Maldon Angling Society

Chairman’s Message

Seasons greetings to all and may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a great new year. My recollections of the past year have left me with mixed feelings. On the positive side the club continues to flourish with an increased membership, healthy bank balance and an impressive list of lakes, ponds and river banks to indulge our passion for angling. These have continued to provide good sport over the year but I’ll leave the details to the secretary’s report. We have continued to re-stock waters that we feel will benefit from an influx of new fish and hopefully stir the resident fish into feeding more frequently. This programme will continue in the new year when fish and funds become available. Work parties on a regular basis have tried to maintain our waters. Limited time and attendances has hindered our progress but significant improvements have been achieved. I must take this opportunity to personally thank our fisheries manager Paul Kemp for his extensive efforts in this matter, often on his own, and hope that he gets more support this coming year. Thanks to those who did attend - your efforts were certainly appreciated. Several members of the committee were sent on a chain saw course to meet regulations and insurance criteria and I can report that all completed this successfully, well done the lads involved. As a result of this we have invested in some new chain saws, attachments and protective equipment to hopefully keep our intrepid workers safe and improve efficiency. The committee as a whole would also like to thank all the bailiffs for their extensive efforts this year. Without their help the club would find it very difficult to manage and control our fisheries and we realise it can be a difficult and unsavoury task at times. These guys come up with suggestions from time to time and one recently has been about providing portable toilets at some of our waters. We have looked into this in the past but have found it to be a rather expensive operation. However, this coming year we are going to trial one, out of the clubs existing funds, to see if it is a successful solution to some of the obvious problems. On the downside, this year there have been certain issues within the committee itself. We are democratically elected and as such try to do the best for the club as a whole. Inevitably there will always be differences of opinion about various topics but the interests of the club should always come first.

It would not be appropriate to detail individual cases, but 3 committee members have left over the past year with one being recently re-instated. It has been a rather troublesome year at the monthly meetings but hopefully most of the issues have been sorted and we can look forward to a more smooth operation in the future. Sadly, we were sorry to note the passing of Tom Martin, one of our Vice Presidents and owner of Totham Pit and Bog Grove. Tom was always supportive of our efforts and we will miss seeing him around the waters. On a personal note, my fishing exploits haven’t been a spectacular success but I have enjoyed my trips out, meeting old and new friends on the bank and long may that continue.

Tight Lines,
Mal Gardiner
Chairman

Notice of AGM

The 2014 AGM is to be held at Great Totham Village Hall on Sunday 26th January, starting at 10.00 am. As has been the norm over the last few years, the information will be presented in the form of a slide show. It’s your chance to see how the club has been run over the last year and vote in the committee members for the coming year. Most of the committee will be there, so it’s a good opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. You will be able to renew your membership on the day, so please bring your cards and membership fees along. Two proposed constitutional rule changes have been received and will be discussed at the AGM.

Membership

For those of you who visit our website, no change in fees for next season will not come as a surprise. These will be confirmed at the AGM and the membership secretary will be on hand at Great Totham Village Hall to renew memberships and night permits. The existing 50 Howells night permits run until the 31st March 2014, and the renewal rate is expected to be high, meaning that members wanting to upgrade cannot do so at the AGM. The membership secretary will contact each member on the waiting list as places become available. Experience shows that around a third of the current standard night permit holders drop out at the end of each season so the 100 standard night permits for next season will be available on a first come first served basis. New members can join now and fish the end of this season free of charge.
Secretary’s Report

As with previous years, I have tried to bring together the feedback I’ve received from members about our waters. Where I’ve not covered a venue it means nobody has told me anything! Also included are details of the stocking carried out during 2013.

Heron Hall Lake, Tolleshunt Major

This water is becoming increasingly popular as a mixed fishery. The ide stocked in 2012 have thrived, with many fish now around the 6oz mark and one or two approaching 8oz, although the skimmers introduced at the same time have been less successful, showing only occasionally in catches. There are also a number of small carp, which we originally assumed were stocked by the owner from his garden pond. This turns out not to be the case, however, and these fish are the product of breeding of the existing stock. Larger carp are also present, with fish in the high doubles reported. The tench also seem to have successfully bred – their progeny have figured in catches all year.

Whitehouse Farm, Goldhanger

The roach, carp and hybrids have again been present in numbers in this very popular venue. We also managed to resurface the track and car park area, as they become very slippery in wet weather.

Slough House Farm

Reports have consistently indicated that the roach have declined, both in numbers and quality. The reasons are unclear, but cormorants feature high on the list of culprits. As a result, we have stocked heavily during the year, with introductions of 217lbs of carp and 705lbs of mixed silvers and tench, including good sized roach. We have also removed the restriction on winter night fishing, though the 1 night limit remains. Hopefully, the more frequent presence of anglers may deter the cormorants. We also hope to introduce barley straw into the water to try to control the annual algal bloom.

Howell’s

The carp have shown pretty consistently during the year, and the restricted night permit numbers seem to have continued to reduce the problem of litter.

London’s Reservoir

You may recall from last year’s newsletter that this water suffered from flooding in 2012. Thanks to the sterling efforts of the fishery management team the overflow pipe was cleared (all 70 feet of it) and the water level has remained steady since then. Match records indicated that catches had declined during the year, so we stocked 630lbs of mixed silvers (including good sized roach) and 2 carp in December.

Bog Grove

Still probably our most popular general fishery, producing throughout the year and can usually give a bite or two where other waters have shut down.

We managed to tackle the problem of the slippery car park bank and also to deal with the fallen and leaning trees which seemed to represent a hazard to members.

Beckingham Hall

The landowner pumped a great deal of water out of this venue during the extended dry period during the summer, bringing the level down to its lowest for some years. I know this caused concern amongst members, but I plumbed it when it was 6 feet down and still found a depth of 11 feet in the middle and 6 feet at the end where the pump floats. The quality of the fishing remained unaffected as far as we could tell.

Little Parks

The upper lake has grown in popularity, with the unsurprising result that the carp have become rather more difficult to catch. Never a consistent venue, the lower lake has continued to be a popular water which produces well on a good day.

Totham Pit

Pike anglers have been successful in 2013 (see the MAS website for pictures) and there continues to be good catches of silvers. The carp boys and girls have been out in force during the year and I understand that the fish have shown consistently.

Rook Hall

We repeated the application of weed inhibitor last year, though this time in two doses rather than one. The result seems to have had little effect on the weed growth in the main lake, and the middle lake was very choked by the end of the season. The top lake remained relatively weed free. Many of the Rook Hall regulars rake their own swims, which can have the added benefit of improving their chances of catching. We plan a major working party early in the new year to thin the surrounding vegetation and open new swims. A further 241lbs of mixed silvers were stocked into the main lake.

River Blackwater (Wickham Bishops)

I have been unable to find the time to try the river this winter, but the chub were showing to the stalking angler at the end of the 2012-13 season.

David Spalding
Secretary

Head Bailiff Report

I am Shaun McGuinness and have been a member of the club for 5 years and a bailiff for 4 years. I am very passionate about my fishing, and now being Head Bailiff, and with the help of all the bailiffs, I hope we can keep all our waters clean, tidy and an enjoyable place to fish.

If any member needs to contact me regarding any issues on the waters you can do so via my mobile number 07842941281.

Many thanks, tight lines

Shaun McGuinness

Head Bailiff
KYFF’S CORNER

I like to pick up these articles where I left off the previous season and this year it feels as if I had a premonition last December as my quote “hopefully I’ve still got time to catch a Bog Grove double to kick start next year’s round up” came to pass on Sunday 10th February. Not long after I arrived two of our juniors packed away and wished me luck as they left. They had caught several singles up to 8½lb so at least I knew the carp were on the feed, although to be fair I’ve found that unless the lake is completely frozen you are always in with a chance down the Grove (sounds nicer than down the Bog). It was raining when I arrived and this had turned to sleet by the time I had a take on my halved peach and mango boille at around 6pm. The previous Sunday in the same swim I had landed four Commons to 8lb 4oz and my new venue best Crucian of 3lb 9oz (I’m mentioning that now because despite my luck with big Crucians I haven’t landed one since). As I expected a single figure Common to be the culprit again I was fairly blasé and played the fish while sitting under my umbrella. It did feel better as the fight went on and once in the net I could tell straight away that this was definitely my biggest fish from Bog Grove in a long while, since 18th February 1995 in fact (yes I log ‘em all). The Common weighed 15lb 1oz but with sleet in my eyebrows I resisted the urge to set up my tripod and settled for a photo on the mat before packing up early; after all it might take me another 18 years to catch a bigger one...

I started the 2013/14 season without transport (first the alternator, then the distributor) so found myself back at Bog Grove in early April on foot. I always used to walk to Bog Grove in my late teens and couldn’t believe that my nextdoor neighbour would drive down. It feels much further now and I started to take my youthful comments back as my rucksack dug ever deeper into my shoulders and my left arm seemed to stretch under the weight of my padded seat (we didn’t have padding in the old days on our blue Argos sun loungers). I was still cream crackered when I opened my account for the new season as I wasn’t happy with my first cast (to call it a cast is pushing it a bit as I normally only fish about 12 feet out) but as I went to wind the rod straight back in I found that a fish had already picked up my bait. The 4lb 10oz Common was probably desperate to get caught as it turned out to be trailing a rig with a boille and 1½oz lead still attached. The action slowed after that but I continued to get a take an hour and the fourth of my five fish was a 10lb 12oz Common so that took the pressure off for this season’s Bog Grove double.

In late April I managed to squeeze in a late evening at Slough House Farm and was surprised to find it deserted. I followed a mild south westerly breeze into the north east corner of the lake. It was dark by the time I cast out but I was happy with my drops and heftly liners every half hour kept me on tenterhooks. With only half an hour to go before pack up time I had a good take. The carp felt fairly small initially as it didn’t run far but it wasn’t coming in either. The Common turned out to be the chunkiest I’ve caught for ages. It had a bald patch on one side and weighed 18lb 2oz. Considering I had ten carp from Slough House Farm last year and the biggest was 11lb, this guaranteed I had a broad grin on my face as I packed away.

I had a week off work in late May and on the Thursday I headed for Totham Pit. I had the whole lake to myself which for me makes swim choice much harder, as having fished there since 1982 I can remember good days in every swim on the shallows. I investigated the little bay, point swim (with no left side bush following a recent working party) and peg 24A. For those of us old enough to remember 24A was missed out the first time we pegged the lake, I think it’s now referred to as the heli-pad. I almost set up in the pond swim and was even closer to setting up in Kyf’s corner (predictably) but none of them felt quite right on the day. I’d only seen one carp which was cruising near the lilies to the left of Kyf’s corner but then a big fish jumped fairly close to the bank in a swim opposite the reedbed - that was good enough for me. On arriving in the peg it just felt carp and was the first swim I’d stood in that had a nice ripple on the water (you can’t beat a nice ripple – just ask a raspberry). I originally cast one rod to the reeds and the other to the right where a smaller fish had rolled but I wasn’t comfortable and moved them both to the spot where the big carp had shown. I resisted the urge to bait up, which is easy for me as I’m tight with bait, and ten minutes later as I was eating a bag of Roysters (T-Bone steak flavour of course) when my left hand rod was away. Despite having seen the carp show here earlier this was still a shock. The barrel of a carp hardly fought and my largest Totham Pit Common for five seasons was soon in the net at 16lb 8oz. I could now relax, until I had a take on the other rod! This fish felt BIG, much larger than any fish I’d hooked in a long time, and took line off the clutch when it got its head down. While this is the norm for a lot of people I don’t play my fish off the clutch and prefer to play them by back winding, so I knew I was attached to something special. The fight went well and once in the net I suspected I’d landed my best ever Totham Pit carp. I was right, just... I’d beaten my 25lb 5oz Mirror of the 2009/10 season by 1oz. Happy days indeed as I held a stunning 25lb 6oz Common amongst the bluebells for the self take photos.

I didn’t top that moment during the remainder of the year, and as usual I’m taking up too much space in the newsletter again, so I will only quickly mention my Little Park exploits where I landed ten carp from the main lake over several sessions and was pleased that over half of them were doubles to 17lb.
I then moved on to Little Park top lake where I will be honest and admit that I struggled. I think this is because more people have now realised that this small venue is worth trying as the carp really do ‘go some’ in the shallow water. In nine visits I managed to eke out two 6lb+ bream and Commons of 9lb 7oz and 10lb 10oz. On my tenth visit I landed my long awaited top lake double figure Mirror of 11lb 5oz. I say Mirror but this carp is probably the closest I’ve ever got to catching a Leather carp as it had very few scales, and not much in the way of a dorsal fin either.

I experienced a first at Rook Hall far lake when I landed three Commons in an afternoon and the last of the three came in attached to a branch and a full tin of sweetcorn which I used to top up my bait box. I also landed carp from Beckham Hall and Heron Hall (no doubles from either lake this year) although my unexpected highlight was the capture of a 1lb 13oz Perch from Beckham Hall on a strawberry boilie. I bagged a few carp at Whitehouse Farm but it was a couple of lost fish late in September that have me chomping at the bit to return in the spring.

Finally Steve will be pleased to read that on my late October Howells trip I decided to stay for that extra half an hour and turned what seemed like a certain blank into an immaculate 17lb Common just after he left. It has been said many times before but there is a very fine line (15lb in my case) between success and failure so stick at it as that special fish might only be inches away from your hookbait….

Paul Kyffin

Concessionary Report

2013/14 has been a very good year for the old codgers. We started the Golden peg which so far has been won 3 times. Also the last Tuesday of each month we have a meal at the Duke of Wellington which has been a resounding success.

We have had a couple of new members this year, and sometimes the venues have been a bit tight for pegs but we managed. We have had some exceptionally good catches, and some bad results, probably the fish never studied the fixture list. But then that’s fishing.

This season we had to give Rook Hall farm a few misses because of very bad weed situation. There were only 3 or 4 swims suitable. Weed clearing and tree surgery needed to be done but the weather kept beating us. This coming season in the new year there will be several big working parties, which the farmer said he would also give some assistance. So the dates will be announced and volunteers will be most welcome. I would like us to be able to fish at least 5 matches at the venue. It is without doubt the best tench water that we have. But it does need some effort to achieve this. We have a good club but it needs members to help sometimes.

This year we had a donation of 20 X £5’s for the biggest fish on our matches which had gone down very well. This was from one of our members. Next season we have 2 donors who will be contributing 10 X £5 prizes each for the best specimen which is a very good gesture. Also we have a new trophy which has been donated by a member. It is called “The Knight tench trophy” If anybody has not seen it, it is a classy hand carved tench on a wooden base, and will be presented for the best tench caught through the season in our matches.

I wish everybody tight lines for 2014/15.

Keith Leverett

Concessionary Match Secretary