

BRISTOL & WEST BRANCH

SALMON & TROUT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 2016

***President: Nick Mitchell
Chairman: Alfred Pope***

Planned for 2016:

AGM

West Country Game Fair

Junior Coaching

***Royal Bath & West Show
Sport for the disabled
including flycasting at the
show***

Members' Day

Annual Dinner

Please see inside for details

**Secretary:
Roy Buckland
8 Millington Drive
Trowbridge
BA14 9EU**

Tel: 01225 760465



All dates and booking form inside. Please complete and return to the secretary.

Len Harvey



The branch is very sad to learn of the death of Len Harvey on September 18th 2015. Len was a long time member of Bristol and West branch and his work with junior coaching over the years was terrific. He spent many hours teaching fly tying to the juniors. He was one of those people who just did it for the love of our sport. Len and his wife Ann always came to the dinner, and he always gave something toward the raffle, invariably some beautifully hand crafted fly box or more famously his

home made priest, their only fault being the quality - far too good to use, and more at home in a display cabinet which I guess is where a great many of them ended up. We always give a prize or two to the juniors who stick with us through the series of lessons, usually books or fly boxes. One year however, Len presented them all with one of the priests in addition to the fly boxes etc. already given. A few years ago Len gave a beautifully handmade chess set as a contribution towards the raffle at the annual dinner - typical of the man.

Roy Buckland

AGM - March 1st 2015



This year we had a different format with no speaker but an enjoyable informal get together for a glass of wine before the AGM itself. Brian Kick as usual ran the raffle with his very interesting fly playing cards and raised £70 for the Branch funds. Alfred and Jane Pope provided an excellent buffet lunch and it was a pity there were so few members to enjoy it. After lunch the AGM proper started with the Chairman welcoming everybody to the meeting and thanked all who had taken the trouble to come. Alfred vacated the chair and John West

proposed him for re-election as chairman. This was seconded by Roy Buckland and carried unanimously. Alfred then thanked all the committee members for a successful season, particularly Roy, Malcolm Fisher and Brian Kick for supporting the shows and the Junior Coach and Brian for his very successful raffles during the year. The rest of the committee all stood for re-election and they were proposed en masse by Peter McGuckian. This was seconded by Paul Middle and carried unanimously.

Jenny West

Spring Game Fair 2015 – March 21st 2015

This busy event is at the Bath and West showground during March - over the weekend of the 21st. and 22nd. It is very well attended. We are there simply to promote game angling and the Salmon & Trout Association. We do not give lessons as this is an indoor show and we are there by invitation of the organisers to show the flag. The organisers Contour Exhibitions provide all the fishing exhibitors with free stands and over the last three years this has developed significantly. We now have people coming to the show principally just to visit the fishing stands, a vast improvement from the time Malcolm and I were there with just one table, leaflets and boxes of flies that Malcolm had tied. We do not ask for volunteers for this show as we always need help at the Royal Bath & West at the end of May.

Roy Buckland.

The Royal Bath & West Show 2015 – May 27th 2015



We left our usual spot at the bottom of the showground and the whole of the living countryside arena migrated to the top end of the site. Facilities there were just as good with the additional benefit of being by the green gate with its heavier footfall. The layout this year was an experimental one and will be revamped for 2016. The arena was rather big, and giving a display in it gave us a bit of a problem. Malcolm Fisher and I shared the demonstrating part of things, but it needed the two of us in such a big area to get noticed. Apart from getting soaked once it

went well. Paul Reddish and Rod Newton did a great job on giving the casting lessons, which again proved very popular. Brian Kick ran the events for the disabled with help from one or two members and friends.

We did not have England Flyfishers sharing the stand with us this year, but we were delighted to have Tackle Trailers joining us and they provided a really good display of tackle products.

Roy Buckland



Members' Day, September 6th 2015, Blagdon Lake



The Lord Darling Trophy was fished for at Blagdon by seventeen members and their guests on 6th September 2015. The winner was Andrew Tyrer with a Brown Trout of 3lb.12oz narrowly beating Mike Hobbs and Stewart Deakin who managed a rainbow of 3 lb 9oz. It was a day when no limits were caught and there were a few blanks to be had. As usual Elaine and her team came up with their normal high standard of food and we all had a pleasant supper. Brian Kick ran the raffle and Alfred Pope presented the Lord Darling trophy to Andrew Tyrer.

Roy Buckland

Annual Dinner, September 11th 2015, Cameley Lodge



The Annual dinner at Cameley Lodge this year moved to an earlier date than previous years the eleventh of September in fact. This made driving in the dark much less of a problem and a lot more people turned up, although Paul and Sandie Middle brought quite a few of Paul's shooting friends. The food was terrific which is the standard set by the Harris team of Paula and John.

Mike Hobbs said grace prior to dinner and gave us the Robbie Burns one. After dinner and the loyal toast we were entertained by James Honeybourne one of the BBC's wildlife team who gave us Big Blue Live this summer, a show watched by millions on television. Brian Kick was presented with the Chairman's trophy by our Chairman Alfred Pope (see picture). This is awarded annually by him for services to the branch, so who could be more deserving than Brian. He and Margaret have run the raffle at the dinner and raised funds over the years for the branch. He often funds some of the prizes out of his own pocket, so congratulations Brian.

Roy Buckland

Big End of 2015 Season Brown Trout for Brian Kick



On Saturday October 10th this big brown trout estimated at 5lb. plus was caught by Brian at Blagdon whilst fishing with Malcolm Fisher a couple of days before the boat fishing season ended.

The fish was quickly photographed and safely returned

Events Calendar for 2016

AGM, Sunday February 21st 2016 at Blagdon Lodge

Meet at 12.00 noon for a glass of wine and meet up with old friends followed by a buffet lunch and a talk by Zoe Hancock, Catchment Coordinator at Wessex water. The AGM itself will start at 2.15pm and is your chance to hear what is planned for this year, to question committee members about the running of the branch and to elect or re-elect your branch officers. If you are intending to come to lunch - cost £14.00 - will you please forward your cheque payable to Salmon & Trout Association with your booking form.

Junior Fishing Evenings, May/June 2016 at Chew Valley Lake

Junior coaching will again be run by kind permission of Bristol Water. This is run over five Friday evenings, May 6th, 13th & 20th and June 10th & 17th from 4.30pm. to 8.30pm. We try and run a complete course including casting instruction, fly tying, entomology, boat fishing, safety and courtesy whilst fishing. This is a comprehensive grounding to fly fishing and a great way to start. This is probably the most important thing we do during our year. We need boatmen, fly tying and instructing. For the last seven years we have run these courses they have been immensely successful. If you are a branch member and feel able to take part teaching youngsters the art of fly fishing, please indicate the evenings you would be available on the booking form and send it to the secretary. We could do with some help on this one.

Royal Bath & West Sport for the Disabled, Sunday 22nd May 2016 at The Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet

'Have a Go Day' to be held from 10:30am until 3:00pm.

Royal Bath & West Show

Wednesday 1st June - Saturday 4th June 2016 at Shepton Mallet Showground together with the Royal Bath & West Sport for the Disabled

This is a very important show for us, and it is vital that we get some volunteers to help with the running of the show. We really do need to make an impression this year to ensure our presence there for future years. All helpers will have a free pass to the show and of course the opportunity to have a look round the whole show at some time during the day. If you can, please help us. Brian Kick has for years run the casting part of the disabled games which are run at the Bath & West on the Thursday and Friday during the main show. Again, if you can spare a few hours to assist Brian he will be very grateful. The same free entry pass applies. If available to come and help, please tick the appropriate boxes on the booking form.

Members Day Sunday 2nd October 2016 at Blagdon Lake

This is boat or bank fishing. The biggest fish caught during the day wins the Lord Darling trophy. The supper, as usual, will be provided by Elaine's Kitchen, it's worth going just for that.

Annual Dinner Friday 23rd September 2016 at Cameley Lodge

The Annual Dinner will again be held at Cameley Lodge 7.15 pm. for 8.00pm. (Black tie preferred). Always a lovely evening and all who went last year said it was one of the best ever. The food at Cameley Lodge is memorable for all the right reasons. Try not to miss it.

On being a Fishing Father (or Sometime Ghillie!)

I have been a fisherman for over sixty years and have been fortunate enough to fish in so many wonderful and beautiful places for a wide variety of fish species. The greatest joy of my angling life has been the introduction of my son, Neal, to the joys of fishing (together with other field sports).

I can still picture in my mind his excited face aged six having caught his first fish, a roach on a trotted worm on our local Little Avon in the impounded water before the weir at Huntingford collapsed. He was hooked for life!

We had so much fun fishing for roach, dace, perch, chub, pike, tench, rudd, grayling and barbel including a 10lb fish on the Bristol Avon to his rod. He was so keen, I had to prise him from the river one day on a grayling fishing trip after he had fallen in to the icy water in early March! He reluctantly came home but was soon back in the river after a change of clothes! (This is the first his Mother has heard of this!!). I also remember asking him to kill a pike that was attached to me via an imbedded treble hook in my hand as I really did not want to go to A&E still attached to a 4lb pike!!

When Neal turned eight, I deemed the time right to introduce him to the joys of fly fishing. I did not want to teach him casting myself with all of my faults and fly fishing instructors were few and far between in those days so I took him to Kent on two occasions to be taught by Iain Thompson. It was an excellent investment as even now it is a real pleasure to watch him cast a fly so much better than his Father! Iain also built Neal his first fly rod, basically with a cut down Hardy fibratube blank. It was an excellent rod that Neal eventually wore out due to an enormous amount of fishing!



Neal's first rainbow trout

I remember his first trout, a rainbow of 3lb 2oz from Broadfield Lake in Wiltshire that I used to run in partnership with S & TA Committee Member George Probert. What a first fish! It stripped his line right out to the backing running to the other side of the lake but after a heroic effort Neal brought it to the bank to be netted by the ghillie (guess who?). A picture of Neal and his fish still hangs on a wall in the house. Initially I was always at his side and I remember after a particularly windy day, I wrote in the Game Book at Broadfield Lake that he caught 2 Rainbow Trout and 6 Racing Drivers!

Neal was keen to extend his horizons to tying his own flies, still aged eight, so we both enrolled in the S & TA Fly Tying course at the old Woodford Lodge. It was with one of his flies, a Peter Ross (still a favourite), that he caught his first brown trout on his first cast on the East Lyn in Devon.

In between days fishing at Broadfield and from the boats on Chew and Blagdon we fished for wild brown trout, the highlight being two weeks at Scourie Hotel spent roaming the moors of North West Sutherland and casting a team of traditional wet flies in the remote hill lochs, always

accompanied by my long suffering wife Jenny who hunts and shoots but does not fish! After a particularly hard day, I would always take Neal the following day to fish his favourite Loch Clashfern where he would be guaranteed a bagful to boost his youthful confidence.

When my son was ten, it was time to move up a gear and try for migratory fish and at his first attempt he caught a 2½lb sea trout from a drifting boat on Loch Stack on a Blue Zulu. It was a day of drama when the ghillie broke an oar but a brilliant day nonetheless. Loch Stack is such a magnificent place to spend a day fishing situated as it is between Ben Stack and Arkle but now seriously degraded with the salmon farming industry having destroyed the sea trout although the odd salmon are still caught.



Happy Days on Loch Stack

in his turn, will introduce his children to the joys of fishing. I hope that I too will have a part to play and that we go full circle and start all over again. I look forward to it.

John West

We returned year after year to fish the wild waters of Sutherland as Jenny and I still do and in particular the River Carron. It was not until Neal was nineteen that he caught his first salmon, a six and a half pound fish, on a Muddler in the Kyle of Sutherland. Why is it that it takes so long to catch our first salmon?

Sadly the good fishing times we enjoyed could not last. Neal went up to Oxford for five years and turned to rowing beating Cambridge in 2004. I look back with very fond memories of those wonderful years and really miss his company on the river, lake and loch. With Neal now committed to work and family we usually only manage one day a year fishing although we do shoot occasionally together.

However, all is not lost. Neal is the father of a small boy and a baby girl. I hope that in a few years time he,

Contacts

*Bristol & West Branch
Salmon & Trout
Association*

*Secretary Roy Buckland
8 Millington Drive
Trowbridge
Wilts. BA14 9EU*

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*The Bristol & West Branch of the Salmon & Trout Association
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