



December 2017



Verulam Trout Committee and Co-opts: Roles and Responsibilities

Bob Ring * (Chairman) Contact: tel: 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 (VACTrout1@outlook.com) **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

I know its supposed to be "Trout" news but I couldn't resist this photo showing the lovely colours of the grayling Andy King sent me of this fish he caught from the Itchen last month. (see below)

River Itchen Trip 2017 (Part 2)

Just as I sent out last months VTN Andy King sent me the following with his picture of the grayling on the cover.

My photo of my one & only fly fishing caught grayling is attached. I caught it at the end of the Trout beats where the by-pass length separates from the main river at where the Fishery map calls Green Hut, with the Storm Brian wind blasts & Sun right in my face.



It was caught using the Klink & Dink method shown to me by Richard Ellis during my River Mimram trip back in May. The Klink is a robust klinkhammer dry fly acting as a float and the Dink is the tiniest

nymph wet fly you can find, at about No.18 hook size. The Dink is tied direct to the hook bend of the Klink on its own bit of line to bounce close to or on the river bed. I only had the tiny size No.20 Dink given to me by Richard back in May, but then Paul Andermahr turned up & now, knowing what his weird method we had all commented on in previous Itchen trips was, he gave me & my son Vincent about 6 small Dinks.

Due to the wind, I lost about 4 of them through being blown into nearside under bank vegetation whilst lifting clear of the river, not as you would expect whilst casting.

Paul caught many more grayling & a few trout, but then he's well versed in the method.

Later Paul and Richard gave Andy the following information regarding Klinks and Dinks.

Paul - I use various on-line tackle shops but mainly Sportfish and Serious Country Sports - see links below.

<https://www.seriouscountrysports.com/en/Klinkhammers/c-420.aspx> *

<https://www.seriouscountrysports.com/en/Nymphs/c-430.aspx> *

(*sorry my hyperlink refused to work with these - Clive)

Richard - There are images all over google: <https://www.google.co.uk/search?>

Essentially tie tippet off the bend of the hook or the eye or before the eye (different people have different preferences and different pros/cons to each technique). There is a setup that enables you to vary the depth but it strikes me as too likely to lead to other problems for me to try, You can fish a couple of nymphs below the buoyant dry if you like. Typically a klinkhammer or other buoyant pattern is used e.g. balloon caddis.

The length of the dink varies depending on the depth of the fish and the flow but 1.5x the depth of the river in a decent flow isn't bad.

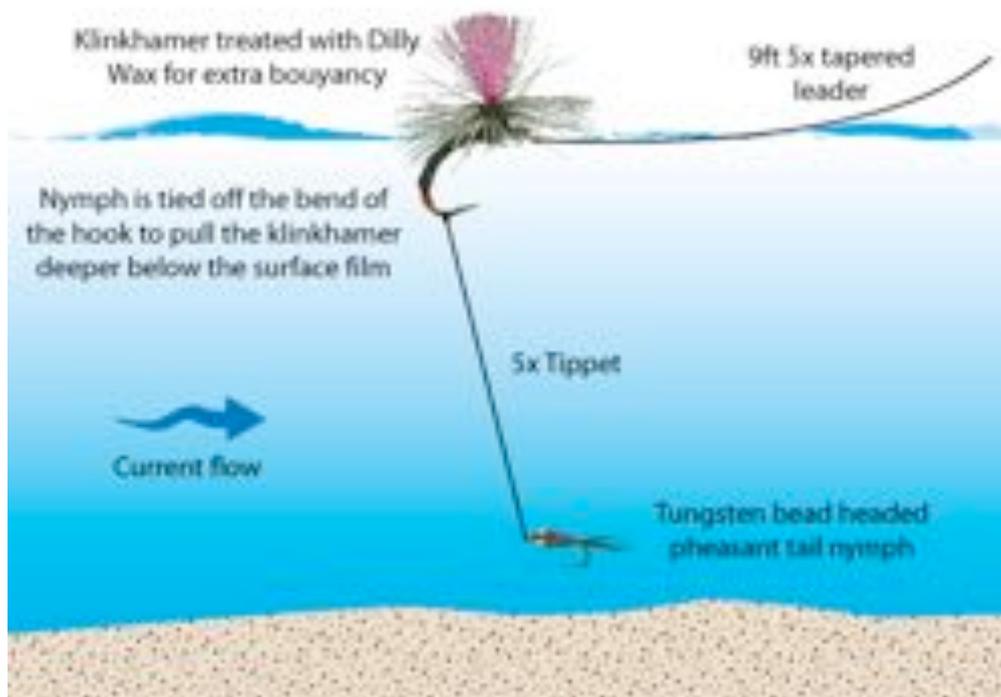
Strike if there is any movement on the indicator and slow your casting slightly.

It's a particularly effective technique in slowish, calm water.

Andy also gave <http://www.troutflies.co.uk/> as a useful alternative for small flies.

Fishing the Klink & Dink

Those of you that read last months Hackle from Derek Cross will know that the Fly Dressers Guild were given a demonstration by Ryan McCullough tying flies down to a size 32. These days I have a problem seeing anything past a size 16 let alone tying a size 20 or smaller so if you don't "roll your own" you may want to make use of the suggested websites. If you do want to try a Klink & Dink here's the set-up.



Clearly the diagram is intended for use in a river so the current has an effect on the nymph but its worth a try on our still waters. My main concern, apart from the unorthodox attachment to the hook bend, would be the wake caused by dragging the klinkhammer if you retrieve. My suggestion is, don't. Simply cast out as straight as you can and let the nymph sink. If nothing takes, slowly lift the rod tip to avoid drag and gently recast a foot or so to one side. Repeat for success. Give it a try; I'm going to.

Bellows Mill Autumn Season

We have all heard about "climate change" but its something that I find hard to relate to. Yes, we all see reports of extreme weather on our TVs but generally its something that affects other parts of the world or at worst a violent storm causing localised flooding and short term damage. But although we're told that our summers are getting warmer, being warm blooded creatures (well most of us) our bodies maintain our ideal temperature so our surrounding temperature has little effect on us. Even in a heat-wave or a freeze we can still function pretty well because our temperature remains constant. We are reasonably immune to the effects of the climate because a) we're warm blooded b) to a greater or lesser extent we wear cloths and c) we take shelter from extremes of weather. However if our body (blood) temperature rises or falls one or two degrees we feel quite ill and we can even die if it goes up or down much more than this for a day or so.

Fish on the other hand, being cold blooded, match their surrounding temperature and can cope with quite a range of body or blood temperatures better than we can. Some, including trout, have evolved over thousands of years to survive in near freezing water that would kill us if we spent more than a few minutes in it. On the other hand, because the environment over their evolutionary development was at the lower end of the thermometer they struggle in temperatures we may find more comfortable. Conversely, tropical fish need warmer water and can't cope with the cold. (I think this proves I crawled out of the tropical primeval ooze – who said "not very far" ?) So although trout are happy with temperatures between zero and about 10 degrees, a much higher body temperature range than we can stand, they start to have problems above this and beyond about 15 degrees their metabolism begins to shut down and they can't feed.

All of this is just to say that, in spite of Donald Trump's "flat earth society" attitude about climate change, I believe it is affecting our fishing directly at Bellows Mill because the water is at the trout's upper temperature limits for much more of the year than it used to be. In my lifetime I can just remember the winters of 1947 and was riding my motor bike through the winter of 1962/3 when we had several weeks below freezing. I believe that workmen replacing burst water pipes were still digging up frozen ground in June '63. But since then we've only had a few days of freezing at a time and some years hardly any frost or snow at all. Fishermen can't be pessimists otherwise they wouldn't bother fishing but if I were I'd say our summer fly fishing days in shallow lakes are numbered. (well, south of the Watford Gap anyway)

The bad news is that a new low point for Verulam Trout was reached during week four of the Autumn Season at Bellows Mill when not one fish was caught. Putting a positive spin on this unwelcome record is to say it can't get any worse in the future and very few fish died.

Anyway! Those of you that receive Verulam Trout News electronically (email) will already know that we have made some adjustments to the latter part of the Autumn Season at Bellows Mill. Because of the poor water conditions when the season opened we advised delaying your fishing trips until the water cooled down. Therefore your committee has said that from 30th November season permit holders may fish twice during any fishing week until 20th December so as to allow them to fit their allocation of 8 visits in.

Now the good news. The following week the water began to cool and the fish started to get caught with the average catch up to 1.8 the week after. By week seven we were up to 2.2 fish per angler which is slightly above our usual seasonal weekly average. During this week 25 anglers fished of which 13 caught their limit and nobody blanked. Derek Lloyd had one over 5lbs and Ted Brown caught his limit that included a fish of 4lbs 10ozs and another at 5lbs 9ozs. By week eight the average catch was up to 2.4 fish per angler.

Earlier several large fish were taken with a notable fish of 4lbs 2ozs caught by Andy King's son Vincent.



Vincent King with his 4lbs 2ozs rainbow

Vincent fished a red nomad on a weight 6 outfit and as he is still a junior this may well be the junior record for a VAC fly caught trout.

So, now Vincent has shown the way, there's no excuse to delay a visit to Bellows Mill.

Away Day at Ringstead Grange – November 2017 – Richard Russell Reports

This away day had to be rearranged from the original date of 21st October because it clashed with a trip to the river Itchen organised by another element of the club much to my annoyance. The next available date at Ringstead Grange was Saturday 4th November. I circulated the invitation to 70 Vac Trout members and only managed 3 positive responses, however I was determined the day should go ahead.

We left St Albans at 06:30 in fine drizzle and this persisted the whole journey, although on arrival there was not a ripple on the lake, I knew winds were forecast around lunch time. A new bailiff was appointed earlier in the year and he has started to put his own stamp on the place by constructing new fishing platforms, tidying up the bank vegetation and weed cutting much of the lake. He had mapped the lake with a sonar device and is able to explain to visitors where the deep channels are and also where the fish shoal up depending on the wind direction. The rowing boats at Ringstead are a bit rickety and could do with replacing, but they are quite large in comparison to Elinor's boats. He only had one electric motor to hire, so we flicked a coin for it and I won. The water level was quite high and gin clear, you could see the bottom in places and depths varied from roughly four to twelve feet on average.

When we left the fishing lodge, both boats headed off to the east bank because that was the most productive area on our last visit; but after a couple of hours the wind picked up and we decided to find some shelter from trees along the north bank. However, this was not an option

as the weed had not been cut in this area and the electric motor propeller kept getting snagged so we headed off to the south east corner of the lake where the wind was blowing all the food and debris, as we approached I could see fish breaking the surface. This was a good sign, I dropped the anchor and fished towards the shoreline with the wind at our backs. My boat partner and I were dressed for the wet in waterproofs, woolly hats and with our hoods up kept out most of the foul weather and the odd tot of cognac in our coffee keep our spirits up. The wind was quite swirling and had changed direction to a south westerly, at this point I was getting in more tangles than usual; I decided to tie a new leader and attached the two black and white buzzers I had purchased at the lodge as droppers and a black and green gold head lure with rubber legs on the point.

After a few casts my rod bent in half as I hooked and lost an enormous fish within seconds, on close inspection of my tippet I could see it had been bitten clean through most likely by a large pike. The bailiff did warn us about this likelihood. The rain continued to get heavier and I spent more time bailing out the boat, then at about 13:00 the rain stopped and the sun came out and our demeanour changed to positive thoughts and at long last the day became enjoyable.

I had a few more casts then I hooked another fish, definitely a trout this time, it tore past the boat, then underneath it and finally I was able to bring it to the net. It weighed 1lb 15oz but fought like a four pounder and was in fantastic condition. It took the green and black point fly. A few casts later I hooked another trout that fought like crazy and again the fish was in exceptional condition, it took one of the buzzers and weight 2lb 4oz, this was followed shortly after by a third fish only not so big at just 1lb 5oz, but again fought like a fish twice its weight.



Ken Woollard battling against the strong winds

The shoal moved on and the bites dried up so we pulled up the anchor and went in search of another shoal. We stopped and tried a couple of spots along the east bank but without any luck and as time was getting on we decided to head back towards where I had success earlier, but found a bank angler had claimed the swim. We dropped anchor nearby and within a few

minutes my boat partner Ken Woollard hooked and landed a trout of about one and a half pounds. He later caught and returned a small jack pike. At the 15:00 weigh in, we found out from the bailiff that all small pike should be disposed of. One other fish was caught by Andy King of 1lb 8ozs making it five fish for VAC trout members, not a huge return, but considering the conditions it could have been worse and we all live to fight another day!



Rowland Elvidge and Andy King return to the jetty

The weather conditions were very testing, although it looks quite calm in the above photograph, it must be sheltered by the jetty. The new bailiff is a very approachable person who is willing to share his knowledge of the fishery. He said that they will be stocking some brook trout next spring, they were apparently native to the lake at one stage. The lake is owned by the same family as Elinor trout fishery and like Elinor much of the profit is re-invested in new stocking and why most of the boats have seen better days. A five fish day ticket is only £22.00 or £17.00 for concessions and the fishery is open from 17/03/2017 until 02/12/2017 from 07:00 to sunset. If we get some decent weather before the close season you could visit this fishery, I'm sure you won't be disappointed, but call Mrs Rosemary Foster on 07584 241078 to arrange your day.

At Last! – Perseverance pays off writes Verulam Trout Secretary Barry Evans

Success at last after trying for the last three years for a salmon!

Each spring, in March, for the last three years I have had a days salmon fishing on the River Dee in Royal Deeside, Aberdeenshire but without success.

The Dee is a great river and after storm Frank in December 2015 the river was cleaned out of debris and silt but still no fish to be caught early in the season.



Fishing the Dee in 2016 without success and showing the bank damage from storm Frank



Further downstream on the River Dee – a different outlook to Bellows Mil



A view from mid-river on the Dee

By mid-October the season on the River Dee is closed so I have a days fishing on the River Don, north of the Dee, again in Aberdeenshire. This is a much smaller river compared to the Dee but nevertheless still challenging. Although I have had knocks in the past from salmon none were caught.

The season ends on the 31st October. So this year on the last day, with local river guide Ian Murray, I again fished the Don. We had about eight miles of river to ourselves. In the first pool we tried and using an eight weight rod, 8lb leader and an Ally's Shrimp pattern I at last had a good take. The fish fought hard but fortunately I did not need to chase down the river after it. The result was a 16lb cock salmon which was safely returned.



I can honestly say this is my personal best salmon!

Roll on next spring when I will again be fishing the Dee and then the Don in the autumn.

Barry

(This is not the first time I've heard that it sometimes take hundreds of hours fishing to catch a salmon. After three years trying a well deserved reward Barry; the first of many we hope. – Clive)

Verulam Trout Survey

Your committee thank you for the excellent response to the recent survey. The results will be discussed at the next committee meeting in December and will inform the recommendations made to the Annual Meeting. Our secretary, Barry Evans, is currently analysing the returns and particularly appreciates those members who have made complimentary remarks about the work your committee does for you.

[I understand from Barry there were no uncomplimentary remarks - but this is not an invitation. Ed]

Another Reminder of Dates For Your Diary

Festive Fun - 27th December

Our instant tradition of a post-Christmas get together at Bellows Mill for Festive Fun takes place on Wednesday 27th December (the day after Boxing Day). For those of you who are new or who haven't attended before its not a very serious affair and has always been enjoyable.

We usually meet at Ford Lake around 9.30 and draw a number corresponding to a platform. If there are more fishing than there are platforms we add "virtual platforms" away from the water. We start fishing at 10 o'clock and about ten minutes later, at the whistle, we all move one platform to the left. This is repeated every ten minutes until a circuit of all the platforms is completed. Our normal fly fishing rules apply and if you catch a fish you stop fishing until the next move. At the end a prize is awarded for the biggest fish and a prize for the heaviest bag of fish. Father Christmas has been known to put in an appearance (he's won it before now) and mulled wine, mince pies and other seasonal food is served.

It is important that in order to allow for numbers **you need to book your place.** Please **contact Bob Ring tel: 07747795334 (bobring@btinternet.com)** if you're interested. Do come; its fun.

Verulam Trout Annual Meeting – 16th January 2018

We have the Annual Meeting of Verulam Trout to be held at 8.00pm on Tuesday 16th January 2018 at New Greens Residents Association Hall High Oaks, St Albans, AL3 6DL

This is the meeting where we announce the season dates and permit prices for the coming year and any other changes that the committee have in mind. Its also your chance to have a say or air your thoughts about Verulam Trout. In previous years we have held a raffle and had a tackle sale from about 7.00 pm but the full agenda will be sent to you later.



VERULAM TROUT SOCIAL EVENING

SAVE THE DATE.....SAVE THE DATE.....

Hello again fellow members.

It's that time of year again, when we announce the date of our annual TROUT SOCIAL EVENING

The Dinner is on Thursday 15th March 2018!!

Due to popular demand we are returning to: -

“The Cricketers of Redbourn”

Just to remind everyone and for people that didn't make it last year

It is a lovely old fashion pub that serves great food

There is a separate room for groups of our size, so we can feel free to chat and enjoy our dinner

This will also allow us to tell our favourite “fishing story” without annoying fellow diners!!!!

Also, as last year there will be something to “occupy” us in between courses

I will send out the actual menu, when it is available in the New Year.

So, when is it.....

Thursday 15th March 2018

Where is it.....

The Cricketers of Redbourn, East Common, Redbourn, St Albans AL3 7ND

At what time.....

7.15pm for 7.30pm

To join us for an evening of “chit-chat”, relaxed entertainment and good food, just reserve you places by contacting Mal Shaw, either by phone 07836632929 or email mds_consult @yahoo.co.uk.

Don't forget, this is one of the few occasions, that you can invite your “better halves”

Please watch out for further updates in the next Newsletter

Cheers Mal

And finally....

As this is the last VTN before Christmas, may I on behalf of your committee wish you a

*Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and Tight Lines
for the New Year*