



RICHMOND AND DISTRICT ANGLING SOCIETY

Established 1912

President: The Most Honourable The Marquis of Zetland

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Society Newsletter 2021

Covid and beyond

In a year which surely no one will ever forget, angling was one of the first sports to get its act together in resuming activities during the first Covid-19 national lockdown. R&DAS followed government guidance shutting down waters for several weeks but, thankfully, fishing was able to resume in mid-May. Thankfully angling was also able to continue during the lockdown in the first weeks of 2021.

A silver lining in the cloud was that, like many angling clubs, R&DAS saw an increase in membership as folk sought an antidote to covid restrictions. Hopefully, those who rediscovered angling, or were trying it for the first time, will retain their enthusiasm for many seasons to come.

Committee and AGM

Unable to actually meet, the society's committee continued to function effectively thanks to various IT channels and the can-do attitude of committee members. The Annual General Meeting scheduled for December had to be cancelled. All committee members confirmed they were willing to continue in post until the next AGM.

Environment Agency

Last year's newsletter reported on the dialogue the committee had opened with the Environment Agency about the possibility of restocking barbel in society's waters. While the EA was at first dubious about restocking, saying that all mid-sections of dales rivers had experienced crashes in coarse species, the door was left ajar in that the EA indicated that restocking projects were sometimes undertaken where clubs demonstrated a willingness to help themselves via improvement projects.

Thanks are due to committee member Peter Fietsch, who undertook to pull together an improvement programme and to tackle a number of projects virtually single-handedly.

Discussions with the EA were maintained and broadened to include other species of coarse fish once prevalent in Richmond waters. At the Agency's suggestion, the Wild Trout Trust (WTT) was approached to undertake a review of the society's waters and to suggest further ways of encouraging fish populations to regenerate and thrive. Despite its title, the WTT has advised an increasing number clubs throughout the country about improving habitat for coarse species.

As this newsletter publishes, dialogue with the EA continues and we are hopeful that a restocking programme for sections of the mid-Swale, including Richmond, will come together.

Financial update

Although the 2020 AGM was cancelled, a draft a financial statement for the year ended 31st October was produced. This showed that the society would have been in the black but for permit sales' income which unfortunately was lost irretrievably when the Harvest Service Station in Victoria Road, the society's prime outlet for non-PayPal sales, was wiped out by fire. The final outcome was that the society suffered a loss £478.

Trout & Salmon Article

In October, Trout & Salmon magazine published an article based on a fishing session on R&DAS waters at Easby by angling writer Don Stazicker, who was accompanied by Stuart Wardle, England international angler who runs a County Durham based fly fishing company. The pair gave a great account of a thoroughly enjoyable day in testing conditions. (See R&DAS website for a copy of the article).

Mill Farm Fishery

Planned changes at Mill Farm Fishery, which included creating a new car park for Cow Pasture Lake, were completed by owners Thornaby Angling Association. TAA organised netting of fish from previously owned Mill Lake transferring them to Cow Pasture.

A wind-driven aerator installed in 2019 to oxygenate Cow Pasture also proved its worth with no losses of fish last year due to low oxygen levels.

TAA also decided to stock trout on a trial basis in Cow Pasture.

The fishery will be available once again in 2021 to R&DAS annual membership permit holders.

2021/22 permits

Permits for 2021/22 are now available – see website for details. Fees for several categories have been raised modestly this year to help ensure that the society meets its goal of breaking even and to support the programme of improvement activities mentioned earlier.

PayPal increasingly is the most popular way to pay for an annual permit. This is not only more convenient for members but also is the most cost-effective, admin-friendly method for the society, so please use it if you can. As demonstrated by the unfortunate fire last year at the Harvest Service Station, PayPal is also the most secure method of payment for the society.

If purchasing an annual permit from one of the sales outlets, please include full email details as this is the most effective way the society has of keeping in touch with members, saving admin and postage.

Water closed

Please note that parts of the river will be closed at certain times to accommodate competitions.

- England team qualifier for Five Nations Fly-fishing Championship (2022) will be held above Richmond Falls on 12th and 13th June, 2021. See R&DAS website nearer time for specific details.
- The Upper Swale Championships - the river between Mercury Bridge and Great Langton will be closed to pleasure anglers to 5pm on Saturday 4th September.

Fishing Updates

Trout & grayling

From miscellaneous reports received 2020 seemed to have been a better than average year on the trout and grayling front. Several notable trout up to 3lb were caught throughout the length of R&DAS waters including Lownethwaite, Red House Farm and Great Langton. Fighting-fit grayling above 16 inches featured in a number of reports. A fish caught on a black pheasant tail nymph at Great Langton in September prompted debate as to whether it was a sea trout or a large, silver-coloured brownie – the consensus being the former.

Coarse fish

An overnight session upstream of Brompton resulting in two cracking chub, estimated at 6lb and 5lb, was the highlight of feedback from one of the society's coarse specialists.

Much of the rest of the report is based on the experience of one of our committee members who has fished Great Langton for c40 years. While summer dace and chublets weren't hugely prolific this year, a good mix of year classes was observed. This was particularly apparent amongst chub with fish from a couple of ounces up to about 1½ lb. It was noted that dace and chublets seemed to start their downstream migration earlier than usual. One highlight was catching a first-ever roach upstream of Langton Bridge. It was noted that angling activity overall at Langton was higher than experienced in the past five years.

Others reported finding some decent chub especially on legered big baits.

While barbel largely were noticeable by their absence, one member reported losing a large fish which he believed was a barbel.

In an effort to better reflect all fishing activities generally Secretary Phil Brown is happy to receive brief reports from anglers throughout the year (just a few lines please, not War and Peace).

Mill Farm

Members who fished Mill Farm Fishery continued to enjoy the facility with TAA maintaining its restocking programme.

Skeeby Beck

Relatively little to report. There are fish there with one member reporting at least one successful outing.

Hopefully we'll see you all again by the river or lake in 2021/22.

Best wishes,

R&DAS Committee.

Look out for updates throughout the year on the society's new website

www.richmondangling.org.uk