



April 2016



Verulam Trout Committee and Co-Opts: Roles and Responsibilities

Bob Ring * (Chairman) Contact: tel: 01582.764442 or 07747795334 (bobring@btinternet.com) - Chairing Verulam Trout Committee Meetings and the VT Annual Meeting. Overall responsibility to ensure the smooth running of VT Representative of VT at the VAC General Committee. VAC Open Day co-coordinator for the VT. Fun Day organizer. Fish purchases. PLUS Assistant Fisheries Manager at Bellows Mill

Barry Evans (Secretary) Contact: tel: 01923.682388 (trout@verulam-angling.co.uk) **Season Ticket Sales** (and liaising with Chris Jennings on ticket preparation etc). Accounts. Agendas and Minutes of Committee and Annual Meetings. Maintenance of the Membership database used for communication and survey

Clive Butcher Contact (jcbutcher@gmail.com) - VT Webpage on VAC website. Fly Casting tuition/Introduction to fly fishing/fly tying. Newsletter (for communication to VT interested members)

Neil Roberts VAC FORUM – Trout discussions moderator

Chris Jennings * Contact: tel: 01442.265866 (early evening) (chrisjennings@btinternet.com) - Day and Guest Ticket Sales at Riverside Road and Bellows Mill

Richard Russell * Contact: tel: 01727.838178 (richardrussell_9@sky.com) - Support for Day and Guest Ticket Sales. Away Day organization. VAC Training Coach

Mal Shaw - Social Secretary

Peter Phillips - General Duties - Ford Lake, Bellows Mill bank maintenance

* **Fly Fishing Day and Guest permit seller**

On the Cover

Dave Franklin does it again with this well conditioned 5lb 8oz fish on 19th March from Riverside Road. Last year Dave's first day netted him a similar fish just two ounces lighter.

Riverside Road 2016 So Far

The first month of our Riverside season followed a pretty typical few weeks and with little rain the banks began to dry out. The chilly north to north east wind made fishing a little uncomfortable and deterred much surface activity but as ever sunk flies worked well with some nice fish caught. (see cover picture) In the first two weeks 75% of anglers took their limit with the average at around 2.8 fish. Predictably this fell slightly in the second two weeks as the fish learned what to avoid; why is it that they learn quicker than I do? By the end of week four the monthly average catch was just over 2.5 fish per angler and each day saw an average of 5.79 members fishing.

This year we have sold a record number of permits for Riverside Road but although there was a near capacity fishing on some days crowding was not a real problem as, with high fish stocks, many members had left before others arrived. The popularity of Riverside has proved a bit of a challenge to the committee as the fish have to be ordered before we know how many will be fishing and there was a late surge for season permits. The difficult autumn last year for our supplier meant there were no spare "stock sized" fish available to supplement our order so we had to resort in a little "juggling" and adding a few browns to our Bellows Mill delivery to keep things balanced. The committee will be discussing this at our next meeting and I will keep you posted.

A Reminder

As you know we like to keep rules to a minimum but we have had a couple of lapses recently. The first concerns **floating permits** at Riverside Road. Because of the popularity of this venue overcrowding is a constant worry. Many members travel quite a distance and the last thing you want is to turn up at Riverside only to find its "full". For this reason we ask that those with a **floating permit** ring one of the ticket sellers **prior** to fishing just to book your slot on the chosen day and to prevent too many another members booking a slot at the same time. To check for a slot we all have access to the calendar (See VAC website for details) but for obvious reasons only ticket sellers can amend it. (Named day season and day permit holders will already be on the calendar) The bottom line is if your name is not on the calendar you shouldn't fish and VAC bailiffs will be carrying out permit checks from time to time.

The other thing is to remind you to please make sure the gate is locked and the combination scrambled when leaving; it has been left unlocked on one occasion.

2016 Bellows Mill Spring Season

The working party on 6th March completed the finishing touches to the veranda of the new lodge and then made up and positioned four barley straw containers under the casting platforms. It is hoped that the straw will help reduce the algal growth and keep the water clear. Some trees were trimmed and the trimmers were busy all around the banks. With the water level up to its maximum Ford Lake was in great shape to accept the first stock of the new season the following Tuesday.

As mentioned in an earlier Verulam Trout News (VTN) this stocking included a small number of brown trout with more added later.(see above) Any member catching these brownies must return them, immediately and unharmed to the water but do not count towards your catch limit. However please make a note of all brownies returned on the catch record sheet.

The first two weeks saw an average catch of 2.8 and 2.9 fish per angler. At the time of writing no figures for returned browns were available. As usual members visited Bellows Mill less often than Riverside Road with only an average of 2.29 anglers per day fishing during the first fortnight. So, statistically, if you want fewer anglers and more fish visit Ford Lake at Bellows Mill.

VAC members can get day permits from any of our permit sellers listed above plus (for Bellows Mill only) Barry Arthurs: tel. 07453264662 (best time – 6pm – 9pm)

Day permits will be available until 24th June when we will close the fishing for the summer with a BBQ)

Waste Nylon and Gizmos

Last month I mentioned that it takes about 4000 years for some waste nylon left on the bank side to biodegrade. Now while that sounds a shocking amount of time, and it is, it is to a certain extent irrelevant. If you drop a length of nylon, a bird or other wildlife can be tangled in it before you start casting at the next platform. Although unintentional, its only a matter of time before the unfortunate animal suffers a sometimes long and painful death; something none of us would wish. Also the last thing we want is a grizzly photograph of the corpse dangling from a bush. So the message again is: "Take it Home With You". But I hope I'm preaching to the converted.

The problem is how can you be sure that the nylon reaches home with you. I try to make sure I pick up any nylon I find but I am guilty of sometimes forgetting its in my pocket and only finding it a few days later when I pull something else out to find it tangled in nylon. That's fine; at least I've found it but what about the times when I just pull out the "something else" and I don't see the nylon fall out. All I've done is spread the problem. Enter the gizmos.

What's prompted this is the quite legitimate campaign by "Trout Fisherman" magazine for a bank side clean up. At the end of their article they mention some natty little tools to help.

The first is the **Smith Creek Trash Fish**.



All you do is wind the line loosely around the fish cut out and then slide the coil into the clip at the end. It comes with a short lanyard to clip on your jacket or fishing vest. £9.99 from Sportfish and others.

Quite neat but will the nylon catch on other things?

The next is the **Monomaster**.



This one is a little bigger and is a bit like a bottlebrush in a canister. The bristles are quite stiff and have hooks on them. You poke the nylon through the slot and twiddle the handle and the

hooks catch the nylon and pull it in. £12.95 from Orvis and others. Effective but a bit bulky and not cheap.

Finally we have the **Fishpond Piopod**



These are similar to and a little bigger than the old 35mm film canisters and can be clipped on or attached to a lanyard. Simply push the nylon through the lid.

£11.99 for four from Guide Fly Fishing

Probably a bit bulky and do you need four?

Of course you could try the **VAC Cheapo** (for coarse as well as fly fishers)

Like the Fish Creek they all suffer from the exposed nylon problem but they're (almost) free



Clothes Peg



Mini Fold Back Clip



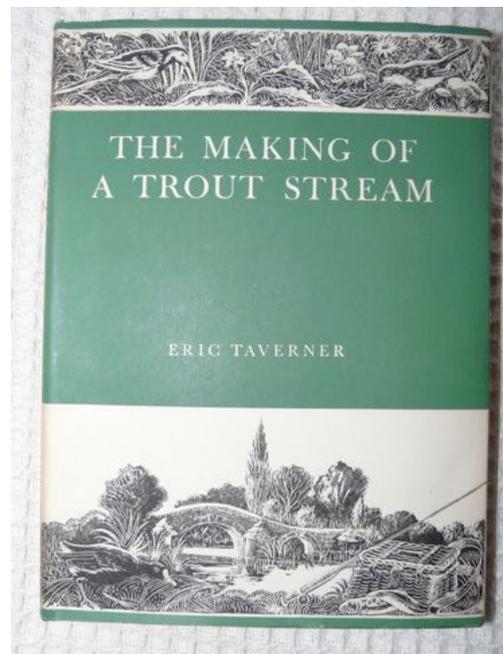
Mini Bulldog Clip

The Making Of A Trout Stream by Eric Taverner

"This is the story of a fisherman's river - not a great or famous river, but a stretch of a rather ordinary trout stream which might be found in many parts of the English Counties." So reads the opening line of the dust jacket note for this book. From this you may have already guessed that this is an old book; how many "ordinary" trout streams are left in "many parts of the English Counties" today.

I've tried to find out when it was written but all I can find is a print date of 1952. Again to quote from the dust jacket *"Entwined in this richness of fishing lore is a group of rustic characters, mingling their skills and crafts with those of the birds and beasts of the water-side, against a background of flowers and moods and boundless possibilities of the River Merriment."*

I would guess that Eric Taverner was thinking of a fictional and idealised time somewhere between the two world wars as he writes about silk lines and gut casts [leaders] with a somewhat patronising view of the "rustic characters". This was a time when, out of the trout season, the writer lived in his "winter quarters in London". The Environment Agency and plastic lines didn't exist and the thought of farmed trout, let alone rainbows, was slightly beneath the dignity of this river. It probably wouldn't



pass the political correctness test of today and this may seem a bit "old fashioned". VAC may already practice much of the maintenance described but there is still a lot of sound fly fishing related advice and information. I think its an enjoyable book about ideas for making a trout stream, even if it was from around eighty years ago.

A copy of this book is on our "library shelf" of our Bellows Mill Lodge; borrow it.

Rats

I've mentioned rats before in VTN and they're not a great problem but as ever where there's water there's a rat (or two). I was reminded by Bob Ring that we shouldn't leave "unsecured" foodstuff in the hut at Riverside as this will inevitably prove too great for them to resist and a cardboard container will only serve as *hors d'oeuvres* before they start on the contents. Please keep all plastic storage boxes tightly closed and clear up any spillages. Just to drive home the message remember that rats are somewhat incontinent.

Look Before You Phone

Being a member of Verulam Trout Committee is not too onerous a task but it does have some slightly frustrating side effects. Last month I added a request with the VTN for members to please read their permits. This was prompted by some committee members receiving phone calls asking for information that has already been given elsewhere. This is of course not restricted to Verulam Trout; many VAC members don't bother to read information that has been sent to them. We recently had a general VAC member trying to enter Riverside Road asking for the padlock combination number. When it was pointed out that it was closed except for trout fishing he replied that he was unaware that VAC offered such facilities.

No VT committee member minds answering questions but before resorting to the telephone please search the rule book/permit/VTN/website for information regarding dates, buying/changing season or day permits and make sure you contact the right person. The committee members duties are always printed at the top of VTN but excludes the required sense of humour. One ex-committee member was telephoned at 6.30 on a Sunday morning asking for a trout day permit - and the caller wasn't even a member of VAC.

Typical

On my chosen fishing day at Riverside this week I had to wait at home for a furniture delivery so I thought I'd tie a few flies while I waited. I'd only managed one mini Sweeny Todd (with a sparse wing they look a bit like a black buzzer) when the furniture arrived so I only did the one. Although I say it myself it really looked the business with its fluorescent magenta throat collar; how could they resist it? On arriving at Riverside I tied it on. Despite the high wind some nice fish had been caught in the days previously and although it was still quite breezy the sun was out and the big pool in the "new" bit by the mound cried out for my attention. It looked (and was) full of fish.

What did I do? You've probably guessed. I put my killer "nymph" straight up a tree on my first back cast. It disappeared and never even got wet.

Upcoming Sportfish Shows

Sportfish have two **free** shows at their Reading tackle shop.

Its a bit short notice but the first is a **Spring Salmon and Trout Day on 2nd April 2016**

Obviously they like you to buy something but they give good free advice on the latest tackle. You can even brush up on your casting technique with a FREE 15-minute tuition session with one of their experienced instructors.

The second is the **Sportfish Reading Show Weekend on 7th & 8th May 2016**

This is their annual two day event with stands from leading manufacturers and casting demonstrations by top names. There's plenty of free parking around Haywards Farm Lake (stocked) where you can watch the casting demos while enjoying some refreshments or take a picnic.

The Reading store is just off junction 12 of the M4 and follow the signs for Theale railway station. For more information see Sportfish.co.uk

Email Addresses

To keep costs down the preferred method of sending this newsletter is by email but we can post it if necessary. Like all addresses its only any good as long as the details are kept up to date (and of course you open it). Please let me know if you want your copy sent to a different email address or by a different system.

Away Days

Remember to contact Richard Russell 01727.838178 (richardrussell_9@sky.com) if you're interested in going to any of our AwayDdays below.

Saturday 14th May :-	Earith
Saturday 11th June :-	Grafham Water
Saturday 10th September :-	Eyebrook
Saturday 8th October :-	Elinor