

# RUTLAND WATER FLY FISHERS



January 2004

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## DIARY DATES

12th January  
Expert Forum—  
Empingham CC 7.30

26th January  
Saltwater Flyfishing  
Empingham CC 7.30

9th February  
Expert Flytying  
Empingham CC 7.30

24th February  
Tackle Auction  
Victoria Hall 6.00

7th March  
Litter Pick-up  
Fishing Lodge 9.00

W/C 22nd March  
Annual Dinner. Day  
and speaker to be  
confirmed.



### David Moore – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003

David gave us a very informative and in depth look at the “ecosystem” at Rutland Water. A record 55 members & guests attended this all-important meeting. This does show how much we care about our puddle - which it still resembles: although there are signs that it is now filling up!

There were numerous apologies for absence received by JW. Therefore, for all of you who sadly were not able to be there on the night, a transcript of David’s talk and some of the many questions, which followed is published in this newsletter. The Chairman had to close the meeting sometime after 10 pm so that David could get home: or we would have no doubt been there all night!

David thanked us for giving him the opportunity to put us in the picture.

### Fur & Feather - Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Despite all the predictions and doubts about the back end bank fishing in 2003, this event produced the result to which we have become accustomed.

There was a rod average of over two, which compares well with previous seasons

## John Wadham’s Fishing Report

with not too many blanks. As always this time of year the fish tended to be huddled together in shoals

Many reported having lots of short takes and fish on and off. So there seems to be plenty left. Let’s hope they over winter ok and survive as well as they did in 2002/2003

Anglers came from all over the country and fished in glorious sunshine after a frosty start with an ideal wind. JW walked the banks and chatted to anglers. One pair had travelled over two hundred miles to fish. Their comment “this place is magic. We don’t have anything like this up North. We have come to have a fun day out”. I am sure that’s what they had and I am glad to say they both caught.

Most productive spots were Cardiac Hill, Whitwell Creek & Front, Normanton Car Park frontage and the Point of East Creek. The fish appeared to have recovered well after their ordeals during the long hot summer but as we expected had not put on a lot of weight. They were very silvery and appeared to be feeding again. Some contained Corixa and tiny buzzers with the bigger fish containing fry.

Some good fish were caught, with Ray Walton leading the field with a Rainbow of 4lb 2½oz caught just to the West of the Fishing Lodge Harbour. His two fish together weighed 6lb 15oz. Well done to Matthew Newton from Scopwick near Lincoln who was top Junior, taking one of the best fish: a fine Rainbow of 3lb 4½oz.

Congratulations to the top lady competitor Hilary Tomlinson from Whissendine who took a lovely rainbow of 3lb 1oz. Some good Browns were also caught and returned. Why do they wait until after 29<sup>th</sup> October to be caught? Are they wiser than we give them credit for?

Fish were caught by all manner of means from Boobies on HiD lines to GRHE fished as droppers on floating lines.

The winner was Mark Haycock from Northampton with 8 fish caught before lunch on a booby on a HiD line from the point of East Creek. Mark having already won the event at Pitsford! Andrew Cruickshank was second with 7 fish for 12lb. Third was Richard Hearsh - RWFF with 5 fish for 11lb 9oz

We all assembled in the lodge for a very good meal after the event. John Seaton conducted the prize giving after JW had written up the results in haste. They always say “more haste less speed” and yes, JW cocked up the results. Apologies to Dan Perks who got left out – he received an additional consolation prize. Other than that, all went very well. John Seaton addressed the meeting and thanked all the helpers, the canteen staff for a very good meal and JW for “helping” with the weigh in!

Lucky winner of a 2004 gold season ticket in the prize draw of catch returns was RWFF member Gordon Alleyne from Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire.

The Fishing lodge tackle shop re-opens on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2004 till the end of February 0900 hours to 15.30.

Happy New Year to all our readers and tight lines in 2004.

# David Moore talk to RWFF on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2003

A record attendance comprising some 57 club members and guests heard a most informative presentation by David Moore on the present status of the Rutland Water fishery, details of ongoing research and plans for the future. The RWFF Chairman, John Maitland, introduced David to the audience and thanked him for the assistance and sponsorship offered by AWS to RWFF.

David started by outlining the problems associated with the extreme weather conditions experienced during the 2003 season, which had apparently affected many other still water and river fisheries throughout the UK. Some even having to close their doors to anglers.

He highlighted the tremendous start to the season as reported by RWFF newsletters and the remarkable over wintered survival rate, which had occurred against all predictions. The catch rate then was a record 6 fish per rod.

He agreed that the bank fishing had been very poor since the middle of June and that for bank anglers it had also been a poor back end.

He discussed a very interesting record of catchability, which was an ongoing project.

He said that there had been a very good response to the beginners & improvers courses.

## **Ergasilus**

He discussed the widespread problem of Ergasilus and gave details of the ongoing research sponsored by AWS and being carried out by Stirling University into the life cycle and reproductive processes of this beastie. It apparently has a liking for bream, tench, trout and to a lesser extent pike & perch.

## **Other factors affecting the 2003 season**

Very high water temps which for some considerable time exceeded 20 deg C at 4-metre depth.

The lethal temp for rainbows is 25 deg C and Browns 24 Deg C. This high temperature may be OK for coarse fish with Carp able to tolerate temps of 30 deg C. But with higher water temperatures come lower dissolved oxygen levels. Such conditions were therefore very likely to cause trout to become distressed.

## **Nutrients**

Most of the Phosphates & Nitrates have been removed from the discharges to the source rivers to comply with a wastewater directive. This process could possibly have had an effect on algae species present in Rutland.

David talked about the iron/silica relationship. Research showed the iron content of the lake to be very low thus scotching any idea of the brown colour being "rust"

## **Algae**

David then discussed the important part that algae play in the lake's ecosystem.

It was interesting to learn that blue green algae are not consumed by daphnia. They prefer green algae. In 2003 the brown algae was thought only to be Rhodomonas. Research showed the brown algae - Ceratium - was abundant. This nasty creation is a spiky affair with a silica coating and is inedible to daphnia. However it breaks down with strong water movement e.g. with aerators or strong winds. This algae could well have affected the fish's behaviour. There is apparently no written evidence of toxicity to fish in fresh water.

The E.A. are at present carrying out much research into algal toxicity.

## **Catch returns**

He went on to stress the importance of catch returns and thanked Jim Watts for producing the figures which make very interesting reading and play such an integral part in the day to day management of the fishery.

We were shown a picture of Ken Merridan and Paul Shaw with two fine fish caught from the boats in November and John Seaton with a youngster and 16 fish to the boat. We weren't told who caught most of the fish!

## **Plans for 2004**

Stirling University will continue to carry out further research into the Ergasilus problem.

David and his staff are at present considering stocking arrangements and permit details.

Catch & release at Rutland could be considered in non-critical periods

Fish of 650g weight to be stocked as normal but larger fish may be introduced to try to overcome the Ergasilus infestation.

To investigate the ecological impact of algae on the lake's environment

Contingency plans to be considered for low water levels in future seasons. Following recent rainfall, volume is gradually increasing and is now at about 66%.

## **Tributes**

David finally offered generous thanks to RWFF for their involvement in the management of Rutland Water. He thanked us for assisting with charitable events and for keeping members and the public apprised of activities at the fishery.

John Seaton thanked RWFF for the contribution to the staff Christmas function.

**Questions** - and there were plenty of these - answered by David Moore, Jon Marshall & John Seaton

**Stocking** - Jon Marshall gave details of stocking methods and said that AWS were in fact the largest customer in the UK. He suggested that increased early stocking could lead to excessive early limits and consequent poorer fishing later in the season.

**Earlier start to the season** - AWS were in consultation with English Nature who have the final say in this matter

**Ticket compensation** - none available for this season but new ticket options were under consideration for 2004

**Publication of boat and bank returns separately** - this will be investigated.

**Methods of fishing** - John Seaton said how well nymph fishermen had done up until October and that the rudder fishing had been the most productive from mid-October

**Season ticket sales** - these were slightly up but there had always been a 20% turnover.

**Season ticket periods** - there was some discussion on this matter.

**Boat pricing** - there were various suggestions mooted from the floor and David said these would be considered along with the other ideas on recent questionnaire.

**Availability of boats in November** - John Seaton said that the numbers of boats had been gradually reduced due to possible problems with launching and getting boats in and out of the harbour due to the very low water level: also, they needed time to service the fleet for 2004.

**North Arm versus South Arm** - David highlighted a number of environmental differences in the two arms. E.g. different biology due to differing volumes of input from feeder streams and differing water movements.

**Impact of changes in pH** - David Moore said that there did not appear to be any evidence of a marked effect on the fishery and any changes in this parameter would be temporary and due to the effect of algal blooms.

**Vehicular access to Berrybut Spinney** - AWS to pursue this further

**Boat pricing** - there were various suggestions mooted from the floor

John Maitland, Chairman, thanked David and his team for a very informative evening.

# RWFF Winter Programme

It should be noted that we provide sandwiches free at all our Winter events (except the forum of experts)

## **RWFF Forum of Experts**

– **Monday January 12<sup>th</sup> - Empingham CC - 7.30pm**

Chairman P.Wild. Panel - Phil Brown, Tony Curtis, Richard Hearth and Al Owen

This is a fun evening and you can fire questions at these chaps who in the opinion of your committee cover all aspects of the sport and have are acknowledged experts in their branch of fly fishing. Best of all, this is our 'bangers & mash' evening. Just the thing for a miserable winter's evening.

## **Saltwater Flyfishing—Beyond Bonefish—Ron Oldroyd**

– **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January – Empingham CC - 7.30pm**

We will be delighted to welcome Ron who will be giving us the benefit of his world wide knowledge of salt water fly fishing accessible to the likes of you and I. He has promised not to spend too long on the joys of Xmas Island! This is now a very popular sport and many holiday companies are getting in on the act and Ron will be able to give some good guidance as to the best places to go, and where to save your money.

## **Expert Flytying—Mick Huffer**

- **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2004 Empingham CC—7.30pm**

Mick will be giving us all a demonstration of his prodigious fly tying skills with particular regard to our needs at Rutland and other local waters. We will be using a camera and projector to ensure that everyone can see exactly how it is done. Mick was able to take 45 fish in a week from the Dam Wall at Rutland, on buzzers, during the apparent midsummer slump in the fishing. So come along and pick up some useful tips.

## **Tackle Auction - Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February – Victoria Hall, Oakham**

Doors open at 6.00pm. *Please note the change of day and venue.*

Jeff Dale has once again kindly agreed to be our Auctioneer on the night. If you have not been to our auction, it is a tremendous opportunity to sell unwanted kit and well as picking up a bargain.

## **Litter Pick Up day - Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup> 2004 – Fishing Lodge**

Come along, enjoy the bacon butties whilst helping tidy the place up and contributing towards charity.

RWFF receives good PR from this exercise and we would encourage as many people as possible to give up a couple of hours on a Sunday morning, before the start of the season.

## 2004 Membership Cards

Those of you who have paid their subscription will have received their new membership card with this newsletter. If you have not received one, either you need to pay up now or we've got it wrong. In either case please contact the treasurer ASAP.

# MAN OF THE MINNOCH

As I looked over Borgan Bridge, the River Minnoch was running unseasonably low for April, but I was still eager to get started, on the 4 inviting pools below. Dad had forgotten his waterproofs, so went 5 miles back home while I made my way down to our favourite Garden Pool.

The air was fresh, as I rambled along the path and as no one else had booked tickets, we had all 12 pools below and above the bridge to ourselves. The Garden Pool was the same as I remembered from the previous autumn. Fast water crashing in from the right where the river narrowed, opening out into a deep and inviting expanse of water renowned for producing salmon – on the right day! I decided to try the fly first, so as not to disturb the water too much and placed the spinning rod safely out of the way. I tied on a local Allie's Shrimp type pattern bought from Newton Stewart the day before, but after several casts felt that spinning was worth a go.

Last spring, my only success on the venue was a pike of 8 lb to a silver Toby, so I decided to start with a red Flying C instead. Just as I was about to cast out the spinner, I heard, what I thought was someone fly casting to my right, about 20 yards away. Just the wind I thought, but it was not windy. It happened again. I stepped back from the river, to get a better look, but I could see no one. Putting my rod down, I strolled over to the dip in the bank to see if an angler was sitting down to cast, but I was very much on my own.

Again the unmistakable sound of a novice like angler, even closer this time, attempting to cast a line, was very evident. The closest other human being must have been at least 300 yards away, in the local farm – not 15 yards or so. I concluded that I was being taken over by the atmospheric location and returned to my spinning.

Dad met me as I strolled along to the bend of the river and I passed on my experience. He always enjoyed the Garden Pool, so despite my lack of success he tried his luck – keeping his ears open all the time. Now my dad is 67 and after 50 years in industry, his hearing is not the best. When he returned unsuccessfully to the bend, I wasn't surprised when he said that he had heard nothing. But then he paused, went quiet and revealed that he had however, smelt the distinct smell of pipe tobacco, wafting delicately on an increasing breeze. Having only fished the Minnoch on 4 occasions, we knew nothing of the history of the place, so with these experiences adding to the angling romance of the day, we tried several other pools, until we reached the Rees Pool directly below Borgan Bridge.

The turbulent water meant spinning was the order of the day, but before I could cast my Flying C, the sounds of a novice fly caster revisited me. By now we were 500 yards away from the farm. Dad heard nothing, nor did the pipe tobacco smell return. The next 20 minutes passed without further incident – or fish for that matter.

After leaving the lower reaches of the river and crossing the bridge to the aging Land Rover that has transported my father for over 15 years, we enjoyed a hearty lunch before tackling the pools of the upper reaches of the Minnoch. With the passing of time, came the drizzle the area is famous for and no fish accepted either fly or spinner.

The following day we visited the local tackle shop to fill in our nil returns and spent some time talking to the owner Tony who originates from Blackpool. Many stories are told in such shops when the weather is inclement or the fishing is poor – or both and Tony told us of a potential poacher from his old hometown.

For many years old Bill and his wife would make the long trip up the M6 to Newton Stewart and their visits to the area had become more frequent, with retirement. Bill had taken up the fly rod late in life and was eager to improve his skills. He would usually spend 10 minutes or more looking in the shop window, smoking his ever present pipe, before joining his wife in the shop. The local game fishing season finishes in mid October, so it was with some surprise that Tony greeted Bill's wife one beautiful early November day. While discussing the usual hometown gossip, Tony was waiting for Bill to amble his way into the shop. "Where is he then", asked Tony. "I've dropped him off at the Minnoch", came the reply from Bill's wife. "What after the season has closed", Tony cautiously enquired remembering that Bill may not have been aware of the closed season.

"No", said Bill's wife, "What I mean is, I've dropped his ashes off Borgan Bridge. Bill died last month and it was his wish to have his ashes scattered over the Minnoch".

Spooky or coincidence – the decision is yours.

Kevin Taylor