Maldon Angling Society
Newsletter No 25 January 2012
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Notice of AGM

The 2012 AGM is to be held at Great Totham Village Hall on Sunday 29th 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 great 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.

No proposed rule changes have been received from members.

Chairman’s Message

I would first like to wish all our members a happy, prosperous and good fishing new year.

This year we will endeavour to add suitable new waters to our fishing package which we feel gives excellent value and varied angling appeal. Indeed, thanks to the continuing hard work of our committee members, we have a new picturesque water to announce which will be open by the time you receive this newsletter. Details can be found in the secretary’s report.

Currently the club continues to be in a sound financial position with the membership exceeding our predicted levels. This can partly be attributed to the hard work and dedication of a stable committee and loyal band of helpers which are prepared to put themselves out for the good of the club.

Unfortunately now comes the annual chairman’s rant. I find it difficult to understand how a small minority of members believe that club rules do not apply to them or choose to regularly ignore them. Each rule is there for a reason, whether you agree with them or not, so please abide by them or inevitably you will find yourselves in trouble. Despite my appeal last year about levels of rubbish around our waters the situation has worsened to such an extent that lake owners have had cause to complain. These incidents risk our losing waters, and the committee was forced to take swift serious action in closing one of our waters to night fishing.

These incidents simply cannot be allowed to continue so the committee has decided to take steps to improve the situation. These actions will not please everyone, but we cannot afford to simply do nothing. May I remind members to read rule 7. By numbering swims around our lakes the bailiffs will be able to identify who, when and where anglers were fishing, and there will be NO excuses for litter.

Those anglers who hide bags of rubbish in bushes, ditches etc. or those who leave human waste around our waters are not welcome in our club, so mend your ways or bear the consequences. If there is no significant improvement then further action will be taken. You have been warned.

Having got that off my chest, I hope this coming year will be incident free and that we all enjoy some exciting fishing.

Malcolm Gardiner
Chairman

Membership

As always the new membership fees will be formally announced at the AGM and the Membership Secretary will be present on the day to renew memberships and night permits. Due to the increased popularity of night fishing, and the associated issues that have resulted, plans are being finalised that will hopefully prevent a repeat of the situation that occurred at Howells in the autumn. Full details will be announced at the AGM and will be communicated to all members with the renewal forms when they are sent out in February 2012.

New members for the 2012/13 season may join from the date of the AGM onwards and can fish the end of the 2011/12 season free of charge.
I am delighted to report that our efforts to find new waters have borne fruit once again with a new lake being open by the time this newsletter is published.

The new water is:-

**Heron Hall Lake, Tolleshunt Major**
We concluded the deal on this fishery in the autumn and work on building swims and installing a car park is now complete. It is an attractive 3 acre lake with an island and a good depth of water up to about 14ft. with lily pads and surrounding trees. The stock includes carp, tench and rudd but is still largely an unknown quantity. We will, as usual, monitor catch levels and consider adding extra stock if necessary. To get to the lake, continue past the entrance to Beckingham Hall Reservoir, heading towards Tolleshunt D’Arcy. Go around the double bend at the bottom of the hill and continue up Beckingham Road. At the top of the hill, about half a mile before reaching Tolleshunt D’Arcy, the entrance to the fishery is through a gate on the left hand side of the road. There is a rough lay-by opposite. Once through the gate (which must be locked behind you), turn immediately left and follow the track to the end of the field where there is a parking area. The lake is then about 100yds walk from the car park. Night fishing is not allowed and there is a public footpath running along the north side of the lake.

**Whitehouse Farm, Goldhanger**
Has continued to be very popular, producing carp to 20lbs+ and good hybrids and silvers.

**Slough House Farm**
There have been some excellent catches of good-sized roach and rudd reported, though the tench fishing has been slow. Weed growth this year has been much less than in previous seasons and we were able to re-open many of the swims which had been closed by encroaching weeds.

**Howell’s**
Howell’s probably received the most angling pressure of any of our waters in 2011 and we have come to the conclusion that we must seek to ease the situation in 2012. Proposals to this end will be put to the AGM. Whilst weed growth was very light, the litter problem was such that we were forced to ban night fishing until a (very) small team of volunteers cleaned up.

**London’s Reservoir**
The improvement in catch consistency seen in 2010 seems to have been maintained, with good catches of silvers and the occasional carp.

**Bog Grove**
Continues to be reliable and popular, even in the colder months, with numerous carp to double figures and large stocks of silvers.

**Beckingham Hall**
This water was the recipient of our most recent stocking of about 300lbs of carp, most of them in the 5-10lbs range. A magnificent effort on the part of the fishery management team who braved icy conditions – our Fishery Manager, by the way, wearing shorts throughout! The existing stock has continued to show well, with many anglers reporting excellent catches of carp to high doubles.

**Little Parks**
As foretold in this article last year, we embarked on a restocking programme for the lower lake during 2010. About 100lbs of carp and silvers (including some good rudd) were acquired from one of our regular suppliers. In addition, the landowner (who is also the Society’s President) generously provided another 150lbs of small carp from the Howell’s stock pond. This injection of fish seems to have had the desired effect, with much improved catch rates well into the autumn.

**Canal**
Low water levels have again affected catches with at least two instances of fish kills being reported. Many stretches continue to fish well, however, and we will be talking to the Environment Agency about possible restocking.

**Totham Pit**
The pit received a stocking of about 250lbs of silver fish (plus one mid-double carp) from the same netting which stocked Beckingham Hall. The silvers included several good sized perch.

**Rook Hall**
We stocked 500 small Ide into the main lake early in 2011 and these have figured in catches throughout the year. We hope that their willingness to feed in winter (and to grow fast) will produce enhanced sport in the colder months. As usual, good catches of tench, rudd and roach (including 1lb+ fish) have been reported.

**New Hall Reservoir**
Under-fished, but produces good bags of silvers with some nice bream reported.

**Brick Kiln Pond**
This water seems to have developed something of a cult following, with a small band of regulars claiming a bite a chuck!

**River Blackwater (Wickham Bishops)**
We suspect that the chub population has suffered from otter predation along our stretch (as well as others) with catch reports well down on previous years. Generally low water conditions have not helped, of course, but we will keep a close eye on developments and would appreciate hearing the views of members who fish the river regularly.

David Spalding
Secretary
As always it has been a busy year for me and my small fishery management team.

Once the snow had melted we got to work visiting all of our venues and assessing our priorities for the season ahead.

In February we arranged for the reedy swims at Slough House Farm to be dug out with a mini digger while we fixed the car park fence. There was a good turnout for the work party held at Totham Pit and Bog Grove on Sun 20th Feb. The posts in the car park at Bog Grove had to be concreted back into the ground as someone had pulled a couple of them out and thrown them onto the ice to determine thickness – very thick indeed! We also cleared the Totham Pit car park.

We had a big work party at Bog Grove on Sun 20th Mar which was a great success and extensive pruning was carried out. Some members thought I had gone a bit OTT on the right hand bank but I pointed out that a proper job now will mean that it doesn’t need doing every season which minimises disturbance around the lake for the next few years.

In April we had to put up some new “Please Do Not Feed The Birds When People Are Fishing The Lake” signs at Little Park and “Beware Rat Poison” signs to try and deter dog walkers at Totham Pit. The key padlock on Totham Pit failed over the first Bank Holiday weekend and I had to replace it at very short notice with a combination lock.

Into May and we had an opportunity to get our nets wet at a local lake that we have netted before at the owners request and we then buy his surplus fish to top up our lakes. This netting didn’t turn up as many fish as in previous years but by also ‘rod and lining’ we upped the total weight of carp moved to Little Park to around 100lb. A further 150lb of carp were also added from the stock pond at Howells.

By this time the access track at Totham Pit was getting a bit bumpy so we had it scraped. Far more exciting was when I joined David to view a lake of about 3 acres at Tolleshunt D’arcy with a view to the club leasing it. The lake is 10-14 feet deep with an island, reeds and lilies and is already stocked with carp to mid doubles and tench to 3lb. It is an SSI nature reserve so night fishing isn’t allowed but we liked what we saw and I am pleased to say that elsewhere in this news letter you can read about our new lake which will be known as Heron Hall.

In June I drew up the design for a 4mm steel flat bottomed boat and passed my plans to a local boat builder for construction. I managed to negotiate a good price and when this boat is eventually delivered it will make life much easier at nettings as it will fit in the back of my van. The flattened sign at Beckham Hall was put back up and swims on the canal at the Speeney, Heybridge Basin and Browns Wharf were trimmed up ready for the early season matches. Kim also got stuck in and cleared 6-7 swims at New Hall. This seems to be another never ending task.

Things got a bit messy in July and we had to put up signs warning of the consequences of visible human waste at both Howells and Slough House Farm. We also had a general tidy up at Bog Grove before the Open Day. The signs at Totham Pit to deter dog walkers were having little impact so we took the decision to start locking the gate by the outflow. Sorry to all those people who were left scrambling around in their tackle boxes on the bridge looking for their rulebooks to locate the combination lock number but locking this gate does seem to be helping to control the situation.

In August we had our nets repaired and the key lock on the main gate at Totham Pit seized up and I was forced to cut the lug off the gate post to gain entry. Believe it or not this worked out cheaper than cutting off the padlock as they now cost us £120 each! After replacing the gate post lug the base of the box was cut away to allow for easier key removal. Next stop was Rook Hall to carry out weed raking on the front lake before the Presidents Trophy. I fitted a new key lock at Bog Grove.

With the lease of Heron Hall now secured materials were accumulated and we had an excellent work party to build most of the swims. Paul Kemp was also keeping busy and there are only a few patches left that need painting on the container which is now looking good for another few years. After some strong winds I inspected the trees at Totham Pit to make sure they are all safe.

In September the owner of Howells trimmed the hedge on the west bank and a great deal of rubbish was exposed. He contacted David to complain and a subsequent inspection revealed a multitude of rubbish including used toilet paper, beer cans, gas canisters, milk bottles and even a bait box full of excrement. This proved that the signs put up earlier in the season had been ignored and we had no alternative other than to ban night fishing or risk losing the fishing on the lake altogether. The night fishing at Howells eventually resumed, but not before Dean and a small band of helpers had cleaned up all the mess.

In October work commenced on the car park at Heron Hall which is around a 100yd walk from the lake (much closer than the one originally planned). I had to replace the padlock at Totham Pit again!

In November I inspected Brick Kiln following the access resurfacing. Most recently we have been netting again over at a lake the other side of Colchester and have managed to purchase some nice Roach which have been stocked into Totham Pit and some more decent strain carp to grow on in Beckingham Hall for the future.

I want to finish by thanking all my dedicated helpers who have given up their valuable time to make our club a better place to fish for all of our members.

Sam Gower – Fishery management Officer
I don't want to tempt fate but as I type this the day after Boxing Day we have again experienced late December daytime temperatures of over 10°C. This tale resumes on Bank Holiday Monday 3rd January 2011 when our lakes were just starting to thaw after two months of freezing temperatures and snow.

It had been two months since I last hooked a fish so even though I found Bog Grove to still be 98% frozen I was determined to fish. Casting two small hook baits only feet apart into a narrow ice free channel in the margins I sat back to await events, if any. I had a few bleeps early on which boded well and these increased as dusk fell. Then the moment of truth, a good solid take on my left hand rod after a three hour wait. This fight seemed doomed from the off as the fish picked up a trailing underwater branch then my other line (I was always asking for trouble fishing two baits so close together). It then swam off underneath the ice. Against all the odds I appeared to be winning the battle but as I drew the fish towards the landing net cord the hook fell out! It was that close that I still lifted the net half expecting the carp to be inside but it wasn’t. To rub salt into my wound I checked that the hook was still sharp and the hook link and mainline undamaged and then snapped a tree root on the recast and lost the rig. I did tie on a new rig and fish on for another hour but my one and only chance had gone.

There is no better way to purge the memory a lost fish than to hook another on the same bait (F1 mini boilies) in the same spot at the same time on your very next trip! A week later Bog Grove was only 50% frozen and I actually wanted to fish a different swim but fate intervened as there were two other keen anglers fishing and one of them was in my first choice swim so I returned to the scene of the previous week’s net cord wobbler. Right on cue my left hand rod rattled off and the carp even fought the same as the previous week (less the trailing branch) and felt the same size. No mistakes this time and I soon had a 9lb 10oz Common on the scales, although as I found out two hours later 9lb 10oz is a popular weight at Bog Grove as I had another Common of exactly the same weight on my other rod (definitely different fish as both had different distinguishing features - a small mouth and a stubby dorsal spine). A third smaller Common another hour later signalled it was time to head for home as I could hear ice breaking in the margins as I played it. I returned the following week and by now the thaw was complete. I banked 3 small Commons and a Mirror, all under 7lb, and decided that with my confidence restored it was time to move onto a more challenging venue holding larger carp. Bog Grove had once again ‘kept me keen’ during the coldest part of the year.

My ‘official season’ still runs from 1st April to 31st March, I am the membership secretary after all, so on April Fools Day I headed off to Whitehouse Farm. What a difference a new season makes and after a weak end to the 2010/11 season I got off to a flyer with a cracking 18lb 11oz Linear Mirror. I was back in my twenty swim from last season and thought I’d done it again when I saw the big Mirror surface. Not quite but a splendid start to 2011/12.

A couple of late evenings at Bog Grove before the night fishing closed saw me bank a brace of double figure Commons before my attention turned to an ex-MAS water where I was frustrated to have never landed a twenty pounder, despite catching a 19lb 3oz Mirror while we had the fishing rights. I purchased a spring ticket and after 5 blanks I finally achieved my goal from my one and only take. Just as well I caught when I did as the following week a Yak aircraft crashed into the lake and it was closed for over a month while the plane was retrieved and a full investigation carried out. This brought home that a disaster that could never have been foreseen can suddenly intervene and unexpectedly close a venue at very short notice.

My evenings now switched to Little Park. I didn’t recapture the glory of the previous season but did land my first ever brace of Little Park main lake doubles, scraping in with Commons of 14lb 8oz and 10lb 1oz. I did manage a couple more doubles from the main lake but most of the carp I caught after the stocking in mid May were singles.

Into August and the Presidents Trophy came round again. I normally skim over this as I invariably struggle to catch as my float rod gets its annual run out, but this year I had my best result since I won this event on my debut back in the mid eighties. I was late arriving at Rook Hall (no change there) and Kelvin had drawn me peg 3, one of the longest walks right down the far end, but actually my favourite of the three lakes. I had a bite a cast for the first 2½ hours and found that if I fed maggots I caught four rudd to every one Roach and vice versa if I fed hemp. The Roach were bigger, one was about 10oz, so the hemp won out. When my swim suddenly went dead I suspected that something a bit larger had arrived. Switching to worm on the hook proved this to be the case as I hooked and landed a hard fighting 9½lb Common, but not before it wrapped itself around a decoy duck and towed it around for five minutes. Word filtered through that my fellow team member Danny Gower had landed several carp from the middle lake (he went on to win with over 40lb) so I spent the last half hour on the worm ‘going for broke’ and with fifteen minutes to go I landed a lovely 10¼lb fully scaled Mirror to clinch second spot (the full result and some photos from the day can be found on the match results page on the website).

Now I will hold my hands up and say that I have struggled at Totham Pit this season. My early efforts resulted in a Bream, a hand sized Roach and a couple of Tench to 5lb 6oz. My first carp arrived on my tenth visit when I set up in Kyff’s corner. They say that things even out over the course of a season and on this occasion the hook fell out just after I lifted the net around a lovely dark 16lb 6oz Common hooked on a maize hook bait with no freebies from the edge of the tree side lily pads. After another Tench and Bream from Colliers Bay in mid June I hooked my second Totham Pit carp of the season in one of the tightest swims on the lake (Peg 28 for those who remember the numbers). This has a submerged branch to the left by the island and contains a huge bed of lilies filling most of the swim. Somehow I guided the 12lb 1oz Common to the net through the fish equivalent of ‘It’s a Knockout’ and it was only as I unhooked it that I realised that I had probably hooked the only fish in the lake I had a reasonable chance of landing in this swim as it was blind in both eyes.

I wasn’t as fortunate at the bottom of the slope in Colliers bay in mid July but the carp that I lost was in open water when the hook pulled. Just to prove that stealth isn’t al-
These last twelve months have flown by and the problems with the “Eastern Europeans” poaching and taking fish have fallen right off. Now our river Bailiffs are having far fewer problems and have been collecting good amounts of revenue from Day Tickets with lots of anglers enjoying the fishing that the canal can provide.

The real disappointment however this year is the amount of litter being left at our lakes, with the landowner of Howells Farm making an official complaint about the amount of litter left on the banks and hidden in the bushes. The night fishing at Howells had to be suspended for some weeks until it was cleaned up. And litter is still being left!

The Bailiff at Bog Grove has just cleaned up the lake and collected over three bags of litter and that’s without the other bags he has collected over the year. This time he also got a hook from a discarded Carp rig stuck in his leg.

The leaving of litter must stop otherwise our Society will start to lose the fisheries.

It is all our responsibility to take our litter home and not to leave it for our Bailiffs to clean up.

I look forward to a litter free year and some good catches of fish from all our waters which I think have improved.

Tight Lines
Kim Naish

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Ways required I had my third Totham Pit carp, an 8lb 6oz Mirror, from the shallows in a swim where I had just dragged a large fallen branch out of the water to make it fishable. I was watching a snake swim passed when I had the take. In August and September I tried my luck on the sheer bank in the deeper water and had a run of Bream in the 4-5lb bracket, a 13oz Rudd and my largest Totham Pit carp of the season, a fine heavily scaled Mirror of 19lbs exactly.

In October I bumped into Alan Hare at Whitehouse Farm, who was then on 99 doubles for the season, and he told me about his incredible eighteen carp in a day from Rook Hall No.3 lake. Throughout the summer I had made occasional forays to the far end of Rook Hall to fish my Presidents swim with reasonable success and had a trip planned for a couple of days later. This turned out to be my most prolific visit to Rook Hall too as I landed five carp with three of them doubles and two of the doubles being Mirrors.

My next venue of choice for a few visits was Slough House Farm where I landed a couple of nice doubles. The news then broke about the rubbish situation at Howells and how the landowner had uncovered a huge amount of rubbish in the ditch bordering the lake which I know will be covered by others elsewhere in this newsletter. The resulting night fishing ban saw me pitching up at Howells on a Friday afternoon and to cut a long story short, as I’ve been rambling on now for more paragraphs than the editor asked for, I banked a margin-caught 22lb 11oz Common.

Returning full circle, December saw me back at Bog Grove where a pre Christmas visit saw me tempt a mixed bag of two Commons, a Roach, a Crucian and a surprise Chub.

Finally for those tracking the progress of Black Spot the Bream I can reveal that I had to wait until October this season but this Little Park Top Lake resident finally showed up 1oz heavier than last year at 7lb 9oz.

Tight lines and I hope to see you on the bank in 2012, maybe at our new venue Heron Hall which I will be keen to try out when spring arrives.

Paul Kyffin – Membership Secretary
Happy New year to everyone! May I first thank all of the members who have been regularly turning out, come rain or shine for the usual friendly Sunday matches.

This year has been a rather mixed affair match-wise, without anyone really dominating and winning more matches than anyone else. Over the 18 matches so far we have had 11 different winners. Including some wins by Kelvedon DAA members, who we have teamed up with in an effort to keep attendances at a healthy level. Next Year, we will also be teaming up with Does AC and hope to improve attendances even more, so if you fancy fishing any Kelvedon or Does waters for the day, for free, why not come and fish a match there with us!

We have a good bunch of regulars, and thrive off of, ‘and I’m sure everyone will agree,’ the banter, rather than the winnings. We all have a good laugh, often at each others expense, which makes for a nice day for everyone, particularly if the fish decide to feed as well. Matches are cheap, only £6 a head with £5 going into the prize fund and 50p going into the ‘golden peg and with another 50p going into the matchman of the year fund, of which you will find the table on the web-site, thanks to the membership secretary for keeping it updated for me! So please, if you are at a lose end for a fishing partner one Sunday and there is a match on, please do not hesitate to give me a call and book your place, My number is 07706047342 and we will all be pleased to see a new face, ‘as long as you are not too good.’

Notable matches this season include John Woodhams on our first ‘away’ match of the season, at Churchgate lakes in Battlesbridge with 70lb+ of mainly silver fish which for a 5 hour match is some going.

Lloyd Druce won in a match on the canal stretch at Brown's Wharf in Chelmsford with nearly 9lb of punch and hemp caught roach, this is a very underfished and also very good stretch in my opinion.

Steve Root had a good win with nearly 13lb of silvers on Layer Marney 3, one of Kelvedons waters, whilst managing to avoid the crayfish.

Team performances have not been great this year, we lost to Chelmsford at Heybridge Basin by a big margin despite me winning with 8lb of skimmers, Chelmsford took the next 7 places 'come on lads, next year!' We lost to Does at Twitty Fee 2 by 15 points and Chelmsford took the next 7 places 'come on lads, next year!'

Steve! but 3 or 4 of us can still catch you!

Second again! Don’t worry, you’ll win it one year mate.

At the moment the standout competitor of the year is Steve Root, who leads the matchman of the year table by three points from myself, well done Steve! but 3 or 4 of us can still catch you!

Well that’s it for this season, may the fish keep feeding and different people keep winning!

Kelvin Willis

Other notable individual performances go to Joe Harber again for winning the Tony Druce Memorial at Heybridge Basin, with Lloyd, Tony’s son, coming second again! Don’t worry, you’ll win it one year mate.

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John ‘Woody’ Woodhams is currently enjoying an extended (steady) honeymoon having recently got married. The attendances at his Tuesday matches have been exceptional this season with up to 22 keen anglers turning up each week.

Some highlights taken from the match results page on the website include the Dennis Penn Trophy fished at Little Park on the 10th May where there was a very good turnout of members and Kim Naish turned up to defend the cup. It looked a great day for fishing with good weather and calm conditions but no one told the fish which were very hard to tempt to the net. Les Drury (again using his secret bait) on the method feeder managed to catch two Bream, one of 8lbs 2oz and the other 6lbs 10oz to win the trophy. Kim could only manage 11oz and reluctantly had to hand over the Dennis Penn Trophy.

Paper Mill Lock hosted the Alf Burton Trophy on the 26th July when fourteen keen members tried their luck. Alf was a keen angler but sadly is no longer with us. His late wife Mary agreed to present the cup to the winner and many thanks must go to her for making the time and effort to do so, next season the venue will be a lot easier on the legs. This year’s winner was Dave Harley and although no big weights were recorded his catch of 2lb 13oz was enough to secure the trophy.

On the canal at Tesco's on the 16th August there was quite a lot of duck weed making the fishing quite hard. Only one man broke the three pound barrier and that was Vic Dadd who included a nice Tench of 4lb+ in his net which won him the Askew Cup.

It was Vic again who beat 18 other anglers at Heybridge Basin on the 27th September to win the Ted Cornwell Memorial Cup. Although the fish were reluctant to take the bait, Vic managed to tempt enough of them to secure victory. The cup was presented by Mrs Rosemary Cousins (Ted’s wife). Thanks must go to her for attending the match and most of the anglers had their chance to reminisce stories about Ted’s fishing days.