



# Verulam Trout News

July 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**

**Final Fling** - Fred Edwards, Mal Shaw and Jim Waller (amongst others) enjoy a final few moments of the Spring Season during the evening of the Bellows Mill barbeque. (see below)

## **Follow The Birds - Chris Jennings sent the following from Bellows Mill**

A 'glug' is apparently the collective noun for swallows. So that's what they're called but, I ask the question, "Is that also what they're doing"? Or maybe, and this I find more interesting, they're feeding on hatching flies off the surface. Either way the event lasted no more than seven or eight minutes and was concentrated in quite a small area, furthermore the swallows we're not flying in straight lines, rather they appeared to be darting sideways just before hitting the water, as if moving towards something specific. Who knows?

Whatever', it inspired me to fish a very, very dry daddy off the platform next to the 'carpet', and three fish in less than an hour, the most fun I've had at Bellows for years.

*[Click the picture to see Chris's video. We think they're sand martins; what do you think? ed]*

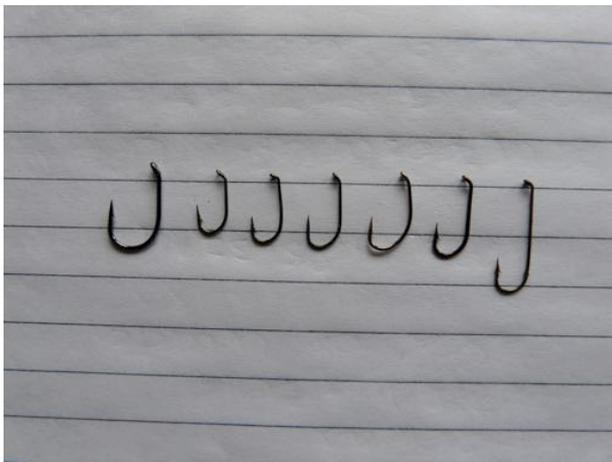


## Size Matters

Following Chris's session I visited Bellows in the afternoon with Fred Edwards. There were fish showing all over but particularly to the extreme right of Chris's picture above. Fred chose the second platform up from the ford end on the car park side and I fished from the third. The fish were at my maximum casting distance but after a few casts I hooked and landed one on a small cats whisker. It was almost a nymph as the white wing had mostly disappeared so it was more of a lime green body with white wing case stumps. After a couple more casts I hooked and landed another fish. Here we go I thought; three fish in half an hour when we wanted an afternoons fishing. Fred meanwhile was getting nothing but bother from floating debris so I suggested he came and fished my spot and I moved to the next platform left.

You've guessed it; I then struggled while Fred took his three. I moved back while Fred had a coffee but still I had no luck. I tried different flies but still nothing. Fred said he was using a "little white bodied job with a reddish wing". I showed him my fly and he said "Oh no, much bigger than that".

I thought about this later and decided I should have asked what hook size he was using and then realised that even this wasn't very helpful.



I took seven hooks from my fly tying box.(see left) All except one are supposed to be a size 12 from different manufacturers. Ok, I cheated a bit; the right hand one is a long shank 12 but the others all vary slightly by as much as 3mm (the lines are 8mm apart) thats 38%. The odd one? Obviously the left hand one, but this is the confusing thing. Its not, as you may expect, a size 10 (remember, the lower the number the bigger the hook) but is in fact a size 14 Partridge Big Mouth Nymph so it should be smaller than all the others. Now I like these hooks. They're strong, sharp, only have a small barb to flatten and hold well because of their relitively short shank. But how can we impart to others what size fly we were using if the "standard" is so variable?

By the way, I did get my third about an hour later by using a Pitsford Pea tied on a size 10 long shank. (at least thats what I thought it was)

## 2016 Away Day 2 at Grafham Water on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June - from Richard Rusell

There were only 5 anglers who made the trip to Grafham Water this year, this must be an all-time low attendance for a VAC Trout away day! We arrived just before 08:00 and joined the queue in the tackle shop to purchase our permits. There were a couple of other clubs fishing the reservoir that day and most of them chose to fish from boats. Ken Woollard, Andy King and myself decided to fish from the bank whilst Andy Fenn and Martin Ede opted for a boat. We decided to start from the dam wall near the valve tower. On our way towards our fishing destination we passed a boat just moored off the wall and asked the occupant how he was doing, "just one fish taken on a cruncher", came the reply. I filed this information and continued our walk along the dam wall. We fished about 20 yards apart, near enough to exchange comments between ourselves. Fish were patrolling along the wall within casting range, I could see the occasional rise and spotted a few fins breaking the surface, but they didn't seem at all interested in what we had to offer. The wind was beginning to get quite strong in our faces and casting was particularly testing as we were forced to cast almost vertically behind to avoid snagging our lines on the dam wall. None of us had a bite for the first three hours, then I thought I'd got a slight knock, but nothing of any significance. On my next cast I had a strong take and I was able to connect and land a trout of 11lb 8oz, not a big fish, but a tough fighter nonetheless that took my cruncher fished on the middle dropper. The wind was now getting so strong, casting was becoming impossible from the dam wall and also there was a lot of surface debris accumulating in front of us brought across the reservoir from the other side by the strong wind. We decided to walk back to the car and change into our waders and try another spot out of the wind. On our way back along the dam wall we spotted Andy and Martin's boat moored just off the dam wall near the south corner and Andy was into a fish, I could see his rod bent in half as I approached, but alas it turned out to be a pike of about 4lb. Neither had caught any trout at that stage and this seemed to be the pattern of the day. There were lots of boats moving around which indicated

nobody had found the fishing prolific. Once changed into our waders we walked along the waters-edge to Gaynes Cove, but on our way we came across several large dead bream to about 10lb and also a dead perch of about 5lb, I didn't realize they grew that big and I wonder what had caused their death as there didn't appear to have any bite marks in them? We fished for a further two hours at Gaynes Cove without a bite between us before calling it a day. Andy Fenn and Martin Ede fished on until the early evening and both caught one fish each of about 2lb.



**Ken Woollard and I resting between casts.**



**The Valve Tower just off the dam wall – normally a fishing hot spot, but not on this occasion.**



**Andy King fishing at Gaynes Cove**

## **British Heart Foundation**

We reported earlier that following the Dave Marlborough Memorial Match and the Verulam Trout visit to Earith, Richard Russell sent a donation to the British Heart Foundation. Richard has received a letter from them containing the following.

*I am writing to say thank you so much for the recent gift of £115.00, raised at the Verulam Angling Club's annual memorial trout fly fishing match, to the British Heart Foundation.*

*With people like you on our side, we are taking huge steps towards healthier hearts and keeping people with their loved ones for longer. Put simply, without your generosity we just could not sustain our life-saving work.*

*I am proud to say that the money you give helps us to support pioneering research and deliver life-saving care to the people who need it most. Your kindness gives us hope for the future without heart disease - and the confidence that we can be there for those whose lives are affected by it now.*

*Thank you once again for supporting us in the fight for every heartbeat.*

*Amanda Pullen*

*Customer Service Manager*



Well done Richard and all who gave.

## Bellows Mill Spring Season

We've now come to the end of another Spring Season on Ford Lake at Bellows Mill. We hit a seasonal average catch rate of 2.3 fish per visit. With our average for both Verulam Trout waters around 2 this is a record seasonal return for Verulam Trout; a remarkable consistency for what are, after all, a bunch of amateurs at fishery management. (Noah was an amateur, professionals built the Titanic) If numbers all sound a bit boring, in practice we've had a great season. In earlier years, when the water was clear, it was possible to "target" some of the fish. (Chris Jennings still can; see Follow the Birds above) Now the water seems to be more coloured (in spite of barley straw) making this approach less productive so we effectively fish blind. The introduction of a few good sized blue trout, along with some larger rainbows made the fishing that more interesting enhancing the element of the unknown. As ever there were great days and some not so great but what would angling be without that and surely any time by the water is great?

You may remember our attempt a few seasons ago at checking the stock level by marking fifty trout with a blue spot and then matching the marked fish caught against the overall catch. This is a proven method of estimating, pretty accurately, the fish population in a lake. Unaccountably we failed miserably as only one "spotted" fish was caught indicating, if my memory is correct, that we had well over a thousand trout in Ford Lake; clearly rubbish. The odd thing is, it's happened again with brown trout.

As you know we introduced a some browns a few seasons ago with a further stock at the beginning of this year and we know some have survived because they've been seen. Seen but not caught. Of the fifty odd stocked, only one has been caught this spring. So, where have they gone? I'm prepared to believe that browns are a bit more "choosy" than rainbows but not that selective surely. And when did the addition of a blue spot provide a sort of "cloak of invisibility" against anglers? Perhaps we should sell this to the MOD. Paint all the military like brown trout and add a blue spot; they'd never get caught.

As we've often said we try to keep our charges down and one of the ways is to limit the amount of paperwork. For the past few years we only issue one season ticket covering the whole season. At Riverside this is easy as with one fishing day per week your dates can be printed on the ticket. Because you can choose your days at Bellows this cannot be done so we have a "Permit Used" sheet in the hut with eight days (or four for dual permits) for you to keep a record.

One of the things about getting older is that it's more difficult to keep track of time and events. Obviously this is not just me as one or two members seem to forget how many visits they've made to Bellows Mill and instead of fishing the eight days for their season they fish more. There is nothing sinister about this; they simply forget to sign the "Permit Used" sheet denoting the number of visits but, quite properly, they record their visit and catch on the return sheet. When the catch records are tabulated we find they've fished more than their entitlement. Our current recourse is to charge them for a day ticket since that's effectively what they've had. So far this has been accepted as just.

Please remember that if you fail to sign the "Permit Used" sheet to keep a tally of your visits and exceed your allocation you should expect to be charged for a day ticket.

## Bellows Mill End of Season BBQ

Just over twenty members and their wives gathered to mark the end of the spring season on 24th June.



### Guests tuck into the BBQ (while some fished)

In spite of a late afternoon shower the evening stayed fine and we all enjoyed a hot dog, burger and cakes washed down with a few drinks. (Thanks to Head Chef Nick Ring)

Last year the warm summer water made the fishing during July very unproductive and so at the last committee meeting it was decided to finish fishing earlier after the BBQ this year. At the sight of rising fish some of the more addicted members couldn't resist a few final casts during the event (see cover) and managed to save some of the fish from the effects of the anticipated high water temperatures we suffered last year. (by presumably eating them)

Ford Lake at Bellows Mill is now closed until 15th September because of high water temperatures anticipated in July and August. (That will guarantee a cool summer - as I write its below average temperature and wet)

However there will still be some work carried out to improve the access path along the car park side and also to continue laying artificial grass on the platforms to reduce damage to fly lines when trodden on. There will be a working party for more general tidying up on 11th September before the start of the Autumn Season.



Pictured left at the BBQ, Barry Evans and Alan Stainton avoid eye contact with their quarry while discussing which fly to use to attract a sausage or two from a shoal that appeared just too close for them to resist.

## **BELLOWS MILL AUTUMN SEASON 2016**

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Sept to Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

A reminder that applications\* for Autumn season permits at Bellows Mill can be made to the Verulam Trout Secretary from **1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 until 31<sup>st</sup> August** to ensure receipt before the start of the season. Applications for season permits after the 31<sup>st</sup> August cannot be guaranteed for receipt before the start of the season. The cost of a season ticket remains at £85 for 8 visits over the season. There are no half season permits.

Also available are Day Tickets @ £16 for VAC members and Guest Tickets for non-VAC members @ £24 adults.

Barry Evans

Verulam Trout Secretary

\* Application form attached with this Verulam Trout News.

## **In Next Months Issue?**

Twelve months ago we brought you the exciting Icelandic Saga of Four Old Geysers In Iceland. Well they're at it again only this year Bob and Nick Ring, Alan Bailey and Mal Shaw are joined by Gerard Panting.

I understand that to fish in Iceland you have to be sterilised (I think that's what they said) I know they've been certified. Hopefully we'll get a blow by blow account of the ~~the~~Famous Five In Iceland by our very own ~~Enid Blyton~~ Bob Ring in our next issue.

Here's wishing them Tight Lines.