



# Verulam Trout News

March 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 - In They Go** - Riverside Road 2016 First Stocking - L to R Ian (the Bibury Fish Farm Driver) Nick Ring (counting?) Chris Jennings and Bob Ring (and no, the trout on the chute didn't make it back to the tank)

and

**Out They Come**



**Richard Russell and Jonathan Hill both took a limit, including this pair weighing just over three and a half pounds each on their first visit of the new season**

## 2016 Riverside Road Trout Season Opens

Just after the coarse fishing closed for ten weeks the initial stocking of around 300 trout was introduced. As usual the average size was around the 2lb mark but at each stocking there will be a hand full (several hands full in fact) of larger fish to 6lbs to spice things up a bit. Fresh supplies of tea and coffee have been added to the newly cleaned hut. The 2016 Verulam Trout season opened at Riverside Road on 26th February and four members fished on the first day all catching their three fish limit with two of the quartet landing beautiful "biggies" of six pounds each; not bad for the first day.



**Day two of the Riverside season and a second fish for Hugh Beardwell**



**Hugh's third fish was this magnificent 5lb 10oz fish**

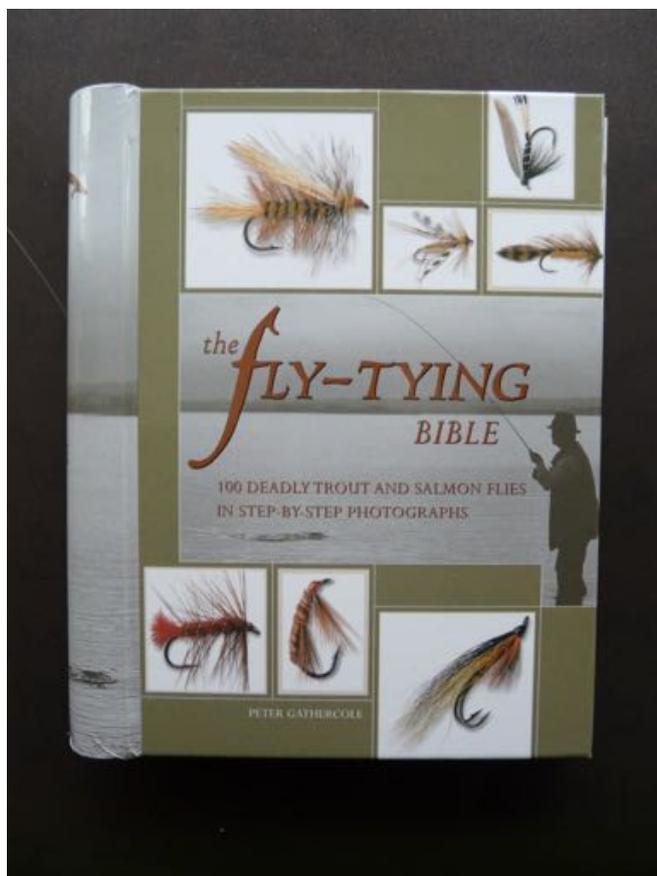
## 2016 Bellows Mill Spring Season

This year we're starting the spring season at Bellows Mill a little earlier on 10th March. Although further features may be added to our new lodge over the coming years it is now fully functional and open to all VAC members to use considerably. As with Riverside Road there will be a pre-season working party (see below) to tidy the banks and make ready for what we hope will be another super season which will run until 22nd June. Again, like Riverside Road, we will be stocking with trout averaging 2lbs with a few bigger fish for interest but in addition Ford Lake at Bellows will receive a few brown trout. As previously these are on a catch and release (C&R) basis and must be returned, unharmed, at once but will not count towards your limit. Please make a note of all browns caught on the returns sheet.

VAC members can still get a spring season permit from Barry Evans or of course 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)

## The Fly-Tying Bible



Most of my fly tying books are several decades old now and while the flies and methods still work, watching one of Chris Sandford's videos prompted me to take his advice and buy a copy of The Fly-Tying Bible by Peter Gathercole for something a little more modern.

Many of you that already tie your own may be familiar with the book but for those of you who haven't taken the plunge, you won't go far wrong with this to guide you. (short of visiting the Herts Branch of The Fly Dressers Guild)

Its spiral bound, making it eminently practical to lay flat on the tying bench and covers basic techniques, tools and materials. It also contains one hundred dressings for trout and salmon flies with step-by-step excellent photographic instructions. Not only are the patterns chosen for their fish catching ability but also to show most of the techniques used in fly dressing. I particularly like the way its laid out in five chapters, one each for dry flies, nymphs and bugs, wet flies, streamers and

hair wings together with the fish they are likely to attract and five levels of tying difficulty.

Many old favourites, like the silver butcher (not named after me, that's the bloody butcher; although come to think of it I'm getting more silver by the day) and invicta, are included with more modern offerings such as czech nymph, cdc dun, minkie and, if the purists among you can stand it, the booby. At the end of the book is a list of our salmonoid quarry together with the flies to catch them, a glossary of fly associated terms, a list of suppliers and finally an index of flies.

All in all, a must have book for the fly tyer. I wish I'd bought it years ago.

Published by Aurum Press Ltd. ISBN-13: 978-1-85410-865-4

## Leaders

Not our chairman and secretary but the thing on the end of your fly line. We held our "Introduction to Fly Fishing" a week or so back and naturally the subject of leaders came up. Now I happen to think that the leader can make quite a bit of difference to the result of a days fishing. Some of our more successful members just pull off a few yards of nylon monofil and use that. OK, it works for them but I suspect that they still use quite a long piece.

In an effort to put as much distance between the fly line and the fly I'm not happy with less than twice my 9'6" rod length. If its windy a shorter length is preferable but still as long as I can manage. I also find that a tapered leader turns over better than just a level piece of mono. On the basis that the fewer knots between you and the fish the better, knotless tapered leaders are better. Obviously there's less chance of a knot unravelling but also there's less "snags" for your fly to hook up on. Knotless leaders are of course more expensive but "home grown" tapers still work.

Have a look at the website of Lets fly fish (<http://www.letsflyfish.com>) where, amongst other things, it has a handy link to leaders and their use.

If you're a beginner or its windy I find a 9' tapered leader with a tip of around 8lbs b/s (for VAC waters) connected directly to the fly line loop (I'm assuming you have one. If not I recommend you fix a braided loop to your fly line. Around £1.99 for a pack of three). To increase the length add around 3' of 8lbs b/s mono to the tip giving you a working length of 12'. (This 3' tip will get nibbled away as you change flies so it will have to be replaced after a time but it saves the dearer tapered leader from getting shorter.) If you want a longer leader I find its better to add a link of the appropriate length between the fly line and the leader and should be the same diameter as the thick end (butt) of the tapered leader. If you try to lengthen at the tip with the lighter tippet it doesn't turn over as well.

Finally, I find fluorocarbon with its higher strength/diameter ratio and near invisibility in water gives me more confidence than using nylon monofil although I wouldn't loose any sleep without it.

Finally, finally; as it says in the Sportfish catalogue, nylon only takes about 530 years to biodegrade while fluorocarbon takes around 4000 years, so take home any you see on the bank side; yours or not.

## Credit Where Credit's Due

I think its been said that politics and religion have no place in angling; I agree! But this is not about party politics but our political system. Like many people I have a pretty cynical view of politicians and whilst it may not be entirely justified some of their actions over the past few years haven't covered them in glory.

My introduction to angling was sea fishing for bass at the age of about six a frightening number of years ago. I was taken fishing in Langstone Harbour, near Portsmouth, by my father and his brother and although we happily caught anything our main target was bass. (why is it fashionable to call them "sea bass" now; we've never had any other bass in UK waters, fresh or salty) Even then bass weren't all that common so there was virtually no commercial fishing but I have a bit of a soft spot for bass particularly as we've now suddenly realised they can be caught on a fly rod. The problem is that bass are now a sort of sea "panda"; an endangered species.

The Bass Angling Sportfishing Society (B.A.S.S.) have long supported protection measures regarding size and catch limits for both sport and commercial fishermen. Roughly the proposal was a complete ban on taking any bass, commercially or recreationally for six months and then a limit for rod and line sport fishing was to be only three 42cm+ fish to be taken per day with anything else catch and release. Commercial net fishermen would be limited to landing one tonne of bass per month.

After pressure from commercial fishermen the EU (bless them) proposed the commercial ban should be reduced to two months then increasing the commercial limit from one to 1.3 tonnes

per month but only one bass to be taken per day by recreational anglers after the six month ban. So much for conservation!

B.A.S.S, and the Angling Trust (AT) joined forces with the MP for North Cornwall, Scott Mann, who is a keen sea angler and has been photographed (trout?) fly fishing. Scott secured a back bench debate in parliament to discuss the matter on 11th February. I received an email from the AT, as did many of you I guess, suggesting I write to my MP asking them (actually it said *him* but I'm not as sexist as the AT) to support Scott. As many of you know the MP for St Albans is Anne Main, for whom I didn't vote (and I'm not saying who I did) so I did; write that is.

I have to say I was pleasantly surprised to receive a prompt reply saying that, although she had a prior engagement and could not attend the debate, she had already written to the Secretary of State, twice, on the subject sharing the concerns of BASS and the AT. Our MP was also, I thought, surprisingly well informed on the matter, considering she is a landlocked MP, so to speak. In the event the debate entitled "Conservation of sea bass and the effect of related EU measures on the UK recreational fishing industry" lasted three hours was carried without opposition. The upshot is that the government will be pressing the EU to revise its ruling in line with scientific and BASS suggested protective measures. Good for them!

This may not have anything to do with Verulam Trout directly but it does indicate that may be, just may be, politicians are not all as bad as we think and if we have a grievance, let them know about it. There are after all around 2200 VAC members; that's quite a lot of votes.

If I may mis-quote Winston Churchill "Democracy is a crap system but its better than anything else".

## **Working Parties**

**Bellows Mill - 6th March** - 8.30 to noon - contact:- Bob Ring 07747 795334

This will be for a pre-season removal of some self set willow saplings to make casting easier as well as a general tidy up of the banks. For those that need it this will count as your working party stamp for next years membership. Don't forget to contact Bob before hand so that he can assess numbers.

## **Verulam Trout Dinner**

Don't forget the Verulam Trout Social Dinner on 10th March; contact Mal Shaw [mailto:mds\\_consult@yahoo.co.uk?subject=Verulam Trout Dinner](mailto:mds_consult@yahoo.co.uk?subject=Verulam Trout Dinner)

## **The Trouble With Numbers**

As you know I email (and post a few) Verulam Trout News (VTN) to any VAC members who have an interest in fly fishing. Early on it was pointed out to me that if a member's computer had a virus it was potentially possible to infect all the others by sending the email directly to a list of names. This is avoided if we use a third party "agent" to send the email, which is what the Club does with "Verulam News" to most of the general membership. It does however introduce a slight time delay plus a possible cost. To avoid this I email VTN to myself with a bcc (blind copy) to members on the VTN email list. This way, although you can't see who else receives a copy, it does (hopefully) protect your device from importing a virus from others. This worked well; until last month.

Last month I was blocked from emailing VTN, even after several tries. After a bit of digging I discovered that there is a limit on how many blind copies I can send. Apparently this is to deter "spammers". The VTN email list has grown to 102 members, so guessing the limit was 100 I split the list, alphabetically, into two roughly equal halves to send separately and bingo! off they went.

So, while VAC members with an interest in fly fishing is at an all time high, it does throw up a few challenges; long may it last.