



Verulam Trout News

May 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 - Super Saturday

RR at RR Our cover picture shows Richard Russell looking justifiably pleased with a brace of rainbows weighing 4lbs 3ozs and 4lbs 13ozs he caught from Riverside Road on the 9th April. It was the day of big fish with six rainbows over four pounds being caught that day and, unbelievably, Richard's fish were the smaller of the bunch. Andy King took a brace weighing 4lbs 11ozs and 4lbs 15ozs.



Andy King's superbly conditioned 4lb 11oz rainbow



Andy caught his fish using a weight 5 outfit and the larger took around 15 minutes to land which made him think it was even bigger.

Earlier on the same day Peter Phillips caught two even bigger fish weighing 5lbs 5ozs and 6lbs 4ozs, the latter being the biggest fish taken this year. (so far!)

Andy with his 4lb 15oz fish

2016 Seasons So Far

Riverside Road

It seems hardly possible that we've only a few days to go to the end of our season at Riverside Road; where have nine weeks gone? At just past the halfway point in the season the fishing became a little challenging and most members had to work hard for their fish. As can be seen by the pictures above some big fish were there to be caught but they didn't give themselves up. Early arrival seemed to pay off with those turning up later having to toil a little longer. Many reported that takes were very tentative suggesting the fish are now very wary. There has been some speculation about the barley corn being fed into the lake to feed the coarse fish. Undoubtedly trout also feed on this and some suggest that this reduces their willingness to take a fly making which is why the fishing is harder. The problem with this theory is that the fishing at Bellows Mill is similarly "challenging" (see report) and no barley corn has been fed into Ford Lake.

I'm more inclined to think the unsettled weather of the past few weeks with a constantly changing barometric pressure has more effect. Surely this must have some effect on the fishes and their sensitive swim bladder.

More stock was added and with some settled weather for the last few days we hope for get some decent catches before we end on 5th May.

The pearl fishers? Although its not unusual to catch coarse fish, particularly perch, a notable catch was made by Richard Russell when he landed a perch of an estimated 2lbs. The fish was around 13" long and returned without being weighed.

What was unusual was the catch made on 14th by Ian Roberts when he landed a large swan mussel. It was not just "foul hooked" but clamped onto the fly. Presumably his fly entered the open shell and touched the mollusc's "sensitive bits" causing it to snap shut. I have no information as to how well the mussel fought or if indeed it contained a pearl.*

*Cue internet check. - Only the freshwater pearl mussel produces pearls and they only live in fast flowing rocky rivers not lakes like Riverside Road. So no pearls from swan mussels but their presents does indicate that the water quality is fairly good.

Another notable catch during April was this five pounder caught on 22nd by Clyde Alexander.

Clyde reported that the fish fought very hard and "had me going for ten minutes".



Clyde Alexander with his Riverside five pounder

Bellows Mill Spring Season

As with Riverside by mid April the fishing became more "interesting". In the main those who stayed on one platform monotonously casting found the going quite hard but those who varied their tactics were usually rewarded with a fish or two. Again the "cliff edge" theory seems to be evident. It appears that for any given body of water there is a tipping point when the stock of fish drops below a certain number they become disproportionately harder to catch. As both of our trout waters are of a similar size this number seems to be around 125. Above this number the fishing is usually relatively straightforward. As the numbers drop below this point the fishing falls "off the cliff" and suddenly becomes much more difficult requiring a more considered approach. That said, this is just a theory and it sometimes unravels a bit. At the end of Bellows Mill week 4 the number of fish stocked less the number caught was down to just 15 and yet members still caught, albeit with a struggle.

As we cannot guarantee our trout overwinter or over summer our stocking policy is to ignore any theoretical fish left from the previous season and start the new season afresh. Presumably some of these "theoretical" fish do survive and boost the numbers remaining.

In an ideal world the stock would be kept just above the statistical remaining number by trickle stocking daily and replacing the previous days catch with a similar number of fish. Sadly our resources only allow this rebalancing roughly one a fortnight. But who wants to live in an ideal world? Its the blank days that make success the sweeter.

Just to spice thing up a bit our last stocking in April contained a few larger blue trout some of them "looking like salmon". I can't wait!!



Nick Ring (left) with a blue and Alan Bailey with a rainbow both of 4 lbs 8 ozs

VAC Annual General Meeting

You will be receiving a report about the Club AGM separately and there was nothing discussed unique to Verulam Trout. However, there was a change to the rules passed that will have an effect on a high percentage (I was tempted to say majority but perhaps not) of members who regularly use the facilities of Verulam Trout. The reason for the change is an aging membership with an increase of those who are eligible for concessionary subscriptions but, sadly, the Club does not receive any concessions on rents etc. Also it is increasingly difficult to define eligibility for a concession in terms of age or disability as the retirement age is now somewhat flexible. The General Committee's proposal was to follow the lead of the Environment Agency.

In future VAC will no longer use the term "OAP" or "disabled" in relation to Club subscriptions. Instead Rule 19 has been replaced to include the words; "There will be a single concessionary rate for members holding a Concessionary Environment Agency Rod Licence. The rate for this membership will be set annually [at the AGM?] on the recommendation of the General Committee."

The new rule will apply to new members joining for the 2016/17 year and existing "OAPs" brought into line (the subs not the members) in steps until 2019/20 when they will be amalgamated.

Recent Question

"If I take a guest to Bellows Mill to fish Ford Lake on a Guest Permit can they also fish Mill Lake for coarse fish."

Answer: Yes! A Guest Permit is issued on behalf of VAC to fish a venue not a lake. If you take a guest to fish at Frogmore they can fish all the lakes and similarly both lakes at Bellows Mill. Remember, however, that you are responsible for their conduct and whilst we don't expect you to fish side by side my view is that you should both be fishing the same lake. Finally, if not obviously, a Guest Permit to fish Mill Lake does not allow fishing in Ford Lake without a trout permit.

Upcoming Sportfish Show

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

VAC Gains FDG Award

As you may know VAC, and more particularly Verulam Trout, shares much with the Herts branch of the Fly Dressers Guild. The FDG has joined with us on our stand at the Herts Show and Open Days at Riverside in recent years and by way of a thank you, presented Bob Ring with a framed display of beautifully tied flies. The display will be hung in the Bellows Mill lodge.

Incidentally, although the colours don't reproduce well here, I think I can identify the outside two columns (not sure about top rh) but does anyone know what the centre three are?



The Art of Falling in Gracefully (A Cautionary Tale from Bob Ring)

Fishing last Thursday was not easy and I was fishing on the end platform at the far end of Riverside Road. A common practice of those that fish on Thursday is to cast out a sinking line and booby set up whilst we are either changing a leader or sorting out a tangle. The theory being you will only catch when a fly is in the water.

I was sitting on the sleeper at the back of the platform doing just that and enjoying the sunshine when my rod and reel suddenly shot off the platform, I bent forward to grab it and did a very graceful sort of roll into the lake! Much hilarity from my so called mates. The rod had disappeared completely but quickly surfaced not far out and so as I was already in the there I waded out and grabbed it. The fish was still on the end and was landed successfully. A motley selection of spare clothes were donated from fellow anglers. The moral of this tale is make sure you secure your rod somehow if booby fishing and keep some spare dry clothes in the car.



Wet fish, wetter fisherman



Nice socks, pity they squelch

Away Days

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

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

Dave Marlborough Memorial Match

Our annual get together in the memory of Dave Marlborough, one of the founder Verulam Trout members, was fished during the evening of 29th April at Riverside Road. With a record number of 16 members taking part the fishing at some pegs was "cosy". As an "observer" it was amusing to see a fish rise and almost at once three flies land in its vicinity. The tolerance of the anglers was matched by that of the fish that obligingly allowed 12 of their number to be caught although, as can be guessed from the average ratio of just three quarters of a fish per angler, didn't give themselves up. Inevitably some caught two whilst others were fishless during the two hours fishing. Most reported getting takes and knocks but as with much of the fishing recently hooking and landing a fish was a different matter.

Amongst those who struggled was Fred Edwards who had many "pulls" but failed to catch by the final whistle. As he reeled in at the end he hooked and landed his only fish. Disqualified? Well it didn't really matter as it wasn't big enough to affect the score.

Whilst the fishing was going on our new lady chefs, Janet Edwards, Linda Russell and Dorothy Lewis cooked burgers and sausages which were enjoyed by all with a drink while the fish were being weighed. Bob Ring easily claimed heaviest fish with a nice one at 3lbs 8ozs but the heaviest bag was a close run thing. Both Mal Shaw and Andy King had two fish apiece each weighing 4lbs but when Mal removed his stringer he was 3ozs behind Andy. So Andy won the DMMM trophy for heaviest bag.

As always a really enjoyable evening with £82 raised for the British Heart Foundation. Thanks to Richard Russell who organised the whole thing.



Left. Bob Ring presents Andy King with the DMMM Trophy for heaviest bag.

Below. The participants plus chefs.

