



CIVIL SERVICE ANGLING SOCIETY AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2020



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, frustratingly we still have not reached an agreement on the new lease for Ellis Water. However, many thanks go to our Secretary, Dr David Kennedy, Wendy Eley of the Civil Service Sports Council, and the Littleton Sailing Club for getting talks back on track. I'm pleased to report that our discussions have now regained traction with the Sports Council hoping to conclude the proceedings by Christmas, but this is possibly a tad optimistic as both ourselves and the sailing club still have some issues with the proposed leases.

David was very persuasive in Zoom meetings held during recent months with the Sports Council over the business case for them bidding for the lagoon at Ellis. Originally both the Society and the sailing club were prepared to offer fifty thousand pounds toward the bid, but the Sports Council decided to make the bid with their own money and successfully purchased the lagoon in October. Once the legal niceties have been finalised, we shall be able to fish there again.

Half-way through the season some cracking fish have been caught, which is testament to the quality of our waters. The river fisheries we took over from Farnham Angling Club at Stanford End and Riseley Mill have also

produced some amazing fish, despite their resident crayfish populations. I was concerned as Membership Secretary that due to COVID-19 our membership would decrease markedly. However, quite the opposite happened and just after the lockdown was lifted in May we had to impose a temporary ban on new membership as Ellis and Sheepwalk were absolutely rammed. We have had a significant increase in membership and it now stands at 662 compared to 591 last season.

A fishing club like ours relies heavily upon a large number of people in order for it to operate successfully. My sincere thanks go to the work of the officers of the General Purposes Committee, the fishery officers and bailiffs and all those who have done work to keep our fisheries in prime condition, despite the ravages of COVID. I would also like to extend a welcome to Richard Cowling who has taken on the role of Competitions Secretary - a full calendar of matches is being organised by him. Further details will be announced on the Society's Facebook page and on our website.

Grant Milliam – Chairman

COMPETITIONS

New Events

Christmas Match - River Thames, Windsor

Due to the ongoing restrictions around the coronavirus pandemic, this match that was previously arranged for 6th December 2020 has now been postponed. It will now be held on Sunday 14th March 2021 and there will be a meal to follow.

More information will be posted on the forum in due course.

Woolhampton Canal Match

A match will be held on the Kennet and Avon Canal at Woolhampton on 28th February 2021. Draw at 08:00 – fish 09:00 - 15:00.

To register, please get in touch with Competitions Secretary, Richard Cowling, at r.cowling911@virginmedia.com.

Match Reports

Tony Paul Memorial Night Match

The annual night match at Windsor Racecourse in memory of Tony Paul was held on 11th/12th July. The results were as follows:

26 members fished and nine weighed in:

- 1st Steve Frapwell - 51lb 3oz
- 2nd Graham Marks – 27lb 12oz
- 3rd Colin Dapp – 18lb 1oz
- 4th Richard Cowling – 11lb 2oz

5th Paul Hammond – 8lb 7oz
6th Vidal Valkauskas – 7lb
7th Arturas Gulbinas – 2lb 4oz
8th Derik Cowlin – 1lb 7oz
9th Paul Kitchen – 4oz

Total weight – 127lb 8oz

Prior to the match, Ian Campbell and his wife organised a superb barbecue, cooking burgers and sausages with salad for all the members. Members kindly donated tackle for an auction, from which we raised £137 for the Sam Beare Hospice.

River Thames, Windsor

A small, friendly match was held on the Society's stretch of the River Thames at Windsor on 19th September. The results were as follows:

Six fished and three weighed in:

1st Alan Muller – 4lb 8oz
2nd Alex Wells – 2lb 8 oz
3rd Richard Cowling – 1lb 12oz

The river fished very hard with gin clear water and minimal flow. The Society would like to extend its congratulations to Alex Well (Junior), who fished his first match and finished 2nd.



A big well done to Alex Wells, a junior who fished his first ever match on the challenging River Thames at Windsor and finished a very respectable 2nd place.

The Crabtree Match

The match held at Crabtree Lake on 23rd August was very hard going. No carp or tench showed and mostly perch and roach were caught. The results were as follows:

Twelve members fished and only three weighed in:

1st Tony Proud - 5lb 2oz.

2nd Ian Campbell - 3lb 15oz

3rd Ricardas Peleda - 8oz

After the Match, Fishery Manager Arturas presented trophies to the three finishers.

FISHERY REPORTS

Crabtree Lake

The fishing at Crabtree has been rather patchy this season. The carp, while still present (they were seen spawning) seem to have wised up and are harder to catch - the increase in weed may have something to do with it. Having said that, they are getting bigger and double-figure fish are not uncommon.

The perch have certainly flourished but seem to remain small - early days yet. Similarly, the tench that were stocked in February often show up, albeit as 'bars of soap'. Roach seemed very thin on the ground during the summer, but as we move into autumn reports are coming through of good bags being taken.

East Whitley Lake

Results at this small lake have been reasonably good, with carp, roach and rudd making up the usual catches. Sadly though, 2020 produced a record number of interruptions to our access, all affecting the spring and summer when the lake often fishes best. After the COVID-19 lockdown closure finished on 1st June the owner asked us to impose a limit of four anglers a day, for which we had to introduce a temporary booking system. After 24th June we were able to persuade them that this system was unnecessary, given the ease of social distancing at this rural fishery and the low risk of virus transmission.

However, an unexpected further restriction was imposed at the end of July when pipeline repairs began nearby, and the south bank of the lake was put out of bounds. After some persuasion by us, this restriction was lifted early in September, giving full access to both banks again with no limit on numbers. We are told that intermittent excavation work may still take place in the field beyond the lake but should be completed soon.

East Whitley never seems to get very busy but the three weeks of the temporary booking system showed that a number of members do enjoy this fishery, with several making repeated visits.



The fish may not break any records but East Whitley lake is a beautifully tranquil and relaxing venue at which to spend a day.

Ellis Water

It has been far from a normal year on Ellis Water with the lockdown followed by a mad rush of anglers when it was lifted. However, the fish seemed to enjoy the prolonged break from angling activity and it was possible to see them behaving 'naturally' during this time. Several fish were landed just prior to the restrictions being imposed and there was a flurry of captures following the easing of restrictions but – as usual – the action has been hit and miss.

The nuisance levels of the general public have also been unprecedented with kids holding parties and raves and people boating and swimming in record numbers. We can only hope that this is a one off and a massive thanks go out from the Committee to our volunteers who continue to keep the banks clean.

With regards to the carp, which is what the majority of anglers pursue, the action has been sporadic at best with a few anglers catching well and most members blanking. Every year the club receives an influx of new members who make a couple of visits to Ellis, catch nothing and subsequently disappear. This suits the hardcore Ellis devotees who are prepared to put in a bit more effort and don't mind blanking. A fish from Ellis represents a real achievement and if it were easy a lot of its significance would be diminished.

None of the large known mirrors have been caught this year and whilst it is accepted that several upper 30's reside in the lake, they have all avoided capture over recent months. A few of the big commons have slipped up including a 36lb caught by a tench angler on maggots – a fish that hasn't been banked in ten years. The majority of carp caught this year have been fish from the 2016 stocking and these now average mid-twenties. All of our fish are in superb condition and well worth the time spent in pursuit.



A few examples of some fine carp caught from Ellis Water this season. Clockwise, from top-left: a stunning 36lb common to Warren Hammond; an awesome-looking 28lb common held by Keith and Isla Fender; a 31lb common for Simon Elder; and a beautifully scaled 27lb 4oz mirror for bailiff Ben Phelps.

The weed continues to thrive despite the best efforts of the sailing club to control it with dye. This contributes to the good condition of all species and could be the reason for the apparent increase in fry recruitment over the last few years. We are optimistic that roach are starting to reappear in Ellis, which is good news for specimen hunters and pleasure fishermen. Excellent weed growth presents its own problems with bait presentation and fish getting 'lost' once hooked. For this reason, certain swims have been ruled as bait boat-free zones to hopefully minimise the chances of fish being lost. Please be mindful of fishing at range where the weed is thick and restrict yourselves to fishing closer in where you have a better chance of landing them.

Our bream stock continues to thrive, although these are generally caught by mistake by carpers at an average weight of 13lb and its surprising how few anglers specifically target them. The tench have also had a good year with plenty of good-sized fish being caught and rumours of large perch have got many people taking an interest, while a good few large eels were also banked.

All in all, it has been a great year on Ellis Water with a wide variety of good specimen fish being caught, from bullheads to giant perch! What more could you ask for?

Hambridge

As usual, reports from the Society's stretch of the River Kennet at Hambridge have been rather thin on the ground. Some anglers have reported good days trotting for silvers (and trout), whereas others have reported long biteless days when fishing for barbel.

It's a difficult picture to analyse, but it seems that if you are prepared to move about and trot, you are in with a reasonable chance of a good days sport with dace, trout, chub, grayling and some roach. Interestingly, the local EA Fisheries Officer, Adam Hilliard, believes that the 8 -12 oz grayling that are being caught are the fry that were stocked into the stretch a couple of years ago – grayling, being short lived, are fast growing.

Most barbel anglers seem to be struggling, although there have been some reports of reasonable catches that include fish between three and five pounds, which is encouraging. Furthermore, very small barbel (smaller than those that have been stocked) are also turning up, which means that natural recruitment is occurring.

Perhaps Ian Hagget's story sums up the unpredictability of Hambridge? Ian took his son to fish the middle meadow on a guest ticket, and before Ian had even tackled up his son had landed a five-pound barbel. After a long

biteless interval, Ian's son (going against Ian's advice) baited with a meatball and promptly landed a 5lb 8oz chub!



Ian Goldswain with a double-figure barbel caught from the River Kennet at Hambridge.

After literally years of negotiations with various bodies, we have finally obtained parking nearer to Fidler's. This is courtesy of Kev Rolls, the manager of Newbury Trout Lake, which is now a carp fishery. This is accessed by entering the Trout Lake through the double gates on the bend a couple of hundred yards beyond our original car park below the railway bridge. **The gates to Newbury Trout Lake are locked with a combination padlock – the code is 03232.**

Drive along the track to the end of the lake, go through the (open) gate and park in the car park. PLEASE DISPLAY YOUR PARKING PERMIT. Retrace your steps to the grassy area at the end of the lake (No Parking) and follow a footpath. A sign has been erected to assist. Follow this path, over a plank bridge, for about five minutes, and, where the path splits, take the right fork. From here you can see a fence with a gate, to deter dog walkers. The gate has a Society padlock with the usual combination. This brings you out a couple of hundred yards below the weir, on the first left hand bend. It is hoped that these new parking arrangements will give better access to Fidler's will lead to more members fishing there.

On the fishery management front, several fallen path-blocking trees and a couple of trees fallen right across the river have been removed.

Using equipment bought for us by the EA, the spawning gravels below Ham Bridge have been cleaned of silt. As we are only allowed to do this in September and October, next year we intend to start earlier and do more extensive work. Having learned that roach will spawn on netting in preference to weed, roots etc., we propose to install netting as a permanent feature.

Thanks to all the stalwarts who have turned out on ad hoc working parties when asked this season.



(l-r) Mark Flux and Ian Hagget cleaning the spawning gravels at Ham Bridge. Picture was taken by Stuart Brown.

Riseley Mill

Well respected all-rounder Duncan Charman has agreed to become Fishery Manager for this new society venue on the River Whitewater. Duncan will be investigating this fishery over the winter months with a view to both assessing its potential and perhaps improving access.

Sheepwalk Little Pit

An enigmatic lake of some four acres and one that is rapidly developing its own band of devoted enthusiasts. It contains large tench, eels and carp to over 30lb. The recent stocking by the club of a few hundred small roach seems to have been successful and these appear to be thriving and growing well.



Sheepwalk Little Pit contains a diverse stock of carp, including this lovely 26lb common caught by Tom Hussey and a heavily plated mirror for Brian George.

The carp that were stocked in 2017 have grown on well with several captures of specimens to over 25lb being reported. However, as with all our lakes this is not an easy venue and it is only with perseverance that success will come your way.

Some ornamental carp also reside in Little Sheepwalk and as these have never been officially stocked, it is likely they have been illegally introduced. The sturgeon that was reportedly caught from this lake in 2019 has not been recaptured (to our knowledge), but any information on this would be gratefully received. Anecdotes of large pike have also been circulating but these have not been substantiated with photographs.

Just what lives in the snaggy depths of Little Sheepwalk is a subject of much conjecture, which certainly makes it an exciting challenge for the modern specimen hunter.

Sheepwalk Big Lake – ‘The Clear Pit’

At around 30 acres in size this historic lake has long been a mecca for carp anglers and it’s easy to see why. Fringed with ancient oak trees, crystal clear and very deep, it has all the ingredients of a big fish water.

A few large commons are still present from the original stock and some of the fish stocked by the Society have grown to good sizes, but the massive head of natural food as well as the extensive snags make this a tough

venue. Generally, anglers tend to target the bars and humps on the lake bed but the deeper areas can also produce fish when the weather is right. Sheepwalk has a track record of producing huge tench and big fish are regularly seen but very rarely caught. Recently more anglers have fished here specifically for the tench but unfortunately, we have no information as to catch reports. Big Sheepwalk also contains bream, perch, pike and eels to specimen sizes.



Sheepwalk offers superb rewards for those anglers willing to persevere. This buttery, fat mirror of 33lb 8oz was landed by John Merrit, while Michael Barnshaw caught this big pike.

Standford End, River Loddon

A new fishery for the Society for the 2020/2021 season, Stanford End represents a prime stretch of River Loddon – a tributary of the Thames.

Our members saw a slow start to the season on the Loddon, mainly due to low summer flows and an algal bloom that coloured the river. However, good catches of silver fish were reported, mainly consisting of dace, perch roach and chublets, in addition to a number of barbel caught for the late-staying anglers. Some big perch to 4lb have also been caught either on lob worms or trotted minnow, and some larger chub and occasional trout have appeared after dark on a pellet or boilie approach. Lure fishing can also score well for the predators.

Extensive weed growth can be an issue on this fishery, particularly on the lower stretch, but this will soon die back once we get some proper rain and consistent cooler weather. The most outstanding catch so far has to be Fishery Manager Alan Muller's 2lb 7oz roach caught on pellets - well done, Alan!



A fine barbel and a 4lb 1oz perch from the River Loddon at Stanford End for Fishery Manager, Alan Muller.

At the beginning of the season the Society invited Adrian Bicknell, Environment Agency Fisheries Officer, to have a walk around with committee members and offer some of his many years' experience. An important point explained by Adrian was that trapping crayfish is counterproductive for many reasons, and therefore it was decided to trial a cessation of crayfish trapping on the fishery. Another important issue highlighted was that fish need as much cover as possible and that by removing weed beds, rushes or overhangs the fish will just move off out of the area and possibly out of the stretch, which is one of many reasons we haven't done so.

We see many day-time anglers at Standford End but very few fishing into dark, which is possibly just one of the reasons the larger barbel haven't yet showed – but time will tell. Most anglers seem to be fishing mainly in the top stretch, which may be because of the cattle located in the lower fields, but they are quite friendly once you get to know them!

We wish all our members tight lines on this new fishery, and would urge as many as possible to try it out. Most importantly, please keep the catch reports coming! These can be submitted using the Catch Reporting tool on the Stanford End page of the CSAS website.

Kintbury

Consisting of approximately half a mile of the Kennet & Avon canal either side of Kintbury Lock, the top end of the fishery is fairly wide and a carrier from the River Kennet provides some flow in this section. This is a typical canal fishery with small fish dominating although there are some good roach and very large perch. As the canal is fed by a carrier at the top end of the venue there is always the chance of a surprise river fish turning up in your catch.

Midgham

The Society's stretch of the Kennet & Avon Canal at Midgham is full of small roach and big bream are present but these are challenging to locate and catch. Big perch and carp plus some chub supplement the other species.

Windsor Racecourse

After an unusual start to the season at Windsor with June 16th coinciding with a racing day, new gates and padlock code mix-ups, things have now settled down. A good number of barbel have been caught with a healthy number of smaller fish, which is hopefully a good sign of things to come over the years ahead.

For those in pursuit of silver fish there is a good days sport to be had with roach, dace and perch aplenty, along with big gudgeon. Plenty of large bream have also been caught out as usual, with a good number pushing low doubles.

There will be some change of gates we use due to other circumstances so please keep an eye on the forum and facebook. The Society does not always receive much notice of these changes, so once we know - so will our members.



A pristine 12lb 9oz barbel caught by Steve Frapwell as part of his match-winning haul on the River Thames at Windsor.

GENERAL NEWS

Temporary Membership Tickets (TMTs)

A TMT when issued for Ellis/ Sheepwalk will be put down as Ellis Fisheries, therefore covering the whole site. This means that separate tickets are not needed and if anyone wants a 24hr ticket for the fishery they cannot ask for consecutive tickets on the separate lakes. Therefore, no guest will be permitted to remain on the complex for longer than the 24hrs allowed.

Members Forum and Facebook Page

If you haven't done so already, please 'like' the CSAS Facebook page to keep up to date with all our latest news and events.

Please also get involved in conversations on our members' forum! Just go to the CSAS website and click on the 'Members Only' tab. Your username is **member123** and your password is **jumbo747**.

Comments and Questions about this Newsletter

Please address these to Newsletter Editor James Champkin via email to jdchampkin@gmail.com, or in the post to 43 Manor Close, Stoke Hammond, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 9DJ.

