



Member newsletter

November 2023

Three months have passed all too quickly, time for the second edition of the new Ross-on-Wye Angling club newsletter. Thanks to everyone who took the time to get in touch. It was great to hear your views, questions and feedback on the launch edition of the member's newsletter.

Members' work parties

You should have already received the dates of the upcoming work parties. Just in case you missed them here they are:

Saturday 25 November 2023 Meet up at Wilton Bridge lay-by

Saturday 3rd February 2024

Saturday 20th April 2024

Saturday 18th May 2024

Saturday 15th June 2024

The work parties will start at 10am. We will let you know the meeting place for future work parties closer to the time. Any changes or cancellations should the condition of the Wye dictate otherwise will be communicated as soon as possible.

We look forward to welcoming members to the work parties. Your assistance is highly valued by all on the committee. There are always jobs to do large or small so, please do not worry about coming along. We can find a job to suit all abilities which will make a real difference. I always look forward to chatting to you all as well as enjoying the results of a few hours spent together.

I must take this opportunity to thank the members that I have met on the bank who have improved the swims that they have been fishing with some sensible clearing. I benefitted from one member's excellent gardening recently and had a great session.

Wildlife recording



Many of you may not know that our club secretary Peter runs a WhatsApp project to record the wildlife activities on the clubs waters. Peter sent me this update :

“Thanks all to those who have been sending their wildlife sightings to the WhatsApp group. To date we have recorded 76 species of birds along the club stretch, with a few waders added to the list this season. They included common sandpiper, curlew and sanderling, along with new records of Cetti's warbler, spotted flycatcher and peregrine falcon. Otters, mink and water shrew have also been spotted. There's always plenty of kingfisher action (a real favourite with resident and visiting anglers alike) and the swans and Canada geese seem to be recovering in numbers since the last bout of bird flu.”

Please do keep sending your sightings in. If you want to join the RoWAC Wildlife Recording WhatsApp group please contact Peter via email (secretary.rossac@gmail.com).



Peter with a rather nice 9lb 3oz Barbel

Club events

At the last committee meeting we agreed that it would be good to organise some more club competitions and social events. Ideas that were discussed included:

Club member competitions

A biggest chub and barbel by length competition

We all thought that this was a great idea as a follow on from the species hunt competition. We intend to get this organised in the near future. Full details of the competition will be sent out very soon.

Social event ideas: A get together featuring a guest speaker

Fishing tackle Bring and Buy sale

Fishing quiz night

Christmas get together

This is where you, our members, come in. Is this a something that you would like to happen? If so, what sort of events would you like organised? We are all ears, please let us know your thoughts / ideas (rowac@dowling.xyz).

Here is a date for your diaries: the club's AGM will be held on **Tuesday 5th March 2024**. Full details will follow in due course.

Regen Ben

The committee meeting in September was held at Townsend Farm thanks to a very kind invitation from Ben Taylor-Davies the owner of the farm. Ben who is better known as "Regenben" is a champion of regenerative farming. He is passionate about the subject and is an active educator on the subject to the farming community and industry. Ben is a straight talking man who practices what he preaches. Sadly, I could not attend but I had been lucky to spend an evening at the farm previously, thanks to a Friends of the Lower Wye event.

RoWAC Committee Visits Regen Ben – RoWAC Secretary Dr Peter Richardson

After years of raising awareness about the River Wye pollution scandal, the RoWAC committee are keen to pursue positive solutions. While we work with Fish Legal to push the authorities to take the action needed, there are exciting, on-the-ground initiatives being developed here in Ross to help clean up our beloved river.

At Townsend Farm, just upstream of Ross, Ben Taylor Davies works 224 hectares of land with 2.5 km running alongside the Wye. Regen Ben (regenben.com) was born from generations of West Midlands farmers and is now leading a local Regenerative Agriculture revolution. His vision is for a radical change in farming, where soil is properly valued, managed and regenerated to allow sustainable, viable and diverse agriculture with thriving farmland biodiversity. Key to this is keeping the soil and the nutrients on his land through strategic crop planting and land management, so the precious soil doesn't wash away into and contaminate the river.

Ben lectures and consults on Regenerative Agricultural in the UK and across the globe. One mid-September evening the RoWAC committee were lucky enough to catch busy Ben at home and enjoy one of his full-on farm tours. Ben is a force of nature. He walked us around his land for a couple of hours, explaining with energy and urgency their diverse crop and hedge planting regime for profit and water retention; innovative soil management to reduce phosphate pollution of the river; their automatic rotational and mobile chicken tractor (with rhea 'bodyguard') to reduce phosphate loading; the growing wagyu and other beef livestock; the rare-breed-sheep-grazed and future-proofing vineyard; mixed-flower planting plots and set-asides for wildlife and their farm honey bee hives, and his brand new fully-accessible sensory garden – just a few of the progressive ideas Ben and his family have initiated on the farm in recent years. Ben's infectious enthusiasm, knowledge and optimism were inspiring – if anyone can influence UK farming to be more sustainable Ben can. We all came away with hope in hearts.

As the tour ended in the dusk light, Ben's wife Helen warmly welcomed us to their family kitchen where we all enjoyed more chat with home-grown pork rolls, as well as beer from the farm brewery and some 2022 vintage wine from the vineyard – all absolutely delicious!

Ben and his family offer tours of their amazing, inspiring farm, and sell their wonderful produce in the Little Meal House on-farm shop – all thoroughly recommended. Find out more about all the exciting things going on down on Townsend Farm here www.regenben.com



Young angler Finlay

Will Smith let us know about a super keen young angler in the making who was keen to catch barbel. He did not have any tackle that was well suited to barbel fishing. We were keen to help to nurture this young angler and had a look through our tackle. I am delighted to report that we were able to kit Finlay out with a nice twin tip rod, Daiwa reel and line and a new landing net. It was our pleasure to help. I hope to bring you news of how Finlay gets on catching his first Wye barbel on his new kit in a future newsletter.

Success story

Thanks got to Brian Clayton who got in touch and let me know that he had found some rather nice fishing clothing in the club car park at Weirend. Enquires were made and it did not take too long for us to find the owner who was extremely grateful, nice one Brian.

Member noticeboard

Colin got in touch sharing a useful river levels website that I had not seen before that he thought might be worth sharing with you all.

<https://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Detail/796>

Not a website that I was familiar with, I often consult <https://riverlevels.uk/rivers/wye>

Graham took the time to let me know how passionate he is about fish care. This issue is covered by club rule 19.

“Members are to ensure that the welfare of any fish caught is paramount. Appropriate landing and unhooking care must be observed. This includes the use of unhooking mats where appropriate, not keeping the fish out of the water unnecessarily and ensuring the fish has had chance to recover in the landing net before release.”

I am sure that it is a subject dear to all our hearts to care for all fish that we are fortunate enough to catch. Angling Times recently published an interesting article on the subject.

<https://www.anglingtimes.co.uk/news/stories/fish-care-from-past-to-future-what-does-the-science-say/>

Let me know of anything else that you would like to share with club members

(rowac@dowling.xyz)

Club water reports

Please send in your email reports to let us know how you have been getting on. Pictures would be great so that they can be included in future newsletters. Now is the time to get your pike equipment out and show off your catches.

Upper Benhall / Lower Benhall

Fishing is has been good with reports of some really nice fish being caught. One of our members Lyndon has been in touch to let me know that in a couple of visits he bagged 6 barbel and 12 chub. That's a very good return; I was delighted to hear from Lyndon again yesterday. He just had a successful session trying a spot of floodwater fishing at Benhall. Two lovely barbel and three chub were his reward after finding a nice safe swim to try.



Lyndon with one his floodwater catches

Sellack

I look forward to news from Sellack now that the stretch is open to us all.

Town Stretch

Apologies from us, as neither the installation of the new platforms nor repair of the platform needing maintenance have been completed. This is due to a combination of the lack of time for us to get together as a group and the weather stopping us. This has been further complicated by the high water levels recently. These jobs are at the top of our to do list, further updates in the next edition.

The good news is that the sale of day tickets remains good which is so helpful to offset club costs. Thanks from all at the club to the dedicated bailiff team who do such a great job.

More importantly for you all to know is that the town stretch has been fishing really well. In fact, I am rather jealous that several double figure barbel have been caught recently by club members and day ticket holders.



The stuff of dreams: our chairman Rob with a double figure barbel

Weirend

The stretch continues to produce some really nice fish. One of our members Colin Bowerman got in touch to let me know that he had a really productive float session landing many good chub. I have also had success on the beat with some really nice chub to 4lb plus and barbel to the mid nine pounds.



A nice winter 4lb 9oz Weirend floodwater chub

The salmon fishing season ended recently. Sadly, the number of salmon caught on our club's water was not what all the members would have liked. Just four salmon have been caught by our members. This echoes the disappointing numbers caught on the river Wye as a whole. The national picture is no better which is a cause for concern.

If you visit Lower Weirend and make use of two car park spaces behind the gates. The farmer has now replanted the fields with his new crops so please do not take a short cut across them.

Committee news

The ROWAC membership secretary Nick has seen a very good response from the club's membership adverts. This has resulted in the waiting list increasing, as all the available club membership spaces are filled for this season.

I mentioned in the last newsletter the new trophy cabinet which is going to be installed at the White Lion where ROWAC committee meetings are held. After our October meeting, John brought some of the club's trophies to the meeting and arranged them in the space that has been allocated. All looked good, final dimensions were confirmed for the display cabinet which will now be made.

Finally...

I would have loved to feature more of your catch pictures and stories but my inbox has been not so busy. Please send them in as we all enjoy celebrating your successes. As ever, do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions, concerns and ideas. One last request, don't forget to let me know your views and suggestions re club competitions and social events.

Tight lines and I look forward to hearing from you.

Chris Dowling

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