What a year for sport (international football being the exception). I hope your fishing was as exciting and successful as some of the events from that wonderful summer. The weather wasn’t great but despite that I enjoyed my angling trips despite being limited by all those sporting events. My catches included some decent individual fish and nice bags of mixed species so I was pleased with that. Catches reported to the committee however paled those into insignificance proving that our waters are improving and in pretty good condition. Hopefully you all enjoyed your trips, escaping from all the pressures of our daily lives.

Last year I was criticised by some for being too negative in my report but I genuinely believed that something had to change or there would have been serious consequences. Gladly things have improved with fewer incidents of members breaking rules and we should all thank our bailiffs for all their hard work in policing our waters and instigating this improvement. Please be polite and friendly when approached by our bailiffs they are only doing their best for the club and are an integral part in its success. Rubbish still remains a problem but because of the efforts of some individuals, picking it up and disposing of it, hasn’t been quite as bad in previous seasons. Sincere thanks to you guys this has certainly made a big difference.

PLEASE TAKE YOUR RUBBISH HOME; IT’S THAT EASY.

Every year, around November time, the committee meets to sort out the budget for the coming season. This involves taking into account what happened the previous year and making predictions for the season ahead. Our financial position again remains sound, however there is a continuing trend of an increasing % of the membership of concessionaries. This in part was caused by the lowering of the age of qualification. Because this has caused a significant loss in income the committee unanimously agreed to increase concessionary subscriptions by a modest £5. All other subscriptions are to remain as last season so as to remain competitive with other local clubs. May I again take this opportunity to wish you all excellent fishing and good health for the coming year.

Mal Gardiner
Chairman
Heron Hall, Tolleshunt Major
After a full year’s angling on this water we have built a reasonable picture of its stock.
It holds a large head of rudd, mostly small, but with some reported around the half pound mark. There are some roach, but they seem hard to find. Carp have shown to mid doubles with many fish around the 8-10 lbs mark. Tench have shown regularly, but I have not heard of anything larger than about 2lbs.
We would regard this level of stocking as light, so 1200 skimmers and 1000 ide were introduced last march. Both species have since shown in catches.
We know that the fishery entrance has caused some concern and we will be talking to the owner about building an entrance which will allow cars to be parked off the road whilst the gate is unlocked.

Whitehouse Farm, Goldhanger
This water has again been very popular, producing carp to 20lbs+ and some good hybrids. Catches of quality roach have also been reported.
In order to increase the variety of species available, 1000 small ide were introduced in March.

Slough House Farm
As last year, there have been some excellent catches of good-sized roach and rudd reported, with a sprinkling of quality tench. Also as last year, the weed growth has been much less than in previous seasons.
The marginal reeds steadily encroached on many swims on the lake’s north side, but we were able to get the heavy machinery in in December and most swims are now re-opened.
We restocked 164lbs of carp to double figures in May. These fish came from one of our regular suppliers from whom we have consistently obtained high quality fish.

Howell’s
The litter problem which prompted last year’s brief closure has lessened this year (though has not been eradicated entirely) following the limiting of night fishing. A similar arrangement will be applied during 2013.

London’s Reservoir
This water has developed into a popular match venue with good bags of silver fish reported.
There have been occasional problems in late 2012 with the lake flooding, the source of which seems to be blockage of the drainage ditch into which the lake’s overflow discharges. We will be talking to the landowner in a bid to solve the problem.

Bog Grove
Probably our most popular general fishery, producing as usual catches of carp to double figures, with large numbers of silvers, including quality roach and the occasional chub. 1000 small ide were stocked in March. Sadly, its popularity means it seems to attract those anglers who leave litter. We are fortunate that our bailiffs and many conscientious members pick up the mess that others leave.

I know that it’s a familiar refrain, but if you see littering by another angler and you identify them to us, we WILL ban them for life.

Beckingham Hall
The high stocking levels here have produced good catches of carp all year, with some surprisingly good catches of silvers to those using sufficiently delicate gear.

Little Parks
The 2010 stocking programme continues to bear fruit with catches remaining good on both lakes.

Canal
The canal suffered a fish kill last year in the middle reaches. Subsequent research by the Environment Agency indicates natural causes associated with low levels of oxygen and they predict that the effect on fish population will be minimal.
Our Match Secretary, Tim Claydon, is keen to extend the use of the canal as a match venue and his proposals are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

Totham Pit
We have received many reports of good catches of silver fish (including quality perch) and pike anglers tell me that their sport has improved over previous seasons.
The carp remain the primary draw, however, with the pit being well fished over most weekends.

Rook Hall
Despite a repeat application of the weed inhibitor which seemed to have an effect in 2011, weed growth in the main lake was more prolific than many members would prefer.
The fishing remained good, however, with the roach, rudd tench and ide showing in numbers. We stocked a further 1000 small ide in March in order to extend the year classes for future seasons.

New Hall Reservoir
Under-fished, but locally popular and continues to produce good bags of silvers. I have also heard of good perch showing.

Brick Kiln Pond
Other than a report that the police caught someone attempting to steal the water lilies, I’ve gathered very little information regarding this small water. I assume, therefore, that its band of devotees continues to enjoy a bite a chuck!

River Blackwater (Wickham Bishops)
I am pleased to report recent good catches of chub on our stretch and I have not heard of otter predation since 2011. The fish caught have been unmarked and there seem to be more small fish (chub and dace) around than previously.

David Spalding
Secretary
My 2011/12 season drew to a close with me trying a new venue, the pretty Heron Hall lake. I always enjoy fishing new waters for the first time especially if word has already filtered through of a few carp being landed. The thrill of that first take (with any luck) from a new water, and knowing that you have never hooked the fish you are attached to before, adds to my anticipation as I push my banksticks into the swim for the first time. On this occasion I was still in the car park when a departing member who had stopped off for a look round told me that nothing at all was showing and nothing had been caught, at least the bar was set low for my debut visit! I was therefore surprised when I approached the reedy bay at the far end of the lake and spotted a dozen carp milling about just beneath the surface by the reeds. I like to wait until the weather warms up a bit before trying out new venues and with clear blue sky, warm sunshine and a light south easterly breeze blowing it appeared that spring had finally sprung in late March and these carp looked catchable. Indeed I didn’t have to wait long before a plump 14lb 7oz Mirror graced my net and my Heron Hall account was opened. The disturbance emptied my corner of the lake of carp, and the rest of the afternoon passed uneventfully, but I left more than content with my first visit. I was back two days later for an evening session and a hot day for March soon turned cool as the sun set, and what a place to watch the sunset! With Heron Hall being on top of a hill you have a perfect view as the sun sinks below the distant tree line and turns the clouds to crimsons and scarlets. I almost didn’t mind blanking as the ruby sky formed the perfect backdrop to several bats who entertained me with their nocturnal aerobatics. Then out of nowhere my left hand rod was away and a 6lb 10oz Common sent me home with a wet net.

One of our lakes where I feel I tend to come up short is the front lake at Rook Hall. This is probably because I am easily put off by weed so I decided to get in early and fish Rook Hall before the weed had taken hold. My visits to Rook Hall No.1 (as I like to call it) in previous seasons had produced Tench to 6lb 2oz, Bream to 5lb 14oz, a 2lb 12oz Crucian, several Rudd and an Eel. Shame they were all caught on 15lb line and a 2lb test curve rod but at least I had the upper hand! My only carp from the lake was a 6lb 13oz Common caught back in May 2002. Ten years on and I hooked my second Rook Hall front lake carp, another Common (possibly the same fish knowing my track record) and it came off. I’m mentioning that up front so you can read the following protracted account while already knowing the outcome and avoiding any unnecessary excitement.

I was fishing just over the edge of some marginal reeds where I had seen some carp cruising up and down in one of those swims where you have to resist the urge to keep peering over the reeds into the clear water to see if there are any fish feeding on your bait, for fear of spooking them. Just when I was convinced there were no fish in my swim one of my alarms bursts into life and I find myself nervously attached to an angry carp which charged up and down in front of me looking for sanctuary. I managed to keep it out of the trees, and the reeds, and it then got tangled around a fallen submerged branch. I kept both carp and branch on the move in open water but they finally ground to a halt just out of netting range at the back of the reeds. I could see the carp, which looked bigger each time it surfaced, in the middle of the branch just out of reach. Unfortunately in these situations I always think to myself ‘these margins look really shallow to me’ and I fail to take into account how silty the bottom is and how little support the reeds will give my size 9 feet. Edging out gradually with net in hand my boots filled up with water and before I knew it I’m up to my knees in cold water and the water is wicking up my trousers towards my unmentionables.

As you already know how this tale ends I can reveal that I landed the branch and got my rig back but the precise moment that the Common slipped the hook went unrecorded as I was too busy trying to keep the icy waterline beneath my undercarriage. While the air can warm up quickly in the spring the water takes much longer to trust me! As shocking as this loss was it wasn’t half as big as the shock that Pat would have had if she had wandered past ten minutes earlier on her way to see Alan at the exact moment I was reduced to my underpants while I was wringing out my trousers!

Spurred on by that episode I return just over a week later on Easter Monday, which was a nasty wet day, for another go. There were two swans up-ending in the swim where I had lost the Common so I settled in on the end of a spit a couple of pegs away. Leading around revealed that some stringy bottom weed was in evidence over the silt so I decided to break out my pop-up tutti frutti corn on one rod, and it worked. I had no right to land the carp that I hooked as it rounded the end of a reedbed after swimming down the channel to my left but somehow it stayed clear of every snag and went into the net first time. I was blown away by the carp when I lifted it onto the mat as it was an immaculate black Mirror which pulled the needle on my avon scales round to 16lb 6oz making it my largest from all three of the Rook Hall lakes. Once again the balance had been redressed (literally in my case).

It took me ten trips to catch a carp from Totham Pit last season, as I’m sure you will recall from last January’s newsletter, and I caught that fish when I
eventually tried fishing a single hookbait.
To try and speed up the process this year I fished single hookbaits from the off and landed a 15lb 10oz Common on my second visit. That was at the end of April and in mid May I found a lucky 5p piece in the Totham Pit car park as I unloaded my car (sorry for not declaring it as lost property on the website). I headed for the shallows, although Colliers bay looked tempting as it always does, and tried to discreetly set up on the right hand side of the point. The swans spotted me eventually and annoyingly hung around in my swim but fortunately they failed to locate my small baited areas. I had a good take at 8.15pm and the carp ran along the tree line before kiting behind the overhanging tree to the right of the swim. My 5p luck held and I played the carp underneath the branches and into the net where I found myself staring down at my largest Totham Pit carp from last season, the heavily scaled Mirror, up 2oz in weight at 19lb 2oz. I told you I had mastered repeat captures, on the same bait too. My only other two Totham Pit carp were a brace of Commons weighing 11lb 1oz and 12lb 1oz on the Jubilee Bank Holiday. I was so pleased with my first Totham Pit brace in ages that I returned the following day and fished the same spot, landing a 6lb 4oz Pike on maize!
Elsewhere I equalled my Little Park Top Lake Bream record with a 7lb 9oz slab from the main lake where I also, over a number of visits, landed ten carp up to 13lb 4oz. My largest fish of the season was from the ever consistent Howells. Some lovely weather in late July tempted me to fish a handful of after work evenings at my £90 outlay on a Howells night permit was rewarded with a 16lb 13oz Common followed three evenings later by a 23lb 9oz Common from the margins. I next moved on to Slough House Farm where I caught fairly consistently but only one of my ten carp was a double, an 11lb Common. Just after I switched my attentions elsewhere a 22 and a 26 were landed so I probably should have persevered a bit longer, but that’s fishing!
An unexpected August Bank Holiday trip to Bog Grove saw me land five Commons, two Mirrors and my new venue best 3lb 4oz Crucian. Dean saw the photo in the gallery and pointed out my record at catching good sized Crucian from several of our lakes. Looking back at my 3lb 14oz and 3lb 10oz Crucians from Totham Pit, my 3lb 8oz from Little Park and my two 3’s from Bog Grove he probably has a point. Finally I increased my Little Park Top Lake Common record to 11lb 3oz and then 12lb (yes a repeat capture) and my Whitehouse Farm venue best Common to 17lb 7oz just before the lake closed for the winter. I thought I was having a poor season but now I’ve taken a step back and written about it I’m realising that I’ve really enjoyed it and hopefully I’ve still got time to catch a Bog Grove double to kick start next year’s round up.

**Match Report**

First of all I would like to thank my predecessor Kelvin Willis who served the club well, Kelvin is now the landlord of the Queen Victoria and has had to step back from fishing as he tries to build his business. I understand things are going well and we hope he will be able to put in the odd appearance next year.

On taking over I hoped to be able to make a few adjustments so as to make match fishing more fun.

I have introduced a Newsletter that gets distributed via e-mail. I currently have 30 recipients and that number is slowly growing, my aim is to have a minimum of 20 regular anglers by the end of next year.

I have also re-introduced club Trophies, we have moved away from the plastic trophies of the 80s; the current trophies really are worth winning. The committee have agreed to let me refurbish some of the old silver trophies and that together with sponsorship from some local companies I have been able to add to the collection. I would like to thank Worms Direct, Buntins of Maldon and AGH Engraving for their generosity. There are also more sponsors in the pipeline.

The matches are generally on a Sunday and fished for five hours 10am till 3 pm the matches are all fished in the right spirit and whilst very competitive not win at all cost, the camaraderie being as important as the result. Through membership consensus we will start next year with a set of match rules, which will ensure fair play and make sure there are no misunderstandings. I am also trying to encourage better communication between the four clubs that share the canal and hope to introduce some exciting new matches for anglers of all four clubs these matches will be inclusive and not exclusive and will be aimed at the club match regulars.

Another initiative is to revive the once popular evening matches and I can confirm that there will be a series of six matches during the summer to be fished on six different sections of the canal 6pm till 9.30, these matches will be open to any member of Maldon, Kelvedon Chelmsford.

This season’s Matchman of the Year Championship is building to a climax and with five matches to go no fewer than 15 anglers can still take the title. This highlights just how competitive the competition is within the club as does the fact that of the 15 matches fished so far this season ten different anglers have been winners.

These are exciting times for match fishing and we know that there are other members of the club that would like to get involved, we are a friendly bunch and we make any newcomer very welcome so don’t hesitate come and join us next year and be a part of the new exciting Maldon club match scene.

Tim Claydon  
Match Secretary
Concessionary Report

This is my first year as concessionary match secretary and a most enjoyable position for me to be involved in. The members range from the ages of 60 years to a very close 90 years of age.

The fixture list that I had taken over was already prepared by John Woodham who had done a fine job and said that I could change any that did not suit. But the weather this year had made me change some of the venues.

We have had some very good results and some exceptionally bad ones. My most recent was the match on the Tesco’s stretch of the canal on the 4th of December. There was an attendance of 16 members. Sadly 13 blanked and the weight’s for the three that caught were 1oz 8dms, 1oz, 8dms a total of 3ozs. But at the end of the match the members as they left for home said thank’s keith for organising and see you next week.

That really made my day. Not one moan. We have had total blank’s but they still laughed that was at S—t house I mean White House, but the next match with a low attendance was won with 40lbs. Bert Savage was the winner. But everybody caught, it just goes to show, patience does pay.

I think next year the start of the new fixture list will hopefully produce some enjoyable results, providing the weather behaves. There are 46 matches on the new fixture list. An increase of 2 matches from this year. The concessionaries love the challenge and the interest and exercise that they get from these Tuesday matches. I am amazed at the interest and skills that most of the members put into their pastime. They tackle up with their 6lb lines and some with 10lb. Hooks that would make weed rakes. But they catch and that is what it is all about.

They are about the best bunch of men that I have fished with and the most congenial. They are made up from plumbers carpenters dustman, no I should say bin men, fireman bus drivers, dad’s army a chef and more, with their knowledge they could form a political party. I think that some senior members cannot wait to become concessionaries.

We have some fine waters be them lakes rivers or canals that offer something for everyone. A challenge most of the the concessionaries like.

Next season possibly once a month any member that is interested, we can after the match go to the Duke of Wellington for an early evening meal which at present is 2 meals for £9.99 and get themselves a drink, enjoy the meal and have a chat. You can’t wear wellies though. This is something to think about. Also it has been suggested that we run a golden peg.

I am going to get full details from people that run them so that it is done fairly. Also I have been asked that we increase the sweepstake to £2.50 and if we go ahead with the golden peg that will be a total of £3 on the day. Also it would benefit everybody that a phone call or stated on match day if you will be fishing the next week it makes the pegging easier and not waste pegs, sometimes good pegs. My numbers are in the membership book.

The points matches went well this year, Allen Beard, Dave Earney, Keith Leverett (that’s me) won the three salvers for their efforts.

I think I have said enough, thank you for making it a good job. Next year will be better.

Tight lines for next year’s 2013-2014 fixture list

Keith Leverett
Concessionary Match Secretary

Fishery Management

The last year in fishery management seems to have been dominated by locks and trees.

We have fixed, or replaced many of the locks during the year, including at Totham Pit, where some kind individual super-glued them shut. We have also been kept busy removing fallen trees and making safe those which posed a danger to members at both Totham Pit and Bog Grove. Also at Bog Grove the woodland path brambles have been taken back (exposing, of course, lots more vintage litter hidden there by our less thoughtful members). We know that the banks at this water can be slippery and are currently looking at options for introducing a safer surfaced.

Many of the signs around our waters have reached the end of their life and these have been replaced, together with new ones for Heron Hall.

As usual, many of the steps at Totham Pit have deteriorated with use and some of these have been replaced. This remains an ongoing task.

Rook Hall main lake was again treated with a weed growth inhibitor, though it does not seem to have been as effective as in the previous year.

New swims have been cut at Beckingham Hall and on the canal with extensive swim tidying operations being undertaken at New Hall and London’s Reservoir. The latter still gives flooding problems and we are looking at our options here.

The swims on the north bank of Slough House have, as usual, suffered from the encroachment of the reeds. They can be cleared manually, but it is a back-breaking task. We were pleased, therefore, to be able to get a digger on the water and most of the swims are now re-opened.
Annoyingly, we had to rescue several tethered fish at Totham Pit and Howell’s, most hooked on “death rigs”. This was despite efforts by bailiffs and others to educate members in the use and construction of safe rigs. As a result we have had (reluctantly) to introduce a ban on leaders on all waters. This covers lead core (which is already banned) and any other bought or made leader interposed between main line and lead. Rig tubing remains OK.

Finally, I would like to thank the select band of members who turn out to help at working parties – without your efforts we would not be able to keep on top of the work needed to maintain our waters in the condition we have all come to expect.

Paul Kemp
Fishery Manager

**Safe Rigs**

We ran this piece a couple of years ago so apologies to regular readers and more experienced anglers but as we have seen a number of tethered fish this year it seems a good idea to run it again. Also note that whilst carp rigs are the main target here it applies to all forms of fishing, minimising the chances of fish towing leads should after all be something we all want to do.

A safe rig is one that drops the lead weight if the main line breaks. To decide if your rig is safe think what will happen to the lead if your main line snaps at the rod tip on the cast. If the lead is semi-fixed (temporarily attached to the hooklink swivel with tubing) ensure that the lead can detach from the swivel if it becomes snagged and slide up the mainline.

Another way to ensure that the lead drops off is to use a lead clip and a tail rubber. This can be especially effective when fishing in weed as the tail rubber can be set loosely (or the clip trimmed down) so that the lead falls off on the take and the fish rises in the water on a tight line. This also ensures direct contact when playing the fish as there is nothing hanging from the line to pick up weed. If using a helicopter (or chod) style rig the lead is attached directly to the end of the line. With these rigs it is the swivel on the hooklink that must be able to travel freely up the line in the event of a breakage.

*Under no circumstance should the lead be trapped between two swivels, be stopped with a split shot or leader stop behind the lead or be permanently attached to the hooklink swivel.*

All of these rigs are known as death rigs as any fish that is in the unfortunate position of towing a fixed lead for a period of time will in most lakes run a high risk of getting snagged up in tree roots, branches, reeds or some other unseen snag.

If there is any give whatsoever in the snap the chances of the fish being able to break the line are very slim. While this article relates to lead weights this can equally be applied to any other bulky item such as swimfeeders and controller floats, although at least with a float the fish has half a chance of being spotted and retrieved.

While using a barbless hook does increase the chances of a fish being able to escape a fixed lead this is by no means guaranteed, especially while there is tension on the line. Using a hooklink that is of a weaker breaking strain than the mainline can help if a fish becomes snagged while it is being played as in most instances the hooklink will then break first and the lead will be retrieved. Remember: permanently fixed leads are silent killers.

**Head Bailiff Report**

Another twelve months have passed and I am glad to say that there have not been as many problems as in the previous year.

The main problems are members leaving their membership cards at home and litter, the latter must change and members must take all their rubbish home or we will lose waters.

Membership Cards should be carried at all times when on the society’s waters as Bailiffs do not know all members and will ask you to leave the water if you have not got your membership card with you.

There have been fewer problems with poaching/fish stealing on the canal during the last twelve months; in recent years there have been issues, typically with Eastern Europeans illegally taking fish, although we still ask members to be vigilant and immediately report any suspicious activity.

Some new swims have been made along the canal and match fishing has been popular with more anglers attending. Please remember not to cut any swims out yourself, permission must be given prior to any work taking place.

Have a very happy new year and continue to have tight lines - and then take your litter home.

Tight Lines,
Kim Naish
Head Bailiff

[www.maldonas.co.uk](http://www.maldonas.co.uk)

Don’t forget to keep up to date with MAS news by visiting www.maldonas.co.uk.

Rather than sending newsletters by post it is much more cost effective for the club to post news on our website, keeping members up to date with anything from new waters to rule changes or water closures.