by Friday Series	
Sat 23 rd – Sun 24 th	Bellwood	12:00 – 12:00	24-hr Carp	
Tue 26 th	Child Beale	10:00 – 15:00	Reading Fishing Club v NAA	
October 2023				
Sun 1 st	Enborne canal	10:00 – 15:00	HELP FOR HEROES (Charity Match) OPEN	(Tickets bought prior to match)
Wed 4 th	Avington D	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sun 8 th	Willows	10:00 – 15:00	NAA Memorial Match (08:30 draw)	Keith Scrivener Trophy Norman Unwin Trophy
Wed 11 th	Bellwood	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	Silver Trees Trophy
Sun 15 th	Avington	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed by Squires	
Wed 18 th	Willows	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup Sam Buxey Trophy
Fri 20 th	Avington	08:00 – 16:00	Venue Closed Booked by Friday Series	
Tue 24 th	Avington	10:00 – 15:00	NAA v Reading Fishing Club	
Sun 29 th	Bellwood	10:00 – 15:00	Pike Match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
November 2023				
Wed 1 st	Avington E	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sun 5 th	Enborne Canal (Down)	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed – booked by RTAA	
Sun 12 th	Enborne Canal	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed – booked by Shires	
Wed 15 th	Enborne Canal (Up)	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sun 26 th	Speen Moors	10:00 – 15:00	Pike Match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
December 2023				
Fri 1 st	Enborne canal (Up)	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed – booked by Friday Series	
Sun 3 rd	Bellwood/Hambridge canal/Risbys and Civil Service stretch	10:00 – 14:00	Christmas Match (Draw 08:30_	(Tickets bought prior to match) Dick Taylor Trophy

As at 1st September, the current standings are:

Over 60's League	points	Over 70's League	points
1 st - Dave Smith	33	1 st – Bill Bowsher	21
2 nd = Henry Sadler	25	2 nd – Steve Thame	20
2 nd = Steve Myers	25	3 rd – Keith Hallis	19
4 th – Tim Wirth	21	4 th – Steve Myers	17
5 th – Richard Wiggins	19	5 th = Mervyn Burrows, Richard Wiggins and Tim Wirth	15
6 th – Ken Rolfe	17		

Result from the 24-hour carp match held at Knotts on 2/3rd September:

1st - Chris Fox - 88lb 8oz
 2nd - Daniel Marshall - 72lb 15oz
 Biggest fish -Kris Reddin - 23lb 7oz
 Ben Greenroyd - 15lb
 Sol Story - 14lb
 Shane Williams - pastie 🍷
 Mike Bantick, Glynn Swain - blanked

Thanks To Chris Fox for arranging this match even if he rudely went and won it! Mind you, he did have his mentors with him – his sons, Lennox and Logan. Unsurprisingly, they enjoyed the match so much they are already excited for the next one. Meanwhile they kept fishing after the match and under their dad's tutelage, both boys caught pbs – Lennox of 16lb 5 and Logan of 16lb 2.



In an effort to advertise the NAA matches that ALL MEMBERS can fish this is the list of upcoming matches through to the end of the year:

- 17 Sep - We travel to Shipston-on-Stour to fish against them on the lovely River Stour. This is an annual trip and we have strong bonds with the local club It's always a fun day fished in a competitive but very friendly manner. Please come and support your Club.
- 26 Sep - We fish against Reading Fishing Club on the Thames at Child Beale. Never fished the Thames? Then again please join us and pop your Thames cherry!
- On 1 Oct it is the *Help for Heroes* match on the Enborne Canal. Tickets for this match are £10 and that money goes straight to H4H. This is a full day with Bacon Butties in the Lamb Pub on Enborne Road and a full hot meal after the match back in the pub. There is always a big raffle which helps to boost the funds

for H4H with plenty of prizes. It's a real highlight of the club's year, and a great chance to meet like-minded people and if you've never fished our canals, pick up tips. Large perch, silvers, bream and the occasional decent tench generally turn up.

- The 8 Oct is the NAA Memorial Match on Willows which gives us a chance to remember those we have lost over the years.
- 24 Oct is the return match v Reading fishing Club and it is on the Canal at Avington.
- Lastly the big get together of the year which is the NAA Christmas match. This is held on 3 Dec and participants have the choice whether to fish on Bellwood Lake, the Civil Service stretch of the river behind Bellwood or the canal at Hambridge Road so a venue to suit everyone. Each year we try to get a Breakfast Buttie and there are plenty of prizes including a Hamper for each of the 3 venue winners.

All the details for these matches are on the match calendar and if you need further information on any match speak to me, Dave Smith the Membership Secretary on 01635 46285



THE ALLURE OF LURE FISHING

By John Vockins

Hi my name is John and I have been fishing on and off for the past 17 years. I grew up in the countryside with my grandfather being a gamekeeper and I helped him with the breeding of pheasants and ducks for the estate we lived on. I used to watch the lady of the estate fly fishing for trout on the river by her house I had always wanted a go. I asked all my family when I was around 10 but there was no one to show me as none of them fished. I suppose it t always stayed a dream in the back of my head until I was about to turn 40 when a work colleague who fished for carp offered to show me. By this time I had a son of my own and I thought it would be a great idea for him and me to learn.

It was a lovely day and we were shown the basics of float fishing, with my very first cast catching me a small mirror carp of about 3 lbs. We caught many fish that day, mostly rudd and roach and a few more small carp, and both my son and I really enjoyed it. My son did not carry it on but I loved it and became a fishing addict.

I soon got into carp fishing and joined several clubs and visited some very nice day ticket waters. I did for a number of years and caught some very nice fish from various lakes in the south and still do it every now and again, But after many happy times on the bank, I found weekends were getting more and more taken up with family events so I was not really getting my fishing fix . I now had only evenings after work, or grab the odd hour or so at the weekend. Carp fishing with all the equipment involved was too much effort for the limited times I could squeeze onto the bankside, so I desperately needed something I could do on shorter sessions.

I turned to lure fishing as I was a lover of perch from my earlier days of fishing with worms and maggots on the canal catching stripeys to about a pound to a pound and a half.

But this time I was in my mid-50's and on my own again as I had no one to ask about lure fishing so started my research. I asked at tackle shops and found the internet is a brilliant place to get great help and advice, with some inspiring YouTube videos. I soon worked out the type of light rod and reel combo I needed and the type of line and leader. I got a basic starter kit together with a small bag to put an unhooking mat and my bits and bobs in, plus a landing net that would fold and I could carry. I didn't want too much stuff as I was going to stay mobile covering a lot of water in search for these striped warriors. It was lovely to be travelling light for a change, and my fishing gear could stay in the boot in readiness for me to pop to the canal at a moment's notice.

That was around 3 years ago, I joined a couple of local clubs which had a good length of canal stretches for me to get started on so I joined Reed Thatcham Angling Association and Hungerford Canal Angling Association. Both offered me a good choice of likely areas to try. At the start of the season, I set off to try my skills, and blanked a lot. On thinking back I must have tried 8 or 10 times in many different locations. I started to think was it the lures or the rigs or my locations. I remember thinking after about the sixth time that there were no fish in the canal. (Well that it certainly not the case) It was totally down to my inexperience in this type of fishing.

I decided to change tactics, so one evening after work in the summer I waited until around 7:30pm when the sun was beginning to drop, the boat traffic had died down. I then headed down to the canal. This time I was going to use small lures work them slowly. I had already resigned myself to a blank but just being by the canal on a lovely summer evening was reward enough. I worked my lure around the walls to a lock gate and then I felt a tug on the line, my heart started to race I lifted the rod only to see a lovely perch turn and swim away. I thought did I strike too early or too late. By this time my heart was racing so I carefully lowered my lure back in the water and walked carefully along the lock gate wall and then bang! The light rod I was using bent round and the reel clutch started slipping... I was in!



I was shaking as I had worked so hard to get to this point and now, I looked like all that time and effort was about to pay off. I slowly lifted the rod and then I saw this lovely perch of about 1½ lb which was bigger than I would have expected for my first lure caught fish.

I slipped the net under it and carefully lifted it out. Well, I was still trembling as I carefully unhooked it and measured it on my unhooking mat. It came in at 34cm long. I took a couple of photos which were not brilliant as I was not expecting it, but this was the start. Since then I have joined Newbury Angling Association and Thatcham AA for the past 2 years which allows me to walk and fish from Thatcham right through to Enborne and then again at Kintbury on the Avington stretch.

I have caught many perch since then with my biggest being 3lb 8oz out of the canal along with a lot of pike of various sizes. I still blank now and then but then that's fishing. I still have to try the lakes but in the summer months most are very busy with carp anglers so this is something I will try in the winter months, it may produce a larger fish – who knows, but it's something to try.



My love of canal fishing is that you can never be sure what's in there. If you see me along the canal, come and say hello as there are too few lure anglers in our area. I still fish for carp fish now and again but there is an equal amount of fun to be had on the canal if you are looking to keep moving and go light. Here are a few of my best catches on the NAA canal waters.

Looking back, it does take a while and there is a lot of advice out there so you have to fine a method that works for you. All I can say is once you have, the results are brilliant and perch fight really well on very light tackle. Although I had many blank sessions I put that down to, firstly wrong location. You have to find fish to catch them which is half the battle. They are not just everywhere. I think I spent too long in one area, so my advice there would be if you're not getting bites after 6 or 8 casts

in a swim move on. Secondly lure size and colour, there are so many different lures out there. I would start with small lures and small jig heads, say 3 gram with a size 6 hook. Colours vary on the day so I would take a few different colours with you and if one colour does not get you bites change the colour of the lure. I only target Perch so I use a light 6lb fluorocarbon leader, if pike are about then I switch to a very light trace or if there are just small jacks around step up the fluorocarbon to 10 or 12 lbs.

I'm looking to teach my grandchildren in the future and canals are a great place for children to start. I wonder if there is a possibility of issuing a permit just for the canals as this could tempt people to join and have a go and help keep the prices down for parents. Just a thought it may attract more members as lure fishing is growing in popularity and not everyone wants to fish on the lakes.



PERCH 2

By Barry Murrer

So, the summer is over, temperatures are falling, the leaves are beginning to turn, and it's my favourite time of year to fish for perch. This is the first of a short series about my efforts to catch some the species in our waters that are not carp – we have excellent fishing available for so many types of fish and I hope to inspire a few people to leave the barrow at home and explore our waters.

For most of my generation of anglers our first fish was a perch- carp were very thin on the ground back in the early 1960s and although I avidly followed the adventures of Richard Walker at Redmire Pool in Angling Times, for most of us carp were inaccessible and, if they were present in local water, were regarded as uncatchable anyway. Perch by contrast were everywhere and always obliging.

I was very lucky to have had exclusive access to a private stretch of the River Ousel in Newport Pagnell, a lovely little river with two weirpools, shallows and bulrush-lined deeper runs. Classic perch territory and my Dad and I caught plenty with worms freshly dug from the vegetable patch. Very simple fishing, just let a float-fished worm

drift along and wait for the bite. During school holidays we caught minnows on bread using a size 14 hook then, using the same tackle, dropped the unfortunate minnow into the nearby 'perch hole'. Always seemed to work but thankfully there is no need to use live fish as bait nowadays.



I moved to near Newbury in 2008 after living in Oxford and then Reading for many years. Great fishing in both locations and I was very keen to get to grips with NAA waters. My first fish from Newbury waters was a barbel, hard to find nowadays but, fingers crossed, they do seem to making a comeback in the Kennet. I quickly realized that we have some excellent perch fishing in all types of waters. In this article I will try to illustrate three of my favourite methods for perch fishing. In another article in the Issue John Vockins gives a really good overview of his lure fishing exploits for perch especially on the canals. I won't repeat his good advice but try to cover some different aspects of perch fishing using three methods- ultralight, conventional lure fishing and my old favourite, float-fished lobworms.

Ultralight fishing



This is a highly mobile method, all of your tackle in a pocket, a few casts in a swim and move on, you can cover miles in a day and it is an excellent method to locate those big perch for targeting with worms later. All the tackle you need is shown in the picture. A 2 metre rod casting weight 1-4g, 1000 size reel with 10lb braid and a short 6lb fluorocarbon leader, a few lures, forceps for pike unhooking and my telescopic folding trout landing net that clips to my belt, not forgetting the unhooking mat and that's it! With lures less than 5cm long I don't usually use

a wire trace but if they are bigger then I think a trace is essential. You can now get knottable nickel/titanium trace wire down to 6lb breaking strain, it's very fine and doesn't seem to put the fish off at all so please use traces and don't risk leaving hooks in an unexpected pike.



I use tiny jigheads or just barbless hooks size 10-14 tied on the line and a split shot pinched on just above the knot, both work very well. There is a huge variety of soft plastic lures available, some of my current favourites are shown. You don't need plastic though- a Denrobaena or bit of lobworm are excellent. A slow sink and draw in the margins works best for me and this method will catch perch in our lakes, rivers and canals. I promised our editor an account of a trip to our lakes but the upcoming deadline for submission meant that I had to fish on one of the very few hot August afternoons we have had this summer- not promising, but it turned out well enough....

I arrived at Bellwood at around 3 o'clock to find the carpark almost full and only a couple of vacant swims. The water was really murky as the carp were feeding well. Not the best conditions for lure fishing for perch. In each of the two swims I fished there were shoals of tiny perch a couple of inches long, too small to be hooked but each time the lure came within visibility I could see some of them frantically attacking it. Little perch are the favourite food of big perch so once the water clears a bit and the carp fishing pressure eases I'll be back looking for some bigger ones.

Next to Pallets, where nobody else was fishing. The water was much clearer and every swim I tried held hand-sized perch. These feisty little fish were certainly on the feed- the one in the picture completely engulfed a 5 cm plastic stickleback. I couldn't find any bigger fish so walked over to Bull's Lock.

This is generally an excellent spot for perch, I'm sure it is because they feed on the huge shoals on minnows in the outflow from Thatcham sewage works. Luckily this is one of the better managed sewage treatment works in our area and the water is generally of good quality. No monsters this time, although I have caught several 3lb+ fish here in recent years using ultralight tactics. The biggest fish was around ½ lb or so, but welcome, nevertheless. I walked back along the canal and was back at the car around 5.30. So, a nice walk, lots of fish and a few spots noted to try later in the season.

Conventional lure fishing



John's article elsewhere gives some great advice, I'll just show some of my most productive lures.

Remember, always use a wire trace with lures bigger than about 5cm!

Little plugs are great, I love to see big perch smash into them as they rise to the surface during a break in the retrieve- almost like a trout taking a mayfly! I've been using Ondex spinners for over 60 years now and they are simply brilliant- I've probably caught more perch (and pike) on these than any other lure. I bend the wire stem a little before use, this helps stop line twist and also slows down the spinning rate a little. Finally, don't be afraid of using big lures for big perch, I've done well using plastic crayfish and eels as pictured.

Floatfished lobworm - This is how I started perch fishing and it is still extremely effective in any of our waters, be they lake, canal or river. I keep tackle very simple- match rod, 6lb line, Avon style float, one or two swanshot and a size 10 barbless hook tied directly to the mainline. I usually break the lobworm in two and hook once through each broken end. And that's it! The bits of worm don't crawl off the barbless hook, just drop it into likely spots. Sometimes the fish will be in midwater and want a bait trotted with any current, sometimes they want a bait static on the bottom so move the float until you find them.

Whilst you can catch some perch throughout the day in Autumn and Winter, be sure to be there for the golden hour- half an hour before sunset and half an hour after. The perch seem to switch on to feeding during this brief spell and I often do a very short trip just to fish for them during this period. As Mr Crabtree teaches us, perch do love a bit of cover and that is always a good place to try. If you do find a good perch swim, it will always be a good perch swim- some of the places I fished 60 years ago are still producing nice perch. I guess the combination of food and shelter retain their attraction through many generations. Sadly, on our canals the chainsaw wielding zealots from the Canal and Rivers Trust are



trying to remove any trace of overhanging vegetation which provides invaluable habitat for fry, perch and kingfishers. The three always go together, I just wish the CRT could appreciate it! Anyway, some of my favourite places for perch on the canal at Avington have been ruthlessly trimmed but the perch are still around- this is the time to try the centre of the canal as it is the best cover they can get.

If you haven't tried perch fishing recently I hope I have tempted you to have a go- please do let our editor know if you do well!

OWEN'S ANNUAL VISIT

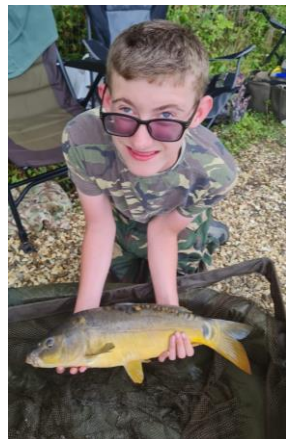
by Chris Matthews

In July, Owen aged 14, made his annual pilgrimage from South Wales to fish Willows lake. Here's his story:

I didn't know I was going until my Mam woke me at 4:30am and said, "Come on, we're off to Thatcham and going fishing". I got dressed quickly and found that she'd already loaded the car, so off we went, only stopping for a coffee and a quick breakfast on the way.

We arrived at the lake and Chris let us in. I was fishing as his guest again. The weather was fine and calm, but there were no fish showing anywhere. We set-up about halfway along the Discovery Centre bank.

Chris baited near the island with a few pouches of particles and we cast out on either edge of the baited area. We used simple running lead rigs with size 8 hooks and a short hair, baited with two 10mm pop-ups. A split shot on the hair between the pop-ups and the hook allowed them to sink slowly, but also pinned them to the bottom so they would just sit on the silt among the loose baits.



The sun started to rise and a few fish were visible cruising over the baits. Now and again, I had a few twitches on the indicator.

Then Chris had a run, but it felt strange and soon came off. He reeled in a mass of tangled line with a rig and tree roots. He thought a fish was probably towing it around and it caught in his line. It was good to know that the fish was now free.

Mam then went off to the Discovery Centre cafe and Chris had another run and hooked into it. He gave his rod to me and said, "You can land it". It was a 4.5lb mirror. Mam was gutted that she'd missed it. She came back with a coffee each though, which was very welcome.

Things went a bit quiet, although the odd fish was still visiting the baited area. I changed to a 14mm single orange pop-up, which needed a bigger split shot to hold it down. The fish weren't really getting their heads down, so perhaps they would respond to something more noticeable.

It wasn't long before my rod was away and this felt a bit better. I had to turn the fish away from the island and it then decided to come in quite easily, kiting around to my right. I had to lean out over the water with side strain to stop it getting caught in any old roots sticking out from the bank. After a few short runs, where the fish

persisted on trying to get under the bank to my right, Chris netted a 9.5lb common and my biggest carp. I was over the moon and it made the whole effort well worthwhile.

By now, it had started to cloud over, which was welcome as it would've been very hot and uncomfortable. I cast out with the same method and after a while, I had another run. This fish also went to my right and tried to get under the bank. It was a 7.25lb common, another fish beating my previous best of 6lb.

By now, there were no fish showing in the swim. Chris topped up with some more loose baits, but it was a long while before we had any signs of fish, when our lines started twitching. Time was getting on now and at 6 o'clock, Mam said, "Time to pack up." Just as she said it, my rod was away! Again, this fish tried to get down the bank to my right. It was another common of 6.5lb, which made it three fish bigger than my previous best.

I was so shattered, I didn't really mind leaving. It was good to get some rest at the Swan followed by a meal and then crash-out.

Newbury's lakes are great. They are much nicer and better organised than the waters back home and all the anglers I met on the lake were chatty and friendly. A big thank you to those who commented and liked Chris's post on the NAA Facebook page. I had a fabulous time and I'll be back.

MY FISHING LIFE

By Matt Peacock



I have fished, like many of you, since I was old enough to walk, however back then Carp did not exist as they do now, so I was brought up on match fishing and pleasure fishing rivers. I was moderately successful in the junior matches with the guidance of my dad and my name may still appear in the annuals of past matches if they still exist.

I grew up in Newbury and had the very fortunate childhood of having what was essentially a private lake to fish. My dad worked for Thames Water and they had a lake behind our house that he had the shooting and fishing rights for in exchange for the upkeep of the lake and its surroundings - it even had a small stream that fed off from Speen Moors. It had a wide range of fish within its waters, chub, perch, pike, bream, roach, rudd, tench and even some wild carp that were unbelievably hard to catch. I was only interested in the pike and the perch back then and would spend many evenings with a bucket of minnows catching countless perch before bed. During lockdown (after fishing was allowed) someone may have even snuck over there and caught a sizable brown trout off the top with a frog surface lure...All of this gave me an appreciation of all fish and not just sticking to one species. In turn this means whatever the weather or time for year there is something for me to catch or at least try to.

I now I spend my time trying to fish places where many others do not, for me fishing is pretty solitary however the idea of a 'social', I believe you carp anglers call it, does seem like the craic. Or fishing for specimen fish (mostly perch) where others may think it madness to even suggest there is a fish of any quality. That's the fun of it for me, yes there is many 'wasted' hours, but fishing is either just sitting still for long periods of time or walking miles and miles and sometimes something happens, when you think about the time spent physically catching fish (striking, playing and landing) in a trip then a blank is really just an extra 20 minutes sat down or walking. It certainly makes me feel better about blanks thinking of it that way.

I have had some, very lucky, success this year (Summer) in the form of a 10lb 2oz barbel, on luncheon meat in broad daylight from the Civil Service stretch. In fact I was so chuffed I didn't even stay until dark just went home and had a takeaway. I've also caught tench to 6lb 1oz from Willows (the left hand lake, I never know which is which) and crucian carp to 4oz... yes I am still working on the crucians, but fishing with 3lb line in a lake full of carp can sometimes be tricky and as fun as it is catching carp between 10 and 15lb on light tackle and a float rod it can become a bore after a while. I also caught a gudgeon from Willows as well!

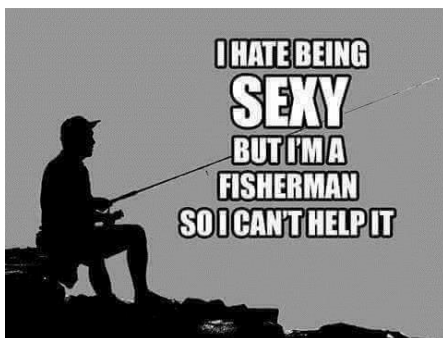


My favourite quarry, the perch as mentioned, is best caught when the weather is colder - but I start my campaign in the summer with trips anywhere where to just catch anything and see what the fishing is like – there's no point fishing somewhere where even in the summer you can't catch, - if there is nothing for the perch to eat you can safely assume that it is unlikely a perch of any decent magnitude is lurking. Another very good source of information is Chris Plumb's blog ([Chris Plumb's Blog - Fishing Forums from Anglers' Net \(anglersnet.co.uk\)](http://anglersnet.co.uk)). This blog led me to Warwick's a while back for some very respectable perch fishing as you can see from the picture. Thanks Chris. If there are any carp anglers out there with any info about large fish, other than carp, that they have seen please let me know - I love a wild goose chase!

Match reports (as shown on the NAA website) can also hold the key to where the fish are or where is worth fishing, depending on how detailed the write ups are.

Once I've found a likely lake or spot (I don't mind telling you this year it will be Pallets for both pike and perch - I can almost hear the sounds of disbelief) I will fish it as much as I can given the time I have, which is not a lot, and hopefully something special happens. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. If it happens more than once you will see me post a picture, but you may have a long wait for that in the winter season. There is nothing fancy about the way I fish, I feel most of the work is finding them and using the knowledge learnt from trying and failing and then I try to outsmart them as best I can.

Last year I did all the above and all I can tell you is I know where you can catch lots of small fish. It does not work all the time but that is specimen fishing and fishing in general and really it only needs to work once for it to be a success.



CHALKSTREAM

By Chris Plumb

When I'm not on the bank I've probably got my head in a book as I am an avid reader of angling literature – and have now built up a veritable little angling library of close to 200 books (plus every Waterlog & Fallon's Angler ever published). And there's not a single 'How to...' book in sight! Below is my all-time top 10 angling books (at the moment!) – with the self-imposed limit of one per author. So in no particular order (apart from alphabetical by author...)

The Glorious Uncertainty – John Aston. Real tossup between this and *A Dream of Jewelled Fishes* – John's 1st book – both are superb – but this one just shades it for me.

Reflections from the Waters Edge - John Bailey. I have most of Bailey's books – but this early one is still my favourite.

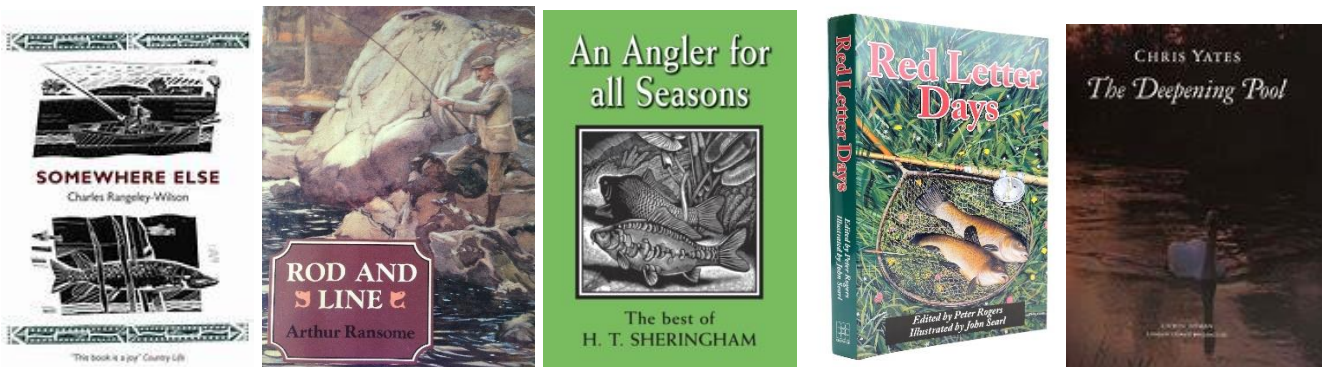
I know a Good Place – Clive Gammon. Great travel book and angling read rolled into one.

Death, Taxes and Leaky Waders. John Gierach. If you've never read anything from this fabulous American author – start here – it's a best of from several of his books.



Fish, Fishing and the Meaning of Life – ed Jeremy Paxman. I love a good angling anthology – in fact they warrant a top 10 of their own – this one is superb and for me just beats BB's *The Fisherman's Bedside Book*.

Somewhere Else – Charles Rangeley-Wilson. Again another cracking travel book as well as great angling story-telling.



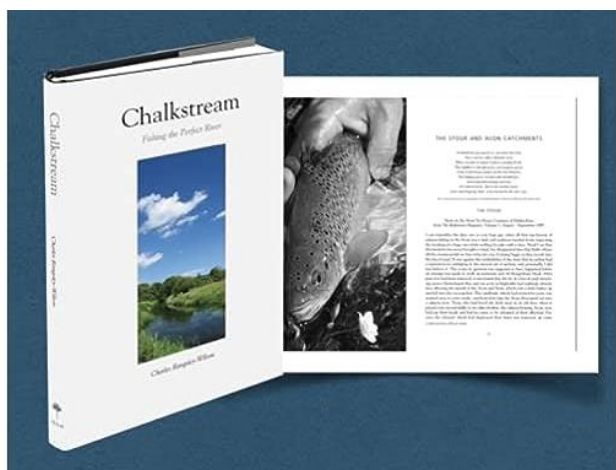
Rod and Line – Arthur Ransome. A classic. First published in 1929 – a collection of 50 articles that had appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* over the previous 5 years. Still stands the test of time and made into a TV series in the early 1980s.

An Angler for all Seasons - H T Sheringham. When Chris Yates first appeared on the literary scene he was often given the sobriquet 'the best angling writer since Sheringham'. This book is a compendium of some of his best writing – and like the Ransome book still fresh today!

Red Letter Days – Various. A lovely read – compiled as a tribute to Bernard Venables – 48 contributors with illustrations from John Searl. Probably the angling book I've re-read the most!

The Deepening Pool – Chris Yates. I could have packed out the whole top 10 with CY tomes – I have every angling book he's ever published. However this is easily my favourite - being a mainly river angler myself. Fantastic Yates prose coupled with his own photography – sublime!

Chalkstream - Fishing the Perfect River by Charles Rangeley Wilson



What a great idea – a collection of articles celebrating my favourite rivers. I do love a good fishing anthology and this is just such a book. Charles Rangeley-Wilson is the fishing correspondent for *The Field* and a founder of The Wild Trout Trust. I have both of his 'angling books' and they are great reads - 'Somewhere Else' and 'The Accidental Angler' – the latter was made into a 4 part BBC 2 series in 2006.

In truth though, there's not much of Charles' actual writing in this book. He and his editor, Tony Hayter, have assembled a large selection of articles and arranged them by catchment and river. Thus, we have chapters entitled Wessex, Thames, East

Anglia, Eastern Wolds & France (Normandy). Each major river and many, many minor ones are then acclaimed through the writing of others. All the classic angling writers of the 20th century are featured:- Sheringham (repeatedly!), Skues, Hills, Plunkett Greene, Venables and Walker to name half a dozen. Well, nearly all. There is a bias in the writing towards trout, which probably explains why there's no articles from Chris Yates – which is a shame, as he has written eloquently of the Hampshire Avon and Kennet – though usually of barbel. Still, it is a somewhat puzzling oversight given that one of the Dick Walker articles is the Dace chapter from *No Need to Lie*.

Chalkstream, the book, is sumptuously illustrated with colour plates, most taken by the compiler and often at the very spot where an accompanying story unfolded (often decades previously!). There are maps of every chalk stream in England, some of which took some hunting down and many of which I've never heard of. Frustratingly though, there is no mapping of the French rivers – which gives that chapter a sense it was a bit of an afterthought.

Naturally, when I first opened the book I turned to the articles on my beloved River Kennet and it was with a certain piquancy that I found myself reading of venues and even swims that I have fished and knew intimately. There's even a colour photo of a swim I know well! However, the pleasant surprise comes in the writings of some 'lesser' rivers – streams I've never heard of like the River Hiz & River Tas, to name a couple. *The Field* and now long defunct *Fishing Gazette* are plundered in earnest for many of these articles. Back issues of both publications are often 'staples' for anthologies like this one!

In all, there are around 90 articles, poems, diaries and 'Letters to the Editor'. And one of the pleasures (in fact reasons) of reading a well-researched anthology such as this is being introduced to new authors and their works. There are a few books that I now want to get better acquainted with as a result of extracts appearing in Chalkstream. Top of my list is likely to be *A Chalkstream Chronicle* by Neil Patterson. I've bumped into Neil a couple of times on *The Wilderness*, where his book is set.

The book itself is produced to Medlar's usual high production values, glossy paper and colour photos throughout – it makes a great present for any chalk stream angler (which is how I acquired my copy!)

Medlar Press Originally 2005, again in 2009 with the latest edition 2020 so still in print. £28. ISBN 1-899600-86-1

YOUR TOP CATCHES

THE BEST FISH YOU'VE LANDED THIS WEEK

SEND US YOUR PICS

● newsdesk@anglingtimes.co.uk
● Make sure your pics are hi-res and that you are in them



“I THOUGHT I'D HOOKED A SNAG!”

John Vockins – 3lb 4oz perch

“ON A warm Sunday afternoon I thought it'd be a great idea to take a walk along the canal with my light lure rod, with the hope of catching a perch.

“I wasn't anticipating catching anything particularly big, and after a few casts around some of my favourite spots with a small 4cm shad, I'd landed a few small fish, which I was happy enough with.

“After about two hours I had a cast into the middle of the canal and instantly felt a pull. I thought at first that I'd hooked a snag and gave it a little tug, only to hear my clutch start to click away! I knew this was a good fish as it gave plenty of head shakes, and as I brought it to the net, I tried to stay calm. Thankfully, it was landed with little drama.

“On the scales, it weighed 3lb 4oz. This was not a fish I was expecting!”

John's top tip: Although it's tempting to target features on canals, I had this fish from the central boat channel, an area well worth targeting for larger fish.

You will have read earlier about John Vockin's self-taught progress from carp angler to lure fisherman

Well, his development has been such that he appeared in the Angling Times in July.

Congratulations, John! I wonder if we can get any other NAA catches in future issues?

AnglingTimes

JUNIOR'S FIRST DAY

By Alex Green



My Son Jack, 17, asked me a week or so ago 'Dad, can we please go fishing again?'

The last time we had done that I had taken him and his sister, Georgie, to Bellwood, they were both 7 and 9 respectively and we'd fished for Perch using float and on worm. Float fishing, I had considered was an accessible way to introduce them and of course something to keep young minds occupied with, as requires watching and understanding translating bites from movement of the float to pre-



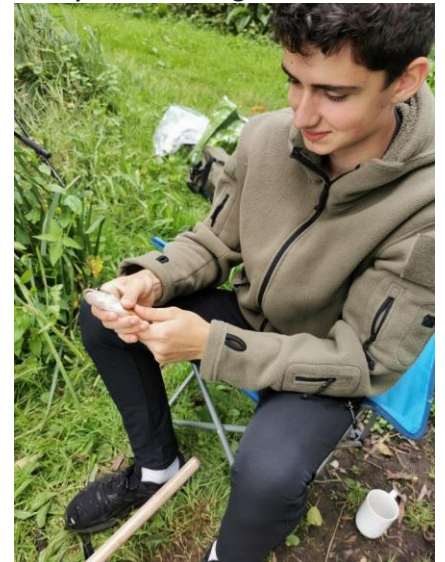
empt that strike.

That was a cool September evening in the mid-2010s. That Day I had no time really to fish myself as was occupied popping between the two of them untangling mis-casts, occasional branch, making the hot chocolate and yes, unhooking the fish! Punctuated with... Dad!!! got one! I'd forgotten what a great sound that is. That was all just fine by me and living vicariously through them gave me great satisfaction. They kids learned quickly as they do.

Myself, between then and now I had on occasion taken his sister fishing upon her request and then myself, an occasion Carp night or two with a friend and as well as occasional lure fishing and fly but nothing too serious. So we set about getting Jack a Junior membership plus rod licence and we were set. Bellwood the venue and bearing in mind the lake, Specimen, I'd have to take further precautions in the unlikely event we hooked into something big. Line heavier and discussion with my lad and along with fish care and landing equipment.

We made arrangement to fish with a view to fish, the following Saturday morning a little special I bought a 10ft float rod for Jack, his own. I recalled it feels nicer when you have something new shiny and for him and his first outing as a junior member might help to add to the occasion.

The visit to Tony to get bait and some bits and pieces. Tony I envisioned from Jack's perspective like perhaps some a wise old fishing sage or wizard.



The banks were packed when we arrived and opted to two pegs on the left-hand side away from the car park. We could afford to make mistakes quietly there also. No one wants an audience when you are lad whilst learning

to cast. Dad! I got one! Was the early call and followed by 18 more of those throughout the morning. All Perch in middle ounces and under a pound but again, I could feel that rise of excitement and was good to spectate.

Striking started to become accurate and hits to misses ratio increased. We had tea together and talked about most things, really talk with him on equal terms. We covered many topics and put the world to right as only a man and lad can do.. We spoke about birds landing on rod ends being a good omen and then we saw a heron,



we laughed. We saw a bailiff who was doing the rounds, checked our permits and I introduced Jack to him. He was kind enough to encourage Jack and update us both on the waters in NAA. Jack heard new terms such as watercraft, wraps and pop ups. He later he asked me to explain those terms as we were packing up.

We also heard the occasional screaming tone from a distant bite alarm, the water was warm to the touch, the fish were feeding.

I didn't catch quite as many fish as Jack as he has since happily reminded me. I did catch the lads attention and interest, or rather the experience did and I was just happy to be part of that revelation to him on that day. Later that day when we are back home he asks. "Dad? When are we going to catch something bigger? Can we try for those Carp?"

MY RIVER FISHING TIPS

By Joshua Golding

I've been fishing as long as I can remember and a lot of that was on the river, only the last few years I've moved onto the lakes. River fishing can be a challenge but with plenty of effort you can have some good fish.

There are plenty of ways to approach the rivers, but my favourites are feeder fishing, or trotting a float. N.A.A has some great stretches and there is so many good free sections around Newbury as well, such as the K&C canal in the town centre. This year I haven't done too many sessions on the river but every time I've been, I've caught numerous amounts of roach and dace, and even some massive trout



Fishing for the roach and dace can be challenging as they can be sat tight to the bottom of the river or they could be sat midwater. To work out the depth of the river, depending on the flow, you could use a plummet but most of the rivers I fish have a fast flow, so I like to keep adjusting the depth of my float until it starts to drag along the bottom. Then I move the float a few inches shallower so my bait runs freely down the current. I'll try this for a while to see if that where the fish are. If the bites are slow, I'll move the float up and fish midwater and see if I get more bites.



I had a great session on the canal at Hambridge canal. I started the day fishing on the feeder but I just couldn't get a bite, so I decided to switch to the float fishing with maggots and the bites came straight away. Within a few hours I'd probably had over 100 roach and dace and even a few trout up to 3 lb. My best river session was on the free section in Victoria Park that joins onto our section of river. I fished it a couple of times catching some big trout, so I decided to show my mate the fish in there and we sorted out a session and started at the furthest point of the free section. We slowly made our way back towards the park, catching the odd trout and then we got to my favourite section, it's

slightly faster but shallower and the trout seem to love it there. I flicked the rod out into the middle of the river, I was using a cage feeder with a generic river ground bait and I was using big chunks of spam as my hook bait. The rod wasn't out too long when it whacked around and I knew I was into a decent fish. The fish jumped clean out of the water and me and my mate was in awe of the size of this fish. We had to chase it down the river as it was stripping line, my mate bundled it into the net and when we see this fish on the bank we knew it was going to be a biggun. A 10lb brown trout, something I never thought I'd catch, let alone from a canal. On another free section of river I've had some big grayling, but I've seen some in there that are huge. That section I can't say too much about as I don't want even more anglers down there but it can be some awesome fishing down there. Bread is my favourite way to catch them, nearly always freelining either with floating crust or a small piece of sinking bread. It's one of my favourite rivers to fish during the colder months, catching grayling when a lot of other fish are not up for a feed.



To finish this piece of I'd say river fishing can be a challenge but effort goes along way and sticking with it and putting the leg work in finding them fish will always catch you more.

Postscript: Since penning this article, Joshua has been back on the river – how about this for a beauty!



TRACKING DOWN POLLUTION

By Martin Salter, Head of Policy at Angling Trust

There was a time when you flushed the loo that there was a more than even chance that it would make its way to the treatment works without spilling out into the environment through cracks in the rising mains or via storm overflows. There was also a time when increases in population were planned for and new water supply reservoirs were built - mainly around my old stomping ground of Staines and Sunbury on the fringes of West London. Sadly, this is a time before the flawed privatisation of the water industry in 1989 which far from ushering in “a new era of investment and transformation” has seen declining water quality standards and not a single new reservoir built since Farmoor in 1976 - year that Abba were number one with *Dancing Queen* in case you need reminding!

A consequence of this appalling record of neglect is that our rivers and streams suffer from over abstraction and, as every angler knows, rivers with low flows are even more vulnerable to the threats of pollution from both sewage and agriculture. And the water industry figures from the last couple of years make for particularly grim reading:

- The number of sewage spills in 2021 – **372,533**
- The number of sewage spills in 2022 - **301,091**
- The total duration (hours) of monitored spill events in 2021 was **2,667,452**
- The total duration (hours) of monitored spill events in 2022 was **1,754,920**

Savage cuts to the Environment Agency budgets since 2010 have left it unable to do its job as our environmental regulator and increasingly it has been left to citizen science and organisations like the Angling Trust and Fish Legal to pick up the baton.

It's now year since we launched our Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) as part of the Angling Trust's Anglers Against Pollution campaign. This has involved angling clubs and fisheries taking their own readings from their local rivers with specially provided equipment and feeding the results into a national database. Last month the WQMN reached a significant milestone with the 2,000th water quality sample taken from UK rivers.

The Network was launched as a pilot project on the River Severn in May 2022 and was rolled out nationally just two months later. It currently involves over 500 volunteers from 200 angling clubs taking samples from their local waters to better understand water quality and potential pollution issues. The 2,000th sample was taken by voluntary bailiff Jonathan Swan on the River Chelmer in Essex and showed that phosphate levels exceeded the Water Framework Directive while nitrates were at the trigger level.

Kris Kent, the Angling Trust's Campaigns & Advocacy Manager who leads on the Water Quality Monitoring project, said:

“When we rolled out the Water Quality Monitoring Network nationally in July 2022, I never expected to record 2,000 samples within the first year, yet here we are. With over 500 volunteers registered from 200 angling clubs we have made amazing progress, and all thanks to all the hard work of volunteers like Jonathan. What is



sad is that the 2000th sample recorded is further evidence of the poor water quality on many of our rivers, exceeding Water Framework Directive standards for phosphate and with high nitrate levels.”

The initiative has received favourable coverage in the national press -

New moves to track down river polluters

THOSE responsible for polluting the rivers and waterways have been warned - steps are being taken to trace who you are.

Members of Mottram St Andrew Fly Fishing Club say that the River Bollin, which they use, is unfit for humans to enter or pets to swim in.

They are taking part in a scheme to monitor water quality and test levels of pollutants such as phosphate and nitrate as well as electro conductivity.

Results can then be shared online as part of a national network set up by the Angling Trust and supported by the Grayling Society.

And Ron Taylor, chairman of the fishing club, says the data can be used to help trace the source of the pollution and

change environmentally unfriendly practices.

Ron, also a conservation officer for the Grayling Trust, said: “For anglers along with all others who enjoy our rivers are entitled to expect the water to be clean, this initiative is a very positive step.

“The target may be a long way off but recommendations for change need evidence to support them which angling clubs can help to provide by involvement in this scheme.

“The disgusting behaviour of those responsible the lack of understanding of the general public and other contributors can be addressed relying on accurate readings over a significant period and armed with evidence of the trends in pollution

which will be exposed.”

The group says that waste can also be dumped in both the River Bollin and Dean and also bad farming practices add pollution.

In addition that there is also a lack of enforcement action from the government and other authorities that is failing to address the problem.

Ron has now appealed for other groups to get involved.

He said: “The time has long since arrived for local people and groups to get involved both with hands on action and applying pressure using all the platforms modern technology provides.

“All angling clubs with access to rivers in our region and nationally for that matter, ought to be joining the network to help

accurately expose the state of our rivers.”

“The evidence of early readings taken by the clubs volunteers from the Bollin indicate that the river is polluted and unfit for humans to enter or for that matter pets to swim in.”

Any groups who join the project will be given test kits at a nominal cost and the necessary training.

The tests will need to be taken at least monthly and take no more than half an hour to be carried out.

Electro conductivity measures how polluted a river is because water conducts electricity easier the more dissolved substances it contains.

Anyone interested in participating can contact Kris Kent at the Angling Trust at Kristian.Kent@anglingtrust.net.



● Anglers say the River Bollin is unfit for humans to enter

And you may have seen this piece recently in Angling Times –

THIS WEEK

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW FROM THE WORLD OF FISHING



CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS MARCH ON!

Volunteer-led efforts to save our rivers show no signs of slowing, as efforts are stepped up to fight pollution

THE plight of our rivers is no longer a secret but, thankfully, groups of volunteers across the nation are tirelessly battling to address the issue as Britain's 'citizen science movement' continues to grow.

In February last year we reported on the Wye Valley Citizen Science Monitoring Project, where hundreds of volunteers were carrying out nutrient tests in the river to establish the true impact of farm pollution. Since then, multiple groups have been set up on the Wye - but it's not just this iconic waterway that people are fighting for, says River Action UK chairman, Charles Watson.

“Everywhere you look, citizen science groups are forming,” he told us. “People know of the issues our waterways are facing, and want to protect them.”

River Action UK has just conducted one of the most extensive programmes ever on the River Thames at Henley. With help from the local community, it proved that the water was excessively nutrient-rich and in a very poor condition, and that Henley Sewage Treatment Works appeared to be breaching permitted levels of ammonia.

Crucially, citizen-led projects are able to create concrete data that allows regulators to be held accountable, as James Wallace, River Action CEO, revealed.

“The results of this citizen science prove the dire state of England's capital river. It's time to end the culture of blame and denial. Thames Water and the Government must admit culpability and invest in modernising infrastructure and enforcing the law,” he said.

Another citizen science project formed last year was the Angling



Volunteer Jonathan Swan takes the WQMN's 2,000th water sample, on the River Chelmer.

“The more anglers that get involved, the more impact we can have”

Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN), which has just completed its 2,000th test.

Under this initiative, volunteers from UK angling clubs take water samples on their rivers. It was rolled out nationally in July 2022.

“When we started, I never expected to record so many tests within the first year, yet here we are,” said Kris Kent, who leads the project.

“What is sad is that the 2,000th sample, taken by Jonathan Swan on the River Chelmer, showed high phosphate and nitrate levels. The more anglers that get involved, the more impact we can have.”

To take part, contact Kristian.kent@anglingtrust.net

Following the recordings taken across the country, a number of clubs have escalated their findings with the Environment Agency, water companies, local authorities and the media.

In Kent, the Royal Tunbridge Wells Angling Society and Bromley & District Angling Society used their findings to pinpoint four potential sources of pollution – run off from a large cattle farm, a Southern Water sewage pumping station, the South Tunbridge Wells Water Treatment Works outfall, and a brick stack inspection port from a local estate – which they reported to the Environment Agency hotline.

And on the River Severn, Shrewsbury Town Fisheries have presented their results to the Town Council and featured at the ‘How Clean Is Our River?’ meeting in February. They are continuing to campaign locally alongside other community groups and have appeared in the angling, regional and national media.

Closer to home we have both Twyford & District and RDAA signed up to the WQMN with regular samples being taken from the Loddon, Blackwater and lower Kennet. On the Kennet the RDAA reading have already identified the impact on water quality of the trout farm at Aldermaston. If NAA would like to get involved then please contact my colleague Kris Kent at kristian.kent@anglingtrust.net.

The Water Quality Monitoring initiative is supported by Orvis UK and the “Big Yellow Boxes” are supplied by Flambeau Outdoors.

You can find out more here -

[Water Quality Monitoring Network](#)
[Anglers Against Pollution](#) campaign

Martin Salter
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THAT’S ALL FOLKS!

As ever, we hope you enjoyed this issue. A thank you to all who have contributed to this issue. I hope you all give lure fishing a chance, or come along to at least one of our matches – You might even win.

And please, please consider Dougie’s request for water tester and committee members and Martin Salter’s Angling Trust campaign above.

We do try and provide a mix of topics regarding our great sport and amazing range of venues. Should you wish to make comment (or even better, submit something for publication, please do so at comms@newburyangling.org.uk

Martin Strike - Editor

