

## NEWBURY ANGLING ASSOCIATION



Founded 1878

**PRESIDENT**  
Steve Pallett

**CHAIRMAN**  
Dougie Hall

**VICE CHAIRMAN , SECRETARY &  
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**  
All Currently vacant

**FISHERY MANAGER**  
Paul Futcher

**MATCH SECRETARY**  
Dave Smith

**HEAD BAILIFF**  
Rob Allen

**HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER**  
Steve Myers

**TREASURER &  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR**  
Martin Strike

# THE NAAN SUMMER 2024



Welcome to Summer, and the excitement of a new season ahead. After the floods of Autumn/Winter we are delighted to say that the unprecedented water levels have receded in all but Bellwood, where the banks are still currently dangerous. Elsewhere, the fish are on the feed.

The clean-up work has begun on the lakes, though as it is the bird nesting season we are limited to what we can do on the bankside at the moment.

Inevitably banksides are still very soft in areas, so please take care, particularly when fishing on your own, or roving the river for early-season chub.

As ever, we are keen to keep these newsletters interesting, relevant and varied for you. Please let us know if you have any ideas for interesting stories to include in a future issue or any successes/failures to share.

You can contact us on any NAA matter via

[mail@newburyanglingassociation.crmail.co.uk](mailto:mail@newburyanglingassociation.crmail.co.uk)

## A BARBEL CAUGHT...AT DOBSONS!



Ricky Davis had quite a day after getting the green light from his partner for him and his mate David to set off to the lakes. 'We were out for a quick 24 hour session, and were going to Collins,' Ricky told us, 'but Dave bottled it saying it was too hard on there, so we ended up on Dobsons. After having a look around we chose our swims. I got my new magic spod mix out and off it went into the lake. It was busy from the off. I'd caught seven carp when the left hand rod ripped off again. After a 15 minute battle I landed the fish and couldn't believe it. There was a 4lb barbel in my net! When I saw what it was I was buzzing. It was a pb for me, well, it had to be really as I'd never caught one before! I caught it on pop-up sweetcorn over a bed of the magic spod mix.

One happy man at this point. Rod back out with more spod mix out there. Krill and pop-up sweetcorn did the trick with me having twelve carp on the pop-ups and another eight on the krill. What a 24-hours. My mate and I had 30 fish out in all, the largest carp being a common of 18lb 7. Until next time, Dobsons – thank you for the pb.'

# AROUND THE FISHERIES

## Work Parties

Two days of work parties took place on Rawlings as soon as the water levels allowed – thank you to all those who turned up and as you will see, did such a good job of getting so many swims fishable. Much strimming was done and bankside vegetation cut as appropriate given the bird nesting season. Much of the work we would like to do will require us employing contractors, for example Joe Wilkinson of Newbury Tree Services who removed a large and dangerous willow from the end of Collins. The cost of maintaining the venues and running the club comes from your permit payment, so thank you for renewing this year. If you are a contractor who feels they may have skills/equipment that may be of use, please contact us at the email address at the top of this newsletter.



The club have successfully applied for an Environment Agency Grant to assist with this and we hope to receive a cheque shortly. We applied for the maximum amount (ie £6,000) but this seems likely to be at least halved due to demand from the many fishing clubs affected by flooding across the country. Please remember that we are a non-profit making organization who own nine lakes and rent/have private access to mile on mile of canal and river, so have to prioritise the nature of amount of work that can be done.

Thank you to those who prepared swims at Enborne, Brimpton and Aldermaston in anticipation of the new season. This was done without the help of club stalwart John Cox due to injury. Get well soon, John!

## CRT Canal repairs near Bellwood

Members and users of the canal towpath will know that the canal bank has been breached again this winter. This provides us with a big headache as the water spills pretty much directly into Bellwood which sits below the level of the canal and remains closed as we write. The club are considering digging out a large ditch behind the canal side bank to absorb some of this water, and while this is still being considered, this would be very costly and would not address the root cause of incoming water. The chairman has been pushing the Canal & River Trust to repair their bank for some time and we notice that this is finally being done. This picture doesn't show a



great job, but to be fair their work had not been completed so we are hoping for a better standard of finish and, more importantly, perhaps an easing of flood water into Bellwood in future. Rob Cole, CRT's Area Operations Manager for our areas has since confirmed there is 'another 10t to go on it'. Thanks to Chris Plumb for the pic.



## Work at Marshalls



A big thank you to Lyne Hawkins and Steve Todd for their on-going work at Marshalls (previously Willows). Swims are now being repaired and more aggregate laid to make the banks cleaner and more accessible. The intrepid pair (with help from others) also shooed the resident muntjac's out through the main carpark gate via a feat of patience and strategy. This involved walking through the undergrowth at the back of



Marshalls, to flush them out, then herding them around the back of Alders and through the gate. Apparently this was quite a performance. As a result, the bankside reeds planted by the club 3 years ago are no longer being nibbled and are growing nicely. This has already given the lake a much softer and more natural look.

As the boys continue to refurb the swims one by one please be understanding and cooperative if they need Land Rover access to drop off the required aggregates in what can be a tight-bankside. Thank you.

## Break-ins on Knotts



While the lakes were closed and all sensible anglers stayed home in the dry, the bailiff team were making regular checks on the lakes as much as access allowed. This identified that the fencing along the canal bank had been cut to allow unauthorised access. This was repaired, but within a day or two, had happened again.

Having again been repaired, bailiff visits to the area were stepped up and made at various times of day and night. To ensure a greater human presence which might discourage the culprits, permission was given for a few selected bailiffs to fish the lake in pairs. Fortunately the one swim dry enough to take this was close to where the break-ins had been happening.

We know this has not gone down well with some members who considered this move as favouritism towards bailiffs when the lakes were closed. We may or may not be able to change those views, but this decision was made with the greater good of protecting our lakes and fish in mind. There have been no further incidents reported of fence-cutting and a hidden trail cam has been set up in the area.

## Tree Survey

By the time this newsletter comes to publication we were due to have had a professional tree survey for the lands that we own at Rawlings, Widmead, Pallett's and Bellwood completed, but this has been delayed by the flooding. The purpose is so we can plan and prioritise any trees that could pose a danger to members. Of course we lost a few in the winter winds, but until works are completed please be particularly mindful when fishing near mature or dead trees, particularly in windy conditions.

## Railway Bridge at the Widmead

It's hard to believe but 25 tons of aggregate was swept away from under the railway bridge this winter – as a result you may find the car park swim at Dobsons has become shallower! What with the whole of the Widmead being designated a Site of Special Scientific Importances (SSSI) and the bridge and land immediately adjacent being owned by the railways (who are notoriously not interested in NAA issues) we are again limited in what we can do, but are considering concreting under the bridge to make access more straightforward and to limit similar damage by any future potential flooding.



## Barley Straw Extract



With the floodwaters liable to have washed a high level of nutrient levels into our lakes, the club is taking preventative action to help reduce the potential for damaging algal blooms this summer. In warm conditions, algae can grow rapidly, with levels increasing to millions of algae per millimetre! As this algae dies and decomposes, sunlight is absorbed and oxygen levels can plummet which can be extremely dangerous for fish and other water life. The application of barley straw extract brings with it beneficial bacteria which, when introduced to the surface of the water (where there is plenty of oxygen), immediately begin to compete with the algae for the available

nutrients and thus reduces the ability of 'bad' blooms to form. The application of extract works faster than the traditional method of throwing in bales of straw which rot down over time. The extract is a more expensive method, but we were unable to get straw bales to the appropriate locations at the time required because of the flooded banks.

## Membership Cards

In 2024/25, the club paid £3,800 for plastic membership cards for its approximately 700 members. This is money we would much rather be putting towards upkeep of the venues. As a result, this is a reminder that the committee has decided that membership cards are **OPTIONAL** this year, with member's permits being available on their smart phones using the Clubmate App. Should you not have a smart phone, not get on with technology or just like to have a card then you can still choose to order one at the permit renewal stage on the Clubmate app, or as a brand new member via Thatcham Angling at the optional cost of £5.



## 2024/2025 Season Tickets

The Clubmate renewal process for existing members has worked very smoothly and quickly for the vast majority, with the odd query that has happened quickly picked by committee members manning the club's email and Facebook account. As usual, volunteers from the committee ran two membership days at Bellwood at the end of May/early June for those who preferred to renew in person for whatever reason. Fewer members attended these than previous years, but was an option around thirty five members took advantage of.



As a reminder, if you haven't yet renewed, EXISTING members (including Associates) should renew their membership for the 2024/25 season via the Clubmate app.

NEW members who did not hold a NAA permit last season and are living WITHIN 12 miles from Newbury Town Hall MUST complete an application form at Thatcham Angling, Sagecroft Road, Thatcham (where they can also pick up their venue key for £5). Applicants will need to pay by cash/cheque ONLY and provide a passport-style photo and documentary proof of address.

NEW members living OUTSIDE of 12 miles of Newbury, can apply to be considered as Associate members, though in order to give local anglers the best chance of having swims to fish on our most popular lakes numbers are limited. Should you wish to apply, please email us at [mail@newburyanglingassociation.crmail.co.uk](mailto:mail@newburyanglingassociation.crmail.co.uk). We will quickly let you know if you have been successful and if so will send you an application form with instructions of how to complete the opening process.

We appreciate that through no fault of the club, many of our lakes have been inaccessible for much of last season. The clubs running costs, like everyone's, has risen significantly, and who knows what work will be required once the banks are fully accessible. The committee have decided that membership fees will remain unchanged to reflect this.

This said, a £20pa annual charge has been introduced for 76 year olds and above who previously had free membership. This change was proposed and voted in at April's AGM by the attendees (of all age groups). This was brought in as sadly across the UK fewer younger people seem to be joining the sport than previously so our general membership is getting older. As a non-profit making organisation, the club does need to maintain a level of income to cover the costs of running the nine lakes it owns and stretches of canal and river it rents the fishing rights to. Thus membership cost is:

* Senior inc Ladies	£80.00
* Junior (aged 12 to 16 inclusive)	£10.00
* Junior (aged under 12)	FREE
* Pensioners (Concessionary rod licence)	£50.00
* Pensioners (76 and older)	£20.00
* Disabled (concessionary rod licence)	£45.00
* Associate	£105.00
*Associate Concessionary (Disabled and OAP)	£85.00

For seniors, pensioners, disabled and associate memberships there is an optional 2 rod (specimen) permit supplement of £40.

## Health & Safety Officer Appointed

The club is delighted to announce the appointment of long-standing committee member Steve Myers to the position of Health & Safety Officer. Like all of our positions, this is a voluntary role and we are grateful to Steve who has a long and strong working background in this area. The club is backing his appointment with the purchase of key equipment as requested by Steve to improve safety standards for all. Please ensure you read Steve's article inside this issue about the threat of Weil's disease.

Talking safety, the club has just invested in the third Sportyak dinghy in a year for our lakes to upgrade the previous wooden boats. These are only to be operated by a bailiff who has received the necessary training.



The positions of vice chairman, secretary and membership secretary all remain vacant and we would welcome any applicant. Should you like to know more please email us.

## Retiring Committee Members

A big thank you and best wishes to Richard Faithful and Dave Taylor who have both stood down from the committee in recent times. Happily they both remain passionate anglers and valued members of the club. Cheers, for all of your dedication and hard work and best wishes for the future, guys.

Dave Smith has retired membership Secretary after many, many years of forcing his wife, Eileen to deal with all the computer work. Dave has now officially taken over the vacant role of Match Secretary. No one is better qualified given that he is once again the Over 60's League champion, but maybe he will be too embarrassed now to make it a hat trick of wins?

## Glynn Swain. RIP

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death after illness of passionate angler and valued committee member Glynn Swain. He will be missed at the committee meetings and more importantly, on his beloved lakeside. Our condolences to his friends and family. Friend and fellow committee member Chris Fox put it best when he wrote, 'Glynn was the most kindest blokes going would always help anyone out, always had time for a chat, always up for a laugh one of the nicest of blokes. I for one will miss him massively and I know all the members that knew him will too.'



## New Committee Members

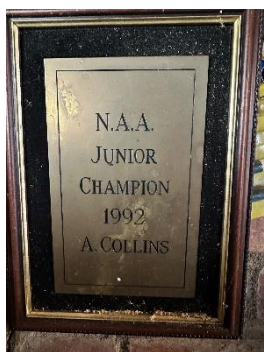
Following a request for applicants, a number of members stood forward for consideration. A big thank you to all that applied – the club really appreciated it. From this, three committee member vacancies have been filled and the lucky men have attended their first committee meeting. We look forward to their playing a part in moving this great club forwards. Chris Plumb needs no introduction as one of the club's most skilled anglers

and a regular contributor to this newsletter. You can read his 'In Praise of Dace' article later in this issue or follow his amazing fishing [blog](#) here. Adam Collins and Paul Moreton may be less well known to readers, so the NAAN asked them to introduce themselves. Paul's resume will appear in the next issue of the NAAN – though you can see him modelling the new NAA merch via clubmate later in this issue. Meanwhile here's some words from Adam demonstrating his credentials!

## Adam Collins

Having lived in Australia for 10 years, I recently came back to Newbury. Still trying to work out why. One saving grace has been the rediscovery of the lakes I loved as a kid.

Fishing Journey: I joined NAA when I was around 10 years old. Mervyn Burrows - who many of you know - took me to Alders to catch a 2 lb carp for my first fish on the opening day of the season and I was hooked. I fished all the lakes a lot as a kid and even won the junior match championship in 1992! I have very fond memories of being dropped at the lakes as a teenager in the school holidays. A lot of freedom and excitement.



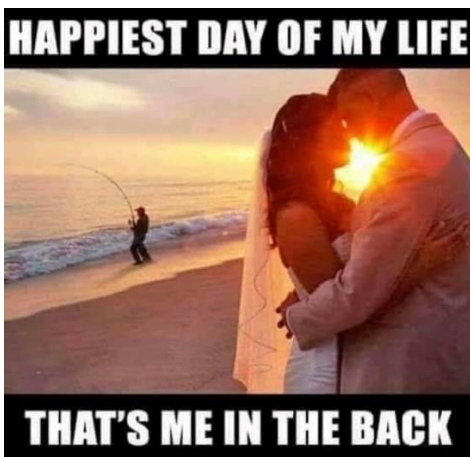
I didn't fish much for 20 years due to work and travel but came back to it last year as my Son (Kai) really wanted to give it a go. I had to dust off the old rods from my dad's garage. Kai caught his first fish in Alders (a bream) some 30 years after I had. I can't get him out of bed for school - but if he is going fishing for Tench he will be up and dressed at 5:30AM. I fished a lot with my Dad so it has been great to pass that down. I also have a new found respect for my Dad and how many perch he had to take off the hook for me!

It has been really interesting to see how the lakes have changed in my time away. I am keen to give something back and help the club where I can.

Favourite Lake: Dixons - I love the peaceful wild nature of it and the surprise of not knowing what is really in there.

Favourite Catch: Crucian carp. Although I really want to catch a barbel this year - so I am open to any advice on that.

Other interests: Anything outdoors. Surfing and biking are my main activities outside of fishing.





# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

by Dougie Hull

As you read this summer edition of the NAAN the summer (fingers crossed) & the river season are now upon us. Like a lot of members, I found the previous winter incredibly frustrating. Many of our lakes and waterways were unfishable due to the long winter of floods a situation that was repeated nationally. Thankfully, that is now all behind us and we can look forward to a summer of enjoyable fishing. All our fisheries are now open except for Bellwood which is still flooded due to the still relatively high-water levels of the Kennet.



I make no apologies for emphasizing an issue that I brought up at this year's AGM the dangers of sewage in our water ways. Bacteria such as E. coli and infections such as Hepatitis remain a real threat due to the amounts of sewage frequently found in our local waterways. **"Illnesses caused by contact with sewage pollution are becoming increasingly common and of great concern"** is a recent quote from the Angling Trust. So, it is essential that basic hygiene measures are followed to avoid some nasty repercussions such as vomiting and diarrhoea. Please take some hand sanitiser or hand wipes with you and avoid putting any fishing tackle that has been in the water into your mouth, e.g. line, split shot, etc.

We are now into the beginning of the river season and the river enthusiasts amongst us can resume their main passion. So, here is some positive news with a long-term view for the future. Staff at the RDAA Fish Hatchery have been busy catching, encouraging some fish hanky panky and stripping the fish of eggs & milt.



So come August, if this initial trial goes well, fry will be released at selected locations on the Kennet between Newbury & Reading. This is a long-term project but with lessons learned and slowly scaling up the process over the coming years, the Kennet will regain some of its former glory. As you already know NAA contribute to the fish hatchery to gain these benefits.

A considerable amount of work was undertaken during May to get the Widmead Complex back to a safe and accessible condition. So, a big thank you goes out to the Fishery Team, Bailiffs & member volunteers who undertook this work. Without this voluntary work the cost of membership would skyrocket something that we all do not want to see.

So, it is tightlines from me until the next Autum NAAN.



# FISHERY MANAGER'S REPORT

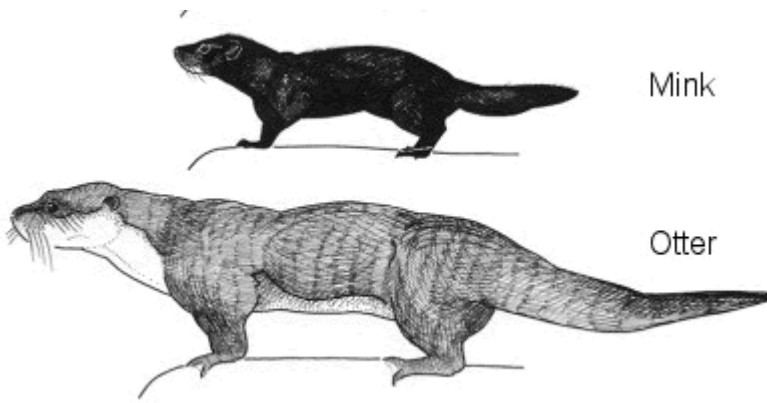
by Paul Futcher

**Unlocked Gates – Really Guys?** Unbelievably, the bailiffs report regularly that otter-proof gates are found left open when they arrive at venues. We can only think this is down to education – or lack of it. As most anglers know, otters are a real menace to fish stocks all over the country since they were re-introduced in numbers having once been close to extinction in the UK in the 1980's. They remain a protected species so once you have otters on your water, you have otters to stay. Otters have been filmed in the Newbury town centre stretch of the canal, so all of our venues are at risk. Those who fish at Brimpton will likely have met otters there too brazenly swimming past without a care, and big perch have been found 'ottered' at Enborne just to mention a couple. Furry and cuddly looking maybe, an otter needs to eat around 15-20% of its body weight – over 5lb of fish, per otter EVERY DAY. Even worse, otters tend to catch the big fish to dine on their nutritious brains and organs then leave the bulk of the fish uneaten. Otter-proof fencing is a sad reality to fishing lakes across the country and though ugly and very expensive to build (the cost of fencing Palletts in 2022 came to almost £29,000), they are the only defence against otter predation. So to leave the gates open is madness as it not only allows otters in, but once in, a locked-in otter or six could soon decimate a whole lake's fish population. So, PLEASE KEEP THE GATES SHUT. It also leaves a shocking draft! Go-Pro cameras have been purchased by the club and are in operation in key areas – persons being found to be leaving the gates open may be subject to a ban from the club.



Please note that mink are also present on our waters. Being smaller than otters they can pass through the mesh of the fencing and though they are (1) not protected so can be trapped and (b) can eat fish as part of their diet, the club is currently less worried on two counts – Firstly they generally prefer to take land-based mammals (the rat population at Marshalls has fallen tremendously), and secondly, it is possible that dogs could get caught in the traps. We will, of course, continue to monitor the mink situation, looking out for any potential fish kills.

To the untrained eye it can be tricky to tell an otter from a mink, so note that otters are significantly larger than mink. This said, an adult mink can look pretty big particularly when you're not expecting it to pass across your swim, so try and look out for these other signs if you can - A mink's tail is more rounded and furry, whereas an



otter's is somewhat flattened, and mink have darker coats.

The club do not need to hear reports of occasional mink sightings (unless seen in numbers or in the event of a fish kill) but do need to hear immediately of any otter sighting – preferably with a photo!

On the general topic of predation – we have a licence to shoot a (small) number of cormorants

each year which we fully take up. While the law stands as it is, there is nothing more the club can do to reduce their numbers. And thank you as ever to committee member Ken Haines, for the excellent often unseen work he does for the club, including trapping crayfish on our lakes as requested. As ever should you find one of Ken's nets PLEASE LEAVE WELL ALONE. Should you inadvertently hook a net, please ensure it is returned to the position you found it. Thank You!

## MATCH NEWS AND UPDATE

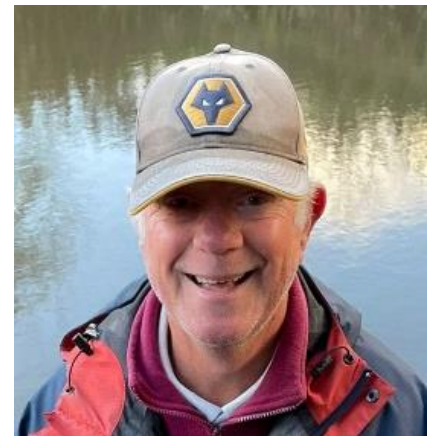
**By Dave Smith**

After 21 years as membership secretary, I have stepped down to give my lovely wife Eileen a break from the computer work. In its place I've have taken on the mantle of match secretary on a permanent basis (I've promised Eileen she doesn't have to attend!) and trust I will pass my 3-month probation without undue problems.

To those who are new to the Club, we run popular, competitive but chiefly good fun leagues for the Over 60's and over 70's. Sadly, we don't have enough interest to support a league for younger age groups – though if enough of you whipper-snappers get together we'd be delighted to help advertise/support it.

Our annual Help 4 Heroes charity match on 6<sup>th</sup> October is however, open to all and is very well supported with PRIZES to be won. Our Christmas and New Years Day matches are also open to all members. Please consider giving it a go. We also run 48-hour carp matches in the warmer months – both pairs and single-angler competitions. As participants seem to be Facebook-savvy final details/entry requests are made in the days leading up to each fixture via our members page, but please contact us by email if you'd like separate mailing on this. Our winter pike matches will be plugged (little pike angling pun there!) in newsletters nearer the time.

Right, time to recognise a few of our winners. The following pictures are of some of the trophy collectors at this year's AGM:







Mervyn Burrows was presented with the Bernard Pallett Roach Cup for the largest roach caught in any club competition on association waters.

Brian Pallett received The Silver Trees Trophy for being the angler weighing in the highest individual aggregate of fish (excluding trout & pike) at a selected match on association waters.

Bill Bowsher won the over 70's league for a successive season.

Well fished all!

The full match calendar for the year is shown below as emailed to all members on 27<sup>th</sup> May – if you didn't receive it please check your junk mail. Note that the calendar also includes a handful of dates when venues will be closed to all members as they have been hired out to other associations.

Please also understand that on dates where matches are due to be held, non-match anglers may be prohibited from fishing that venue.

DATE	VENUE	MATCH TIME	COMPETITION	TROPHY
<b>June 2024</b>				
Wed 26 <sup>th</sup>	Alders	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup Col Maxwell Trophy
<b>July 2024</b>				
Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Marshalls	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> /Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	Knotts	12:00 – 12:00	24 Hour Carp Pairs	
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	10:00 - 15:00	NAA v Shipston AA	(08:30 draw)
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup>	Dobsons	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup C R Sutton Cup
Wed 31 <sup>st</sup>	Bellwood	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	
<b>August 2024</b>				
Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> /Sun 4 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood	12:00 – 12:00	24 Hour Carp	
Wed 14 <sup>th</sup>	Marshalls	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>	Dobsons`	10:00 – 15:00	Silver fish only	
Wed 21 <sup>st</sup>	Alders	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	
Wed 28 <sup>th</sup>	Avington D	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Sat 1 <sup>st</sup> /Sun 1 <sup>st</sup>	Knotts	12:00 – 12:00	24 hr Carp match	
<b>September 2024</b>				
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup>	Marshalls	10:00 - 15:00	Silver fish only	
Wed 11 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup

Wed 18 <sup>th</sup>	Dobsons	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed	Booked by Friday Series
Sat 2st/Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Bellwood	12:00 – 12:00	24 hr Carp	Peter Brooks Memorial Match
<b>October 2024</b>				
Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Marshalls	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Fri 4 <sup>th</sup>	Avington	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed	Booked by Friday Series
Sun 6 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne Canal	10:00 – 15:00	OPEN CHARITY MATCH	Tickets bought in advance
Sun 13 <sup>th</sup>	Avington	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed	Booked by Shires
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup>	Knotts	10:00 – 15:00	Over 70's Rover	
Sun 20 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Down)	10:00 – 15:00	Venue closed	Booked by RTAA
Tue 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Avington	10:00 – 15:00	NAA v Reading Fishing Club	
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup>	Marshalls	10:00 – 15:00	NAA Memorial Match (0830 draw)	Keith Scrivener Trophy Norman Unwin Trophy
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood	10:00 – 15:00	Pike match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
<b>November 2024</b>				
Wed 6 <sup>th</sup>	Avington E	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup Sam Buxey Trophy
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne Canal	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed	Booked by Shires
Sun 24 <sup>th</sup>	Knotts	10:00 – 15:00	Pike match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
<b>December 2024</b>				
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	08:00 – 16:00	Venue closed	Booked by Friday Series
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood/Hambridge Canal/Risbys & Civil Service stretch	10:00 – 14:00	CHRISTMAS MATCH Draw 08:30 (Tickets bought prior to Match)	Dick Taylor Trophy
<b>January 2025</b>				
Wed 1 <sup>st</sup>	Enborne Canal	10:00 – 15:00	NEW YEARS DAY ROVER	New Years Day Shield
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	10:00 – 15:00	Venue closed	Booked by RTAA
Sun 26 <sup>th</sup>	Bulls Lock	10:00 – 15:00	Pike Match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
<b>February 2025</b>				
Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Enborne (Down)	10:00 – 15:00	Venue closed	Booked by RTAA
Sun 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Speen Moor main river	10:00 – 15:00	Pike Match	Buckingham Cup Ben Smith Trophy
<b>March 2025</b>				
Wed 12 <sup>th</sup>	Enborne (Up)	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
Wed 26 <sup>th</sup>	Avington	10:00 – 15:00	Over 60's	Field & Stream Cup
<b>April 2025</b>				
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> /Sun 13 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood	12:00 – 12:00	24hr Carp pairs match	
<b>May 2025</b>				
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> /Sun 11 <sup>th</sup>	Bellwood	12:00 – 12:00	24 hr Carp match	



# HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT

by Rob Allen

With the Summer ahead of us we are all looking forward to our fishing. We are constantly reviewing the position at Bellwood. I assure you this will be opened as soon as it is safe to do so – the fish will have missed us!

You will have seen the change in the Club's policy regarding plastic membership cards which are no longer mandatory. Should you have chosen not to pay the £5 for a card, please ensure you have a mobile device with you capable of evidencing your membership on the Clubmate App. I strongly advise you to check this is available to you on your device before your first trip of the new season.



With the good weather hopefully ahead of us, I thought it would be appropriate to remind all members of the club rule regarding barbecues and fires generally:

Open fires and barbecues are banned on all Association waters and properties unless specifically authorised by the committee, and properly organised. Included in the ban is any device or product where the flame or source of heat cannot be switched off safely and immediately with a switch or controller. Small portable stoves where the flame can be switched off safely and immediately are permitted.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind all members but carp anglers in particular of the following:

- No rod and line may be left unattended in the water.
- On all waters carp must not be placed in a keepnet or carp sack, or retained by any other method except during a match or for a short time to allow fish to recover from capture.
- Lead core leaders and safe zone leaders are not permitted on any waters.
- A maximum of 4 kilos of bait is allowed per angler on all venues. (per 24 hours)
- Members must carry an unhooking mat at all times suitable for the target species.
- No wading on any NAA waters.
- The use of braided mainline is prohibited. No braided mainline to be used on any NAA waters (except for spod/marker rods and for predator fishing where braid is allowed)
- Applicable to the following lakes only - Collins, Knotts, Dixons, Bellwood and Pallets.
- If any member estimates a captured Carp to be over 20lbs you must transfer the fish including the broken down net into a retention sling before transferring the fish from the water to the unhooking mat.
- No litter of any kind must be left. Anglers must remove from the fishery any litter, hooks, line or spent equipment, in or adjacent to their swim whether it is their litter or has been left by others and dispose of it correctly.

As with all of our regulations, they exist in the greater interest of safety to both the fish and yourselves. Any member found in breach of these or any other regulations will be reported by the bailiff team and risk having a ban imposed.

So let's all please play the game and enjoy our fishing.

We have a total of 17 official bailiffs including myself patrolling all NAA waters on a regular basis, all have been issued with bailiff warrant cards and report books. I'd like to personally thank each and every one of my bailiffs for their continued support, commitment and for all their efforts and hard work around the fishery over the last year. I'm pleased to announce and identify the following bailiffs that will form the NAA Volunteer Bailiff Team for the 2024/25 season,

Head Bailiff



Rob Allen

Bailiff team



Ricky Davis



Chris Fox



Paul Futcher



Carl Garson



Maca J Gill



Ken Haines



Jim Harden



Jake Harris



Dougie Hull



Dan Marshall



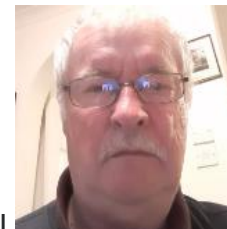
Will Martin



Kevin Richardson



Sam Stockwell



Nigel Whiston



Joe Wilkins



Lewis Youd



# COLLINS RE-OPENING WEEKEND

by Rob Allen

Knowing that we were due to reopen Collins on Friday the 24th of May at 16:00 and that it needed some work doing on it prior to that, I decided to plot up on Knotts on the Thursday evening both to ensure that no one snuck on prior to the reopening time, and also to empty the truck so we could go and pick up the strimmer's for the work party the next morning.

After setting up on the second point on Knotts, Foxy and I went off to pick up the strimmers and all the associated gear. By the time the first rod went out with the bait boat loaded with a kilo of a boilie and pellet mix it was around 10:30pm, so a late start. I'd just got the second rod out and the first one rattled off at 11:00pm with a nice mid-double common which put a welcome bend in the rod. I put the rod back out on the spot and it smashed off again just before 01:00. After a really hard fight under the tip I managed to land one of Knotts gems with this stunning dark 19lb 8 mirror which is one of only a handful in there, which made it all the more special.



As we needed to crack on with the strimming the next morning and I needed some beauty sleep, I decided to leave that rod against the bivvy when the second rod which went with another mid-double common which fell to the fake corn rig over a bed of particle.

Both of the rods went back in out around 08:30 while I was packing away and I managed another common and unfortunately lost the last run of the morning to a hook pull but nevertheless, after five runs and landing four, it had been a hectic but enjoyable overnight session.

Myself, Dylan and Foxy started the strimming on Collins around midday and finished at 15:00 which gave us enough time to get the strimmers in the truck and be back on Collins in good time to add a notice into the notice board stating that "All pegs on Collins are open with the exception of pegs 8, 9 & 10 which remain closed until further notice" plus an updated lake map showing the closed areas. Massive thanks to Chris Fox and Dylan Mackay for all your hard work that day.



As there were nine very keen anglers ready to go at 16:00 I decided that fairest way to sort the swims out was to have a draw, putting nine numbers in a hat to decide the order that anglers would choose their swim.

Would you believe it, last number left in the hat for me was number one – it wasn't a fix, honest! Being the first to pick a peg, and having three nights ahead of me, I decided to plot up in peg thirteen and attack the pads area. I went for a split baiting approach and used my usual particle/corn/chopped boilie mix which normally does very well on Collins on the left rod towards the centre section of the pads, and the same boilie/pellet mix as I'd used on Knotts the night before on the right rod on the right corner of the pads.

After a very quiet night and not having a bleep or seeing anything from first the right hand rod bobbin smacked the blank at 10:00, after an epic battle walking straight back locked up keeping the fish away from the pads and after another epic battle under the tip I landed this brute of a common at 28:14. This fish is naturally down in weight due to no bait going in for the last six months or so, but had some serious power. It gave me the run around, beat me up and gave me a right royal workout.



Knowing that I had to reel in at 13:00 to carry out some essential fishery duties and take the strimmer's back to the stores, I re baited both spots and headed off. The rods went back out for the second night a few hours later but as I'd seen so many fish moving through the back of the pads and bubbling up in the weed I put some bait out into that area to my left but didn't fish it. Night fell. I wasn't asleep long and the right hand rod went again landing a 17lb 8 common at 02:00. It then went dead for a day. As nothing had happened on the centre pads spot, for the final night I moved the left rod two rod lengths left into the weed where I'd put the bait the day before. This resulted in an unfortunate hook pull at 01:00 and a small 11lb common at 06:00 which was retained for transfer back into Knotts where it came from. Another member in peg 11 had also caught a Knotts common which he also retained and while someone sat on my rods I carefully moved both commons back in to Knotts.

I then had another run on the right hand rod at 12:00, and despite always checking my line for any crayfish damage or any other nicks before it went out again, the line snapped whilst playing the fish away from the pads which I was obviously gutted about. Licking my wounds and thinking that was the final day's bite time gone, I got the rod back out on the baited spot and started a slow pack up.

I'd had a few bleeps on the right rod since it went back out and it wasn't long after that it burst into life. Fishing locked up tight, having a strong set up, I was super quick on the rod and walked straight backwards, soon steering the fish away from danger. I landed this cracking 25lb 8 common at 17:00 on Bank Holiday Monday afternoon to finish off a very busy but very enjoyable three-night; six runs, and a four fish trip on Collins.





All of the runs came using Ronnie Rigs on tubing, with a helicopter set up, and size 4 Krank hook using match the hatch 15mm bottom baits with a trimmed down topper snowman style over a tight patch of boilie and pellet. They were not interested in my usual particle/corn tricks at all this time round.

Thanks to everyone that helped out with everything over that week and over the bank holiday weekend, great effort all round. Tight lines to you all.

## **ACTION for the RIVER KENNET (ARK)**

**By Rupert Kelton – ARK Senior Project Officer & Volunteer Co-ordinator**

*An Introduction* :As Project Manager, Rupert managed the DEFRA Green Recovery [Sparkling Streams](#) project, and continues to expand that work to a full catchment scale restoration of the [Shalbourne and Dun](#). He is an expert in chalk stream habitat restoration as well as wetland design and creation. Rupert leads ARK's lower Kennet practical habitat restoration work and larger projects, including fish passes and river realignment projects. Last year this included work on NAA's Brimpton stretch. Over to you, Rupert...

Hello. When it comes to improving the health of the river Kennet, water quantity and water quality are incredibly important issues and despite the depressing statistics about the volume of sewage being spilt into the river this winter it has been great to see so many campaigning groups and individuals making more and more noise about these aspects of environmental degradation.

A third aspect of river health which often gets overlooked but is of equal importance is physical habitat complexity i.e. the kind of structurally varied environment which makes the river Kennet a place where invertebrates, fish and other species can live through all the various stages of their life cycles.



Rupert Kelton

The basic principle is that if we create diversity and good quality physical habitat in the river then, all else being equal, ecological diversity will follow.

Unfortunately, over the course of many centuries and even until very recently the Kennet, like most of the country's rivers, has been straightened, dredged, diverted, drained and simplified to make more space for agriculture, industry and development.





This is the case on NAA's reach of the Kennet upstream of Brimpton Mill where the river has been historically diverted into a perched and straightened channel to enable its energy to be harnessed for milling and for drowning the meadows, to the south, for grass production.

Moving the river off its natural floodplain and dredging, then embanking the channel to keep it there robs the river of the structure, energy and varied flow patterns that it needs for natural processes like scour and deposition. These are the forces that create habitat diversity and the sorts of conditions that chalk stream species need to thrive.

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) have been working with the Wild Trout Trust (WTT), NAA and the adjoining landowners to carry out works to the straightened reach upstream of Brimpton Mill to help re-establish more complexity and improve habitat quality.

The works took place in September 2023 and involved adding timber and historically dredged gravels to the channel, creating sinuosity and flow diversity as well as lots of complex cover for fish.

The photographs below show one of these habitat structures being constructed and demonstrates how the changes immediately catalysed the river's natural processes to recreate a pool, riffle sequence similar to those found in an unmodified meandering river.

The newly scoured pool will provide ideal holding habitat for adult fish, with the tree limbs giving safe refuge nearby. The fresh, clean gravels deposited at the tail of the pool offer perfect spawning conditions, again with great nursery habitat in the slack water downstream of the berm and with submerged woody material offering plenty of cover to escape from predators.

Whilst continuing to campaign for better water quality and against abstraction ARK continue to work with angling clubs and riparian owners where there are opportunities to help improve the physical habitat quality of the Kennet for the benefit of fish and the wider ecology of the river.



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ARK's priority is to create and maintain habitat that supports healthy self-sustaining wild fish populations, which will allow fisheries to reduce reliance on stocked fish. ARK's role is to promote healthy wild fish populations by improving habitat, removing barriers to fish movement and improving water quality. To find out more, or to join or volunteer, please visit the [ARK website](#)

## NAA joins Angling Trust and ARK in call for immediate government intervention on local sewage pollution

**Martin Salter writes:**



For over three months, anglers, riverkeepers and residents of the Kennet and Lambourn valleys, along with those in the neighbouring Pang valley, have been subjected to the distressing daily reality of sewage overflowing directly into homes, streets, and rivers. This is a direct result of Thames Water's failing infrastructure, which has been unable to prevent the continuous discharge of sewage into these sensitive habitats causing obvious environmental damage and creating serious health risks.

We have seen:

- Inundation of the multiple award-winning Stonebridge Wild River Reserve with over 300 hours of untreated sewage already in 2024 from just this single unmonitored manhole cascading directly into the river Kennet.
- Raw sewage and waste overflowing from unmonitored manholes onto the main streets of Lambourn and pouring directly into the once wildlife-rich chalk stream.
- "Drive slowly" signs outside of Compton C.E. Primary School to prevent cars from splashing raw sewage onto pedestrians.

On Sunday April a 250 strong protest was held in Victoria Park Newbury addressed by Anna Forbes from ARK and myself for AT alongside Baroness Jenny Jones, Green; Laura Farris – MP for Newbury, Conservative; Lee Dillon – Head of West Berkshire Council, LibDem; and Olivia Bailey – candidate for Reading West & Mid Berkshire, Labour. It was good to see a strong contingent from Newbury AA, RDAA and other local angling clubs at the protest.

The event was organised by a coalition of concerned groups and individuals, led by the Kennet Catchment River Keepers Association (KCRA), and supported by the Angling Trust, Action for the River Kennet (ARK), residents, and angling clubs from Reading to Newbury. This united front against Thames Water's negligence called for immediate and decisive action to protect these unique chalk streams including:

- **A government intervention.** Thames Water is not fit for purpose and must be taken into special measure immediately to protect consumers and the environment.
- **An urgent investigation by industry regulator OFWAT.** Into Thames Water operations and plans in West Berkshire and Wiltshire.
- **Urgent upgrades to Marlborough WWTW.** Upgrades are not currently due to be complete until the end of 2026 – work has not even been designed yet – and the WWTW will not meet targets for storm overflows until 2030/35. This is too long.
- **Priority of plans to tackle groundwater ingress.** The EA has confirmed what has been done to date has had no impact. Thames Water must bring forward plans to tackle groundwater ingress (which is not a legally permitted reason to dispose of sewage in a waterway). Local communities have suffered for too long, rivers will be irreparably damaged if pollution is allowed to continue.

Sam Marshall, Riverkeeper, Chairman, KCRA, said:

“ The River Kennet, like all our chalk streams, is a jewel in England’s river systems, yet it is being treated much more like an open sewer and waste disposal system than a globally rare ecosystem. The sheer lack of investment from water companies has led to rivers being sucked dry in the summer months, and then filled with sewage in the winter months, subjecting them to year-round undue stress. Our water services industry is not only broken but also completely unregulated. The governing bodies that should be prosecuting and protecting our waterways are so underfunded they are non-existent. We need to see vast improvements from regulators, pushing for prosecutions of underperforming and polluting water companies.”



Anna Forbes, Action for the River Kennet (ARK), Senior Project Officer commented:

“ Our fragile chalk streams have had months of raw sewage continuously pouring into them, from sewage treatment works without adequate capacity and from burst manholes. Our water quality testing evidence very concerning ammonia, phosphate, and bacteria results. We are demanding better from the government, regulators, and Thames Water for our rivers, their wildlife, and the local communities. We want to see long-term solutions, not the expensive sticking plaster reactive responses happening at the moment.”



Speaking at the rally I said:

“What is happening right now in Lambourn, with raw sewage flowing down the streets and into the river, is an absolute disgrace. The storm overflows discharging straight into the Kennet, a so-called protected SSSI chalk stream, is a disgrace. But what is even more disgraceful is that Thames Water has no plans to fix groundwater infiltration until 2045 or to tackle the failings of Marlborough STW until 2035. And even if their business plans are approved what confidence do, we have that this bankrupt and failing disaster of a water company will deliver on even these inadequate commitments?”



Following the protest an urgent appeal was sent to the water services industry regulator OFWAT, the Environment Agency (EA), and Steve Barclay MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) by the Angling Trust and Action for the River Kennet . With the initial determination of Thames Water’s business plan proposals for 2025-2030 now due in July, both organisations wanted to highlight the severe environmental threats posed by unchecked sewage spills into these critically sensitive habitats. Recent data underscores the scale of the issue, with Thames Water identified as a major polluter, responsible for lengthy and frequent sewage discharges into these rivers.



## Key Points from the Letter



**Widespread Pollution:** In 2023, the Thames Water region

- experienced 16,990 sewage spills totalling 196,414 hours. Notable areas of concern include the River Lambourn and the River Pang, both of which have suffered extensively due to inadequate infrastructure and operational oversight.

- **Public Outcry:** The local communities have voiced their frustration and anger through protests, reflecting the urgency for remedial action. A recent rally in Newbury attracted over 250 attendees, including political figures from multiple parties, echoing a united demand for significant changes in Thames Water's

operational practices.

- **Demands for Immediate Action:** The Angling Trust and ARK are calling for:
  - An immediate Government intervention to place Thames Water under special measures.
  - An urgent comprehensive review by OFWAT and the EA of Thames Water's operational and planned activities in the affected areas.
  - Immediate commencement of upgrades to sewage treatment works, particularly those that are overdue and critical for preventing future spills.
  - Acceleration of groundwater ingress control measures within the upcoming asset management plan (AMP 8).

The Angling Trust and ARK stress that without immediate and robust intervention, the ecological health and biodiversity of these chalk streams are at a grave risk of long-term, irreversible damage.

**Charlotte Hitchmough, CEO, ARK, commented:**“ For too long the water industry has got away with pouring untreated sewage into the chalk streams of the Kennet and Pang, sometimes for months at a time. Not only is it illegal, but the ecological and human health risks from allowing this practice are not acceptable and proper investment in infrastructure is urgently required.”



Local anglers and community groups are quite rightly up in arms about the disgraceful treatment of these iconic rivers and streams in the Kennet catchment. They have suffered for far too long and will be irreparably damaged if these levels of pollution are allowed to continue for another 20 years. That's why we are calling on the regulators and the government to reject Thames Water's wholly inadequate proposals and insist that long overdue investment is made to their failing wastewater infrastructure.

[The full letter can be viewed here.](#)

# IN PRAISE OF DACE

By Chris Plumb

I think it was the late, great Richard Walker who once said that ‘Dace come in three sizes, too small for pike baits, just right for pike baits and too large for pike baits!’ A rather dismissive view of such a lovely species and a sentiment I heartily disagree with! My attitude to all things leuciscine is much more benign and benevolent. Dace are one of my favourite species and many a session on the river has been saved by a shoal of dace turning up in my swim! In fact, I have caught more dace over my angling life than any other species.



For me dace are a marvellous species, tremendously well adapted to life in faster streams and as handsome a fish as one could ever hope to catch. A species I absolutely associate with the Kennet, they are fast biting and offer sport in the most challenging of conditions, be it the low water of a summer drought or the iron hard frosts of winter. They will feed all day long – even in bright sunshine and as dusk descends will feed harder still. Only in the most turbid of flood conditions may you struggle though even here you will still probably catch if you can find them.

Angling for the species is pretty straight-forward. Nearly all my dace are caught trotting maggot – usually on a size 16. If I think there's a chance of a specimen I'll scale down to an 18 or even a 20 – usually tied to 0.14mm mono (around 3lb test). However this can lead to some fraught action – my first ever 6lb chub was caught at Speen Moors in 1999 on a size 20 – when I was following up a lead on some really big dace. Dace have pretty eclectic tastes and will take most baits offered. I've caught them on 14mm ledgered halibuts when barbel fishing and as a youth I even caught dace on silver chewing gum paper when I ran out of worms one time! Dace are the earliest coarse fish species to spawn in the UK – predominantly spawning from late February to May. I have often caught dace that have already spawned in the last week of the season. Ichthyologists believe that the main ‘trigger’ for spawning is day length and not water temperature. Hence dace will spawn in water temperatures between 5°-9°C, much colder than other river species such as bleak, roach & chub. This is the main reason given as to why you don't find dace hybrids – they spawn much earlier and in much colder water than species they could conceivably cross breed with. On the continent there are some rare examples of dace/ide hybrids – but this probably says more about the fecund nature of ide!

Dace invest a lot of energy into spawning. Females develop a classic pigeon chest - distended with eggs which may make up nearly 20% of their body weight at spawning. Males also broaden in girth and become sandpaper to touch. Dace have been known to be sexually mature when only one year old – though 2-5 years is more typical. They live for around 10 years – with females out living males – commonly reaching 10-11 years with males rarely reaching beyond 8. Hence a shoal of big (and hence old) dace will have a preponderance of females.



Dace are not territorial and can roam large distances – especially at spawning. As a rheophilic species they will seek out faster, streamier water, dropping into slower, deeper reaches in early spring to ‘mend’ after spawning. As such most NAA river venues have good populations of dace – with the exception being Aldermaston where the population appears to be sparse. They were also a little thin on the ground at Brimpton last season (23/24) though hopefully this was just



down to my lack of skill in finding them as I had good numbers of dace the season before. Widmead, Hambridge and Speen have them in abundance – with Speen my best bet for 'double figure' (i.e. 10+oz) ones.

It was the memorable, and wholly unexpected, capture of a large dace on a winter's grayling trip in the late



80's that made me realise I needed some new tackle! At that time all my kit was all a bit old and 'Heath Robinson'. I was still using a couple of rods that I'd bought from Woolies in the late 70's with my paper round earnings as a teenager. My Mitchell 206's were from the same era, all my floats were either homemade or one's that I'd found (actually they mainly still are!) and I'd not long owned my first brolly. It was really a case of 'make do and mend'. The trip in question was on an extremely mild January day a week before my 28th

birthday (my diary entry is for 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 1989). I was fishing the River Lambourn for grayling and whilst I'd accounted for a couple of small specimens I was also being 'plagued' with salmon parr that had recently been stocked – part of a failed experiment to try and re-introduce the species. Eventually bites from the salmon parr abated and I connected with what I originally took to be another, more respectable, grayling. I was stunned though when, a minute or so later I was not slipping the net under a Lambourn Lady but under a dace. And what a dace! This one was huge (well huge for a dace), bigger by far than any I'd ever seen up to that point. It was a plump, pigeon chested, gravid female. I stared at it in awe as it nestled in my net in the shallows.



I then realised I had nothing with which to weigh it really accurately. All I had were the Little Samson's of my youth, which were OK to within a couple of ounces, but I wanted a really accurate weight for this old girl. Both sets registered it at 1lb which in a perverse way didn't please me! I felt ashamed to be weighing the fish of a lifetime on such pitiful equipment. I checked the spring balances when I got home with a measured pound which appeared to match that of my fish. In that moment though I decided to get some better scales and a week later was treating myself to some for my birthday. I also resolved to always carry a camera with me when on the bank.

The following year saw a general upgrading of my tackle. I bought my first carp rod. I picked up a lovely 14 foot match rod for a snip at a bankrupt stock auction (since retired in preference for my trusty Harrisons). I even treated myself to a centre-pin which kicked off a whole new obsession. It turned out to be quite an expensive dace!

That dace was my only one of the day – and in fact in the 35 years since I can count the number of dace on the fingers of one hand that I've caught from the Lambourn, though they have all been big ones (½lb or better). At the time I considered this fish the dace of a lifetime – however it is now 'only' 6<sup>th</sup> equal on my all-time list having accumulated 8 further fish of 1lb or better in the following years.

Whilst this doesn't put me in the same league as Dennis Flack\* it is still an achievement I'm proud of and suspect few others can boast.



Big dace feature large on what is without a doubt the best day's angling of my life. It occurred on 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2003 on the Middle Kennet below Hungerford. My diary entry for the day records that I caught exactly a dozen dace. All of them were over ½lb. Eight of them were 13oz or bigger and the biggest 3 went 1lb2oz, 1lb1½oz, and 1lb exactly. Three, 1lb+ dace and all caught in the first hour's fishing - unbelievable!!! The biggest of course was (and still is) a personal best - a fat pigeon-chested female that was 29cm in length. The second biggest was leaner yet 2cm longer - dace over a foot long - WOW! That haul of dace alone would have made it truly memorable trip but what made it doubly (or trebly) so was that my first fish that morning was a 1lb 15oz roach and my last of the day as dusk fell, was another red-fin - a personal best (to this day) of 2lb 11oz! A red letter day for the ages!



*\*Dennis Flack – a Suffolk farmer and a famous mini-species record hunter – in 1998 he held 4 British records simultaneously (Bleak, Bitterling, Silver Bream & Three Spined Stickleback – the Bleak & Bitterling records still stand) – a feat no single angler had ever achieved (before or since). The one record he really wanted eluded him however. He is credited with catching over 100 dace over 1lb and many mere drams from the British Record – including two different 1lb 4oz fish on the same day (when the then record was 1lb 4oz & 8 drms). He once caught a dozen 1lb+ dace in a single session – a jaw dropping achievement. An interview with him in Waterlog in 2002 called him ‘Dennis the Dace Man’, a fitting epithet. Dennis died on 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023 – he was 92. See also: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/things-to-do/fishing/blogs-articles-and-news/the-fisheries-and-angling-team/dennis-flack-a-living-legend>.*

## CLUBMATE CLUB CLOTHING STORE

You may have noticed on your Clubmate app that a range of clothing is available bearing the club logo as shown here. We can't vouch for the quality of every item as we haven't seen them, but the cap and t-shirts are demonstrated here by our very own supermodels who both confirm their garment to be of good construction, decent fabric with an excellent embroidered badge. (If anyone else has ordered items, please let us know what you made of them).

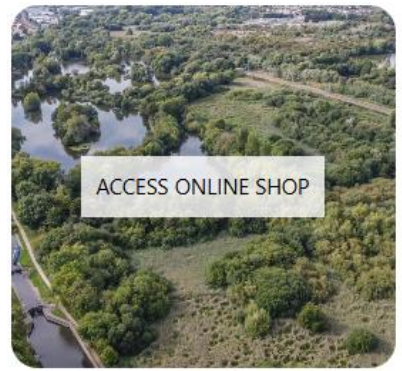
NEWBURY ANGLING ASSOCIATION



FOUNDED 1878



With every order processed, Clubmate donate 50p to the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme. 10% of order value will also be paid to NAA so the club will benefit the club as well as you looking like Jack the Biscuit on the bank. To place an order, simply browse the store, select your items, pay and the items will be delivered directly to you by Clubmate. Please allow **10-15 working days** for your order to be fulfilled. Please note that NAA have no dealing with the ordering and delivery process whatsoever, so all questions/queries should be directed to Clubmate. Here is their current range, all items available with the NAA logo:



Classic Cotton Unisex T-Shirt -  
NEWB  
£12.00



Fishing Towel - NEWB  
£13.00



Cotton Peaked Cap - NEWB  
£14.00



Camouflage Snapback Cap -  
NEWB  
£15.00



Organic Cotton Beanie - NEWB  
£17.00



Classic Polo Shirt - NEWB  
£17.00



Organic Polo Shirt - NEWB  
£22.00



Classic Sweatshirt - NEWB  
£26.00



Classic Hoodie - NEWB  
£27.00



Classic Waterproof Insulated  
Jacket - NEWB  
£60.00



Premium Insulated  
Bodywarmer - NEWB  
£70.00



Premium Waterproof Insulated  
Jacket - NEWB  
£125.00

# WEIL'S DISEASE – A SALUTARY WARNING

By Steve Myers – NAA's H&S Officer

So. What is Leptospirosis?

Leptospirosis is a bacterial infection from exposure to the *Leptospira interrogans* bacterium. There is an acute form of infection known as Weil's disease. **Weil's disease can be fatal.**



Weil's disease is comparatively 'rare', though 'mild' cases of leptospirosis happen everywhere that there are carriers (e.g. Rats).

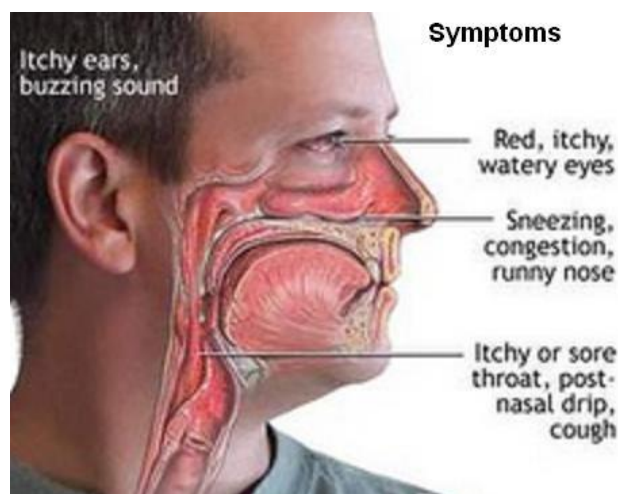
The vast majority of human cases are from contaminated water where agriculture and rodents mix. Individuals who engage in recreational outdoor activities involving exposure to water that may be contaminated (urban canals, small ponds and lakes etc.) are at risk. This group includes anglers.

Anglers are at risk, as it is reasonably common to cause minor cuts and puncture wounds with hooks, knives and the like, and this greatly increases the ease by which the bacteria can enter the body.

Recreational exposure (e.g. angling) is clearly done at the person's own risk and they must weigh up their own balance of risk vs. desire. The level of risk can be greatly reduced by applying some simple basic preventative measures - minimise the risk of water entering the body by any and all means, be aware of the symptoms and seek treatment immediately should you feel unwell.

Symptoms:- (Not to be mistaken for a bad hangover!)

- Headache
- Fever
- Chills
- Severe muscle aches and tenderness
- Redness of the eyes
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Sometimes a rash



Precautions:-

Do not drink the water or splash water on your face in hot weather.

Do not wash your hands in the water (e.g. after mixing ground bait). Cover all open wounds (especially to hands) with waterproof plasters.

Consider carrying waterproof plasters and antiseptic wipes for cuts and puncture wounds sustained whilst fishing.

Do not put your fingers, bait, or items like disgorgers in your mouth and refrain from biting through line.

When eating, hold the food in a wrapping and if you drop any on the ground don't eat it.



If you notice any of the symptoms see your GP and explain that the symptoms appeared after you have been fishing on water that may be infected by rats.



If you happen to fall in and swallow any water see your GP as soon as possible and tell him/her that the water may be infected by rats.

Do not feed the rats! by leaving food items or unused bait on the ground. Don't throw it away, treat it as you should with any 'litter', pick it up, take it home and dispose of it.

Individuals involved in waterside working parties are at a higher risk, and all such work carried out on NAA waters shall be subject to an appropriate level of risk assessment and risk reduction control measures.

Malcolm, A Kent angler fishing in France a few years ago reported that: "I was fishing early on Sunday morning. I was absolutely fine about 7.30am but by 10am, I had the shakes, my arms and legs were killing me and I had really bad chest pains – I don't think I'd ever felt that ill. Luckily I went to hospital straight away."

So, don't be a Malcolm - If you follow the list of precautions, the risk of contracting Weil's is low.

## YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

By Nathan Wheeler

I have been fishing Newbury lakes on and off for the last 40 years. It was my dad that got me started many years ago, my dad being a match man soon got me in to match fishing but as I got older, I started pleasure fishing with my friends, targeting different species, fresh water and salt water.

I've loved it all, ranging from a 350lb porbeagle shark to small roach on the pole, with many PB's broken. Honestly, I'm just happy to have a line in the water catching anything.

With the weather warming up in May, so are the ponds and lakes, its lovely to see fish bubbling in the early morning mist, so I decided to have a go down Dobsons. But on the day I decided to go it was cold, windy and rain forecasted for the day, but that wasn't going to put me off.

With tench and bream in mind I armed up with worms, maggots and a little ground bait. I started on my float rod and by lunch time I had not had a single bite, but I knew there were fish there under the branches, for every now and then bubbles were coming up. With the wind swinging around and the rain starting to hit me in the face, I decided to put a small ledger out - but still nothing. Time was running out as always so I put on fresh bait and recast as a Hail Mary.



My line had not been out for long when at last, I had a bite. I struck, and it felt an alright fish. I could tell it wasn't a carp but it was still trying get away under the branches. Carefully easing it away with some odd lunges I got a glimpse.

I think I swore to myself as I saw a bar of gold under the surface. It made another lunge as I put the landing net in the water the fish was soon beaten. I could not believe what was in the net - a lovely crucian. I was soaked but did not care.



I have caught a 3lb from Marsh Farms before but this was bigger, and after having it witnessed as being a true crucian, we carefully put it on the scales for a moment of truth.

3lb 9/10 oz, and I was jumping - another PB broken! After a few quick pictures, we slipped her back safely into the water.

It just goes to show - although having only the one bite all day I caught a new PB. You just never know what's going to come along next...so hang in there!

Cheers all and as always tight lines.

### **If you'd like to enter your catch from an NAA water as a contender for the Annual Specimen Cup:**

- Your catch must be reported to the Committee via the club's email address.

- A completed Specimen form (badly named, we know!), available by request by email *within 4 weeks of capture*. The form should be counter-completed by a witness (if present)

- Entries must be received by April 15<sup>th</sup> in any year to be valid for entry.

- A photo(s) must be providing evidencing the scale of the fish and its location in an NAA water.

- Non-members and Guests may not enter specimen fish for consideration.

- The committee will choose a winner from all entrants and the Specimen Cup awarded to the winner at our AGM held April/May each year.





# A TAIL OF THE UNEXPECTED

By Keith Moores



The day began full of expectation with my confidence brimming through the previous April rainy gloom as a fine day was promised at last. On arrival at Marshalls (previously Willows) I proceeded to the swim of my choice and began to dismantle the complete tangled mess of tackle on my trolley.

I eventually managed to sort myself out and started to set up for the day. I had a good look at the condition of the lake and watched for any movement on the water. Damn I thought, the buggers are on top and proceeded to feel very frustrated as I was without my trusty floaters.

I had decided prior to setting off that I was going to fish light with an 11-foot feeder rod, free spool reel, 6lb line, a flatbed feeder, sticky pellets and 10mm pop up.

A good cast followed with the feeder landing within half a metre of the island. I had fired out some 10mm pellets prior to my cast to try and tempt the fish down onto the bottom.

Just as I sat down I was surrounded by geese charging around trying to get their oats and one of them immediately caught my line. I was lucky however and after a swift retrieve was soon back fishing.

The hours slipped by and I had tried every trick in the book that I knew, and still not even a twitch. It got to 1.15pm and I started to pack up. I'd had enough and nobody else was catching as far as I could see. Well the inevitable happened and my tip bent round and a screech of line tearing off the reel followed.

Having engaged the reel the fish continued to charge off parallel to the island. I eventually managed to stop the initial run and used all of my experience to play the fish into a more controllable area in front of me. I had been playing the fish for 15 minutes and had still not seen it and my arm felt like it was going to drop off. At last I caught a glimpse of the fish and immediately thought that the net was too small. How the hell was I going to land it?... I managed to get the fish into the net after the fourth attempt chucked the rod down and went into cardiac shock. Shit! What a stonker I thought and having removed the hook and grabbing the scales proceeded to go into shock again as the scales hit the twenty mark. 23lb 2 oz of common carp in fact.



The sun was burning down at that point and I struggled to see anything on my phone let alone take a picture. By more luck than judgement I managed to get a few shots. Nobody was in earshot at that time so I gave up the thought of a witness being there and being able to have a posing pic taken. One more cast I thought and would you believe it the tip went round again and a 10lb bream, almost black and covered with nodules was soon on the bank.

A day that promised very little provided me with two stonking fish and a day that will remain in my memory for ever.

A tip! Always leave your rod in when you begin to pack up.

Oh, but reality beckoned. As ever, just when you think you've got this fishing malarkey sussed – my next trip to Marshalls was a blank!

Get In!

## COMING TO THEIR SENSES

By Martin Strike

I've always naively believed that if the rod tip signifies a positive bite then a fish has taken the bait into its mouth, but turns out this is not necessarily what is happening at the "business end." The rod tip frequently vibrates because of a variety of other reasons, but with the exception of wind, weed or current, what else could be causing such animated movements of the rod tip? The more we know about our quarry's senses, the more likely we are to decipher the clues as to what might be happening down there and so the idea of researching this article was hatched.

When a fish first detects an object, even one off to its side, it will turn and face it in order to see it. You'd probably do this too if your eyes were located each side of your head. Being square-on enables the object to be brought within the narrow range of the fish's binocular vision. Fish are near-sighted and focus on objects much nearer to their eyes than humans do. They will often approach very close to their intended prey to inspect it, frequently making accidental contact with the bait – or your line - in the process. Dependence on sight varies greatly in fish species and a general clue to the importance to each is the relevant size of its eyes. Think the tiny red eye



of tench and the bigger plate-shaped peepers of perch. Irrespective of the comparative size of their eyes, the majority of fish see colours in much the same way as we do, but their retinas are developed to detect the type of colours typical of their environment. Whilst no fish was prepared to be interviewed, it is believed that they associate certain colours with bait acceptability which as us anglers know, can vary from day to day, but explains why dark wafers that you might think would be impossible to see, appear more attractive to fickle fish on certain days than the coloured ones most anglers seem to reach for.



Pure water is blue (think of the Mediterranean rather than Collins) because it contains little colouring matter unlike lakes and rivers. Mostly, this colouring is the product of decayed vegetation and disturbed sediment which stains the water a green or brown colour and subsequently influences the colour of baits seen by fish.



Like us humans, fish retinas contain both cones for colour vision as well as rods for black and white. During daylight fish use mainly cones, but in lower light, this switches to rods which provide more light sensitivity and resolution. The process of switching between using cones instead of rods (and back again) may take up to two hours to reach maximum efficiency which is possibly why dawn and dusk are considered by many to be the optimum time to catch fish. It may also explain a number of 'false bites' of fish misjudging baited hooks. The eyes of predators adapt far quicker than prey species which probably improves their chances of a kill and why the half hour before dusk is often peak-perch catching time on our canals.

Hmm, this got me thinking of the differences and similarities of other fish senses. It turns out that unlike mammals where taste buds are restricted to the mouth and pharynx, fish also have them on their gill arches and barbules, even as modifications on fins in some species, but funny enough not on their tongues. Some scaleless species, like catfish for example, have taste buds all over their bodies. Fish taste buds can be triggered by touch, so the sense of taste can come not just by items the fish has picked up in its mouth, but also those bumped into, or swept against a fish in the current, which is why some species are able to turn and snap at a bait located near their tail. This means amino acids, bile acids and sugars all trigger the taste buds and tell the fish what they have found is food. Betaine, for instance, an additive used by some carp anglers and which is naturally found in fishmeal, is one of several chemicals that trigger a strong response from the taste buds, so can spark a robust feeding response.

Cyprinid fishes, like carp and roach, possess a fleshy, muscular area on the roof of their mouths, called the palatal organ, which is covered in millions of taste buds. When a fish sucks in food it uses this organ at the back of its mouth to taste it. As soon as the palatal organ touches and tastes something edible, it automatically grips the particles of food. With the edible stuff held tightly, the fish is free to spit out the non-edible wreckage, such



as stones or grit. Next time you bait a hook remember the fish you're trying to catch will probably be able to taste the metal it's made from! The palatal organ is probably the main reason why carp were once thought to be almost uncatchable and why the advent of the hair-rig has had such a big impact on the number of carp that were caught. Here, the bare hook is free to prick the fish on its way out of its mouth as the fish tries to get rid of the hook once its suspicions have been aroused. This ejecting of non-food particles from other matter by the palatal organ may cause vigorous movement on the rod tip.

Taste buds are also sensitive to the same chemicals as a fish's remarkable sense of smell. This relies on a set of well-developed nostrils located on its snout. These nostrils, also known as nares, are complex structures with an inlet and an outlet. Water flows through these openings, carrying scents from the environment. Inside the nares, there's a folded structure called a rosette. This rosette houses sensory organs responsible for detecting smells. The number of sensory cells on the rosette can be as high as 500,000 per square mm. The folding of tissue in the rosette increases the surface area, allowing more room for sensory organs. Interestingly, different fish species exhibit varying smell sensitivities. Pike, for instance, may have fewer than nine folds per rosette, while eels can have up to 90 folds, along with a denser coating of receptors, making their sense of smell potentially 1000 times better than that of a pike!

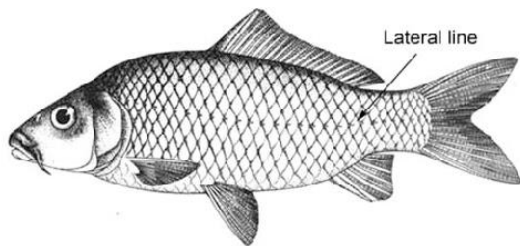




Fish can smell various chemicals, including amino acids and bile acids. Amino acids are found in food items which leak into the water creating a scent trail for fish to follow. Even seemingly odourless natural foods like worms and snails release low levels of amino acids into the water which fish can detect. Salmonids (salmon and trout) have a limited smelling range but cyprinids (carp, roach, barbel, bream etc) have greater sensitivity to amino acids. They are far more likely to be stimulated by baits and additives with natural aminos. Bile acids are excreted by fish after digestion. Their presence indicates feeding activity in an area, prompting

other fish to search for food. The creation of bile acid is one of the reasons why regular loose-feeding is effective and why pre-baiting a swim for a few days can often guarantee action. Fish can also sense many of the chemicals we add to baits to make them more appealing. If a new food with a unique smell is introduced to a fishery and the fish have learned that it's food, they will soon search out that smell to find the food they associate with it.

Natural bait flavourings, containing amino and bile acids, are likely to be the most reliable chemicals to boost your bait. It's also likely that adding lashings of flavour may work against you. Species with a highly folded smell rosette, such as cyprinids, can locate chemicals at very low levels. It is quite possible that loading a bait with a very high level of synthetic flavour may repel, rather than attract them. But, whatever bait you're flavouring must have a good food value in its own right. Fish will soon stop eating a substance that has been enhanced with flavour but which has little nutritional value for them.



As well as senses of sight, smell and taste which we can recognise, fish also have a lateral line of receptors running along their flanks which provide a touch system wholly outside of our experience. All 30,000+/- fish species have a lateral line which is a row of openings into which water flows in and out all of the time. Inside this row are sensors in the form of hair cells which convert subtle changes in pressure to electric signals for the fish to interpret.

Thus, its lateral line allows the fish to detect movement and give it spatial awareness of maybe 2 or 3 times its body length - think of the reversing sensors on your car. This allows fish to navigate and hunt in poor visibility without banging into other fish or snags. Those freaky blind cavefish get along just fine exclusively using their lateral lines to orientate themselves. We may have seen that pike may lack a sense of taste, but have holes head and chin which hold supplementary receptors like the ones on their lateral lines.

Lastly in this armoury of senses, comes their hearing. Quiz question for you : do fish have ears? Well, they do – and here's a thing. Fish are approximately the same density as water meaning that sound waves travel right through them. This means their ears don't have to be external like ours, which is why you never see a chub wearing a pair of sunglasses. Instead, their ears are inside their heads, one behind each eye. Each ear is a small hollow space lined with hairs containing three otoliths, or ear stones that rest on them. Being dense, they pick up sound waves as they pass





through the fish which stimulate the hairs. Amazingly, these grow with the fish to leave an annual ring much like a tree, so a dead fish can be aged by examining its ear stones.

A fish hears only relatively frequency sounds compared to us, as associated with life underwater, which explains why you never see chub at a Bee Gees gig. The range is limited from 20Hz to maybe 1,000Hz. For comparison John 'Rhino' Edwards, legendary bass guitarist of Status Quo told the NAAN that he strums notes at 40 – 262 Hz while the beep that accompanies the TV test card is exactly 1000Hz.

As we can see, it turns out fish are darned complicated. All of these senses combine to give the fish a much better sense of its environment than we have and explains why the buggers can be so hard to catch. How we apply this knowledge of their senses in our fishing, if at all, is down to us, but perhaps suggests why stealth and bait presentation is key and that the tremor on your rod tip need not be caused as simply as you think.



John 'Rhino' Edwards

## \*\*\*STOP PRESS\*\*\*

After working on the project for some time, we are able to confirm the much needed upgrade to our website. The aim is for this to go live on 21st June. Uplifting the whole site to a new format represents a major project, so if the content is not perfect on live day and the few days after please bear with us. The new site contains some beautiful venue pictures submitted by members after a request on Facebook a month or two ago. If you have any constructive ideas, and particularly any good quality pictures you' think would illustrate our venues for new members please email us. Many, many thanks to Ray Wilton for his amazing work in setting up and maintain the original site.

We hope you like the site which will be found at [newburyangling.org.uk](http://newburyangling.org.uk)



# THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

A big thank you to all who have contributed so well to this issue. I aim for 24 pages per issue to make it meaty and varied enough to justify its existence and, hopefully, to try and ensure there is at least one piece of interest for all of our members, whatever their angling preferences. I'm delighted to be writing this on page 34.

Have a successful season ahead – and if you do, don't forget to tell us all about it!

**Martin Strike**

**Editor**

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## If you have lost a big fish due to a friend's negligence



**You may be entitled to financial compensation**