

BRISTOL & WEST BRANCH

SALMON & TROUT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 2015

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

Planned for 2015:

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

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

AGM - March 9th 2014



We always open this day with an informal get together meeting for a glass of wine before a talk. This year we had the pleasure of listening to our own John West who in his slightly younger days was British Classic Car Trials champion. He talked to us about the finer points of classic car trialling and had one or two pictures of himself in action. It's surprising what we were all capable of when younger. Malcolm Fisher was a motorcycle scrambler in his youth. The chairman Alfred Pope thanked John for his most interesting talk. I personally thought it one of the more memorable ones. Brian Kick as usual ran the raffle and made money for our branch.

Lunch as usual was provided by Elaine's team and I say this every report I have done over the years - It is always good.

After lunch the AGM proper started with the chairman welcoming everybody to the meeting and thanked all who had taken the trouble to come. It always seems such a pity that more members do not bother to come to this most enjoyable day and support those who work on your behalf. Alfred vacated the chair so that Nick could propose him for re-election as chairman. This was seconded by Brian Kick and carried unanimously. Alfred then thanked all those committee members who all work for your branch and make it one of the most successful in the whole of the Salmon & Trout Association. He then proposed Nick Mitchell for re-election as president. This was seconded and carried unanimously. The rest of the committee were all available for re-election.

Roy Buckland.

The West Country Game Fair 2014 - March 22nd 2014



This is becoming a really popular event for the fisherman. The organisers Contour Exhibitions went out of their way to promote the fishing area putting each company in their own shell stand, the effect created our own small fishing village. The organisers were so pleased with the appearance they are keen to develop this fishing region of the show. If anyone knows of a tackle shop or small fishing company who might be interested in taking part please let us know as well. It is free to exhibitors. Gayle from head office came along to lend a hand which was a great help to myself, Brian and Malcolm. This year we were able to run our own video show with videos from the head office plus one or two other fishing videos. We do not give lessons at this show as it is an indoor event for us but Malcolm Fisher shows people fly tying and sells some of his own flies This does have the effect of drawing people to our stand and gives us the opportunity of promoting the Salmon & Trout Association.

Roy Buckland.

The Royal Bath & West Show 2014 – May 28th 2014



This year's show had decent weather for the most part although it got a little bit cold on the Wednesday afternoon. Once again we were kept very busy teaching on the casting pool that was built for us. This was true of every day we were there. We were helped enormously on the first day by Gale from head office and Victoria Le Sueur from the Wessex branch. Rod Newton put in a full shift being there from setting up to taking down, it's fair to say that Rod kept the casting going almost single handed at times. John Ball of England Flyfishing once again set

up a great display of stock with rods and reels and a whole range of fishing equipment which gave great emphasis to what our activities are about. Malcolm Fisher demonstrated his fly tying skills and helped anyone interested enough to want to have a go. I am grateful to other members who came and gave a hand when they could. Brian Kick, Jonathon Howitt, Alfred Pope and Mike Hobbs looked after the fly casting event of the disabled games held right at the top end of the showground. This is a very worthwhile event that we have supported for many years run by Brian Kick. Next year he will still be there doing his usual thing. It would be great if one or two others could come and give a hand for the odd hour or two (please see the booking form). Brian is looking for someone to take over from him so if you are interested please contact Brian and have a chat to see what is involved.

Roy Buckland

Junior Coaching – Spring 2014



This year's beginner's evenings were again changed on some evenings to accommodate the variable weather. This then reflected on numbers attending but we were able to run a course and get through the full five sessions. Our thanks to Bristol Water who were very accommodating allowing us to use the boats on the non-scheduled days. Our thanks to all who came along to help to Malcolm Fisher who did a great job running the whole thing. One must also mention Jay Curry who, although not a member, came along and ran

a boat on the evenings it was safe to put a boat out. He managed to find a few fish for his pupils - always a bit of a bonus. This year, sadly, we lost Wells Cathedral School who have supported us from the beginning. Duncan Gowen, their master who is a keen angler and organised their fishing, has moved to a new school. We will miss him and wish him well. We were able to present all the juniors with a small fishing gift on their last night. Brian Kick kindly donated fishing books suitable for beginners and Malcolm organised boxes of flies, so everyone went home happy. We will run this course next year as long as we are able to get some funding and with the permission and help of Bristol Water. We would welcome one or two more members to come along and help, unpaid but very rewarding.

Roy Buckland

Members' Day, September 7th 2014, Blagdon Lake



Twenty two members and guests arrived for Member's Day. Sadly an accident at the start of the day meant that two were unable to fish but live to fight another day - no serious harm being done - and Bristol Water are kindly letting them have a free boat for a day next season. 19 rainbows were caught in total with a weight of 47lbs 13oz averaging 2lb. 8oz. The winner was Paul Middle with a best fish of 3lb. 12oz. Most caught only 1 with the odd 2 and several blanks, Not an easy day by any means so Paul wins the Lord Darling Trophy (not for the first time). Presented by our Chairman, Alfred

Pope. Our congratulations go to Paul. No need to comment really on supper afterward, it was of course up to the usual high standard set by Elaine's team.

Roy Buckland

Annual Dinner, November 28th 2014, Cameley Lodge



This year the food, if that were possible, was in the superb category, but it probably always is. Twenty four came to what is our only social event of the year. This year we had round tables of eight so it did away with the need of having a top table. This really did work well and I rather imagine this could well be the arrangement in the future. Our Chairman's idea, so well done Alfred. The speaker this year was Phil Horton of BMW. Phil is a senior director and has worked over a large part of the world in that position. But first the dinner which this

year started with grace from John West - I have never heard grace followed by applause before. Then there followed a choice of medallions of beef, a chicken dish which Debra one of our guests said was delicious, roast lamb which looked great, a fish choice of Bass along with a choice of vegetarian meals - although I don't know of anyone having the latter, all followed by a choice of sweets and coffee. Phil introduced himself and handed out a picture quiz for us to complete as he spoke. This was a great way to get us concentrate on what he had to say, was good fun, and an unusual light hearted talk which we all enjoyed. Brian Kick as usual ran the raffle which produced £135 toward branch funds. Brian with the help of his wife Margaret must have put hundreds of pounds into the branch over the years.

Our Chairman, Alfred Pope, presented a new award to Roy Buckland for his most extensive and much appreciated work on behalf of the Branch. In addition to his work as Secretary, Roy has organised and been the Senior Instructor on our Junior Coaching Course for many years. He has also organised the S & TA stand at both the Royal Bath & West Show and the West Country Game Fair over a similar period. Indeed, he has done much to raise the profile of angling and, in particular, the S & TA at these shows and elsewhere. He is held in high regard at S & TA Headquarters.

Roy Buckland

Events Calendar for 2015

AGM, Sunday March 1st 2015 at Blagdon Lodge

Meet at 12.00 noon for a glass of wine and meet up with old friends followed by a buffet lunch. 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 2015 at Chew Valley Lake

Junior coaching will again be run by kind permission of Bristol Water. This is run over five Friday evenings (May 8th, 15th and 22nd and June 5th and 12th) 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 May 10th 2015 at The Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet

'Have a Go Day' to be held Sunday, May 10th 2015 from 10:00am until 3:00pm.

Royal Bath & West Show Wednesday 27th May - Saturday 30th May 2015 at Shepton Mallet Showground

Wednesday May 27th 2015

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 September 6 2015 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 September 18 2015 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.

Encounters with Otters

If I went out in the countryside looking for otters it is doubtful that I would see one. They are shy creatures and inclined to be nocturnal in their activities. I have encountered the otters I have seen unexpectedly.

I was walking along the River Bray several years ago, when I saw my first otter in the wild. It was above the Saw Mill Weir. I disturbed it in the Mill Pool from under my feet. It swam a few feet then dived, and came up about 100 yards up stream, looked back, dived again, and it was gone. I only had a fleeting glimpse of it.

When my father and mother were running the hotel, they very much left me to my own devices in the summer school holidays. I more or less had a free run to do what I wanted. Sometimes I would go up the river in the late evening sea trout fishing, not to return until the following morning. One night I was fishing Peel Pool, one of three pools connected by waterfalls, where the river runs through a deep gorge known as the "Hangings". After a while sitting there, and casting into the pool, I sensed the presence of something watching me. Looking up to the top of a high sloping rock at the top of the pool, plain to see in the moonlight was a large dog otter, looking down with staring eye and grey muzzle. It did not seem to be concerned at my presence until I moved. It then slid down the rock diving under the water at the head of the pool then surfaced to glide with the aid of the current into the pool below. I stopped fishing and went home. With an otter fishing the pool there would be little chance of me catching any sea trout.

I was sitting in the annex of the hotel talking with my sister one late evening early in the year. We both heard an unfamiliar sound. A sort of crying or mewling coming from the river outside below the bridge. I picked up my Government surplus Aldis lamp and went into the garden. Standing some 30 feet above the pool, I shone the strong beam into the pool. There below was an adult otter playing in the water with her three cubs obviously enjoying themselves until we disturbed them. They quickly disappeared up stream under the bridge.

My bedroom was in the annex, and overlooked the bridge pool. One morning in late summer, I got out of bed and saw on the flat rock below something shining about 2 feet in length. I went out to have a closer look, and found it to be a fresh run salmon covered in sea lice, with a small bite in its throat just behind the head. The fish had obviously come in off the tide the night before, and was killed by an otter. I cut off the head including the part that had been bitten. I presented it to the chef who cooked it for the family, and we had it next day with a salad and mayonnaise.

A few years ago I shared a boat with a friend for the season. We would fish one day a week on the River Taw above Eggesford. On this particular day, after taking our lunch and a beer at the local hotel we came back to continue fishing. Before starting my friend decided to take a nap under a tree sheltered from the hot sun. I decided to take a stroll up stream to see if I could locate some sea trout. On rounding a corner I saw a swirl at the top of the pool before me. A salmon, I thought. I crouched to keep myself from being seen on the skyline. Without warning an otter emerged from the river in front of me with an eel wriggling in its mouth. I could have touched it. It must have been only seconds but felt frozen in time. We just stared at each other. Without seeming too concerned it turned, dived and disappeared.

All the places that I have mentioned are in that part of North Devon known as "Tarka the Otter" country, known after the writer of those parts, Henry Williamson.

Bryan Slann



Contacts

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Salmon & Trout
Association*

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Email address

Request We do have some email addresses from members sent with their booking form returns but what we need is everybody's. Just send it with your booking form or log it on to the website www.bristolsta.co.uk and save the cost of the postage.

The Bristol & West Branch of the Salmon & Trout Association gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance given to them by Bristol Water PLC.

Visit our web site at

www.bristolsta.co.uk