



## Member newsletter

May 2024

Time for another newsletter now that the river close season is with us for coarse fishing. I do of course wish all the salmon members well with their efforts to catch a cracking Wye specimen. I am told that it is easier said than done! There is quite a bit to update you all on.

### Members' work parties

Since the last newsletter we have completed two work parties. The first focused on the town stretch despite the best efforts of the weather resulting in prolonged flood water conditions.



### The town stretch bank is out there somewhere!

Unfortunately, we did not see a great turn out but many thanks to all that made the effort. We did make some good progress clearing away the winter/spring growth from many of the day ticket swims and a few on the member only side. The work completed opened up some swims that had got somewhat overgrown.



Yet again, we were lucky to get the assistance of a non-member Steve who along with Lyndon even stayed on long after the rest of us packed up, completing some great work on the members' section. A huge thanks to the dynamic duo who really did put the rest of us to shame.

We switched our attention to Upper Benhall for the second work party session. We were very grateful to see a bigger turnout. As we had expected it had really suffered from swims getting overgrown, new willow growth being the biggest culprit. We were fortunate with the weather and pole saws were the order of the day. However, Wes brought some of the club's power tools along with the new first aid kits for which he gave a great H&S briefing before we headed off.



### **Trust me to be caught not paying attention!**

As a reminder to you all, Adrian our committee member who looks after the club's H&S and risk assessment responsibilities has completed a lot of work recently updating them. I would remind you all that you should familiarise yourself with them. You can find them on the club website here: <https://rossanglingclub.co.uk/risk-assesment/>

We got a lot done including opening up a new swim in addition to clearing a lot of swims. There were a good few of those present who were getting excited about making plans for the new coarse season. The cleared swims looked really inviting; when combined with the state of the Wye on the day it left many of us cursing that we could not get a rod in the water. Oh yes, you have guessed it, the dynamic duo were in attendance again! Declining the offer of going to the White Lion for a pint and carrying on working, thanks both.



The next work party is on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 10:00am**. As ever, everyone is welcome as there is always much to do. This time we be focusing on Weir End, meeting in the Weir End car park before heading off. As is the norm, should conditions dictate, we will get in touch ASAP should we need to cancel the work party or make any changes.

Here is a reminder for your calendar, we have a work party planned for **Saturday 15th June**. We will let you know the meeting place for this work party closer to the time. All work parties will start at 10am.

We look forward to welcoming members to the work parties. Your assistance is highly valued and much needed 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. By the time the June work party arrives there will be a lot of new growth to clear so that everyone can enjoy their fishing. Please try and come along, your help will be much needed.

### **The Chub and Barbel Bash February 2024**

A big thankyou to John Cheyne who as you know organised this fun members' event which went ahead thanks to the Wye being fishable after the poor weather. John has kindly sent in this report on the day's events:

"Back in February, we held our first ever Ross on Wye Angling Club Chub & Barbel Bash. This was a fun, friendly "match" with a difference. Instead of being pegged like most matches, the event was a roving match where the competitors could fish wherever they liked on our river stretches and fish caught were photographed on an unhooking mat next to a measure. The rules were simple: there would be two winners, the person who caught the longest barbel and the person who caught the longest chub.

Conditions looked pretty good first thing, and day ticket anglers could be seen landing some very decent barbel on the town stretch when we met up by Wilton Bridge to start the event. However, the river was rising quite fast, which would prove to make things tricky. With the club's shiny new fish measures handed out and once we had made sure everyone knew the rules, we all set off. Most people choose to fish fairly near to Wilton on the Lower Benhall stretch, but others headed for both Weirend and Upper Benhall. Those that headed off to quieter locations ended up glad of their decision!

Julian Lane got off to a flying start in the chub stakes, landing a fish of 53cm early on and then bagging another just 1cm longer almost immediately up at Weirend. While over at Upper Benhall, event organiser John Cheyne had a nice chub, only to discover he had forgotten to give himself a measure! The chub was released, and John had a long walk back to the car. Luckily for him his first cast on returning saw his rod tip fly round and a bronze flanked barbel of about 8lb graced the net which measured 72cm. The guys who had stayed around Wilton were now struggling for bites as the river rose. Our younger members then got in on the act as our chairman's sons Theo and Reuben found a fish or two, with Reuben landing a lovely barbel of 71cm. There were a few more chub caught through the match with most managing a fish or two and Julian managing to up his best to 55cm. Then as the match was coming to an end our Secretary Peter Richardson made a late surge for glory, netting two barbel in quick succession but both were just short of top spot at 71cm.

Back in the White Lion Pub we had a good chat about the days fishing over a pint and the final results were announced. Julian won the Chub prize (a very nice Korum Rucksack) for his 55cm fish with Stephan Williams 2nd with a 48cm chub. Event Organiser John Cheyne took top spot in the barbel stakes with his 72cm beauty, with the youngest competitor Reuben Leather a very close second on 71cm alongside Peter Richardson. Sportingly, John let Reuben pick up the prize and head off with the other Korum Rucksack commenting that it was fantastic to see one of our Junior members giving the more experienced anglers a run for their money!

All in all a great day, good fun and some lovely fish caught. It was particularly nice to spend some time together in the pub at the end and swap stories. We will be holding some more of these informal roving events in the future, so if you fancy meeting up with some other members and being part of one of these friendly events, please do get involved."

### **The winning fish**





As John said, please get in touch and let us know what sort of events you would like to see organised in the future. It is your club, just let me know. Email – [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)

### **Town stretch platforms**

Despite the Wye doing its very best to frustrate our plans to repair and install more platforms on the town stretch, the work is now complete. We all need to say a big thankyou to the outstanding efforts of Colin and Wes in the planning, construction and installation of the platforms. Here are some pictures to give you and idea of what has been going on down on the day ticket section.





Thanks to everyone involved with the repair and installation of the new platforms.

We did have some feedback letting us know that day ticket holders were not using the existing platforms. Apparently, people felt that signage gave the the impression that the that they were for ROWAC member use only. Recognising this, we have replaced them with some new signs made which simply state "Anglers Only"



I should also mention that the cost of this project was significantly funded from some money bequeathed to the club for which we are very grateful. Go and have a look for yourselves to see the results of all the work which should bring the club some increased income from day ticket sales as well as great fishing opportunities for you all.

## Jeremy Talbot

A plaque is now in place on the town day ticket section celebrating the life of former ROWAC member Jeremy Talbot. He enjoyed his fishing so much and it is a great to tribute to him.



## Club water reports

Don't hesitate to 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.

The end of the coarse season brought some excellent fishing on all of the club's water. I am sworn to secrecy but one member caught 11 barbel in one session on the Upper Benhall stretch, it was not me! I have also heard reports of some nice predator catches towards the end of the season on ROWAC water. Weir End as ever produced some cracking results, I met a member who was packing up early with a big smile on his face to go and celebrate catching a double figure Barbel. Apologies to the member but I forgot to ask his name in all the excitement. I tried something new for me after finding a safe spot, some flood water fishing which produced three lovely barbel in an afternoon session. The town stretch also yielded some lovely fish, yet again big chub and barbel have been caught. I understand that our salmon members are finding life very challenging.

Let me know how you get on, it is so nice to share your successes, email [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)

## **Bank safety**

I thought twice about sharing this story with you as it involves me. This is a cautionary tale which does have a serious point. I was fishing at the upper end of Weir End quite near the big Oak tree close to the boundary fence a week or so before the coarse close season. The Wye was not in flood and had a nice steady flow. Before I started fishing, I took a good look at the swim which is on the inside of a bend. I like to do a risk assessment as it were and satisfy myself that it is a safe place to fish. I spent the day there quite happily blanking despite being convinced the conditions looked good for catching you will be delighted to know. My morale finally dipped around 4:20pm and I started to pack up. The next thing I knew the ground below my feet gave way completely with me going into the Wye. So, there I am alone in the river in the failing light wondering exactly how I am going to get out with a raised bank in front of me. I was aware that I was the only one at Weir End which made life that little bit more interesting. I was fortunate that I did after a few minutes managed to get myself back on dry land. I did how ever lose some gear that was in the section of bank that suddenly failed which I guess is just frustrating.

There are lessons to be learnt especially if you are like I was, fishing alone. One of the few good habits I have is letting my wife know exactly where I am fishing. I use What 3 Words to share my location. I urge you all to have a really good inspection of where you are going to fish and consider how you would get out of the river if the worst happened before you start fishing. Upon reflection, I could have done a lot better as I consider myself to have been very fortunate. Recognising that the bank was a little elevated, I really should have at least had a rope with me and secured it to a trunk and laid it out before I started fishing.

In a delicious coincidence the next time that I went out fishing the first two members I met had done exactly that and got a rope in place. They both had gone one step further and were wearing floatation aids and they were not fishing from an elevated swim. After sharing my dunking experience with them, I walked away super impressed with their attention to safety.

I did however get a bonus point from them when I showed them my crampon spikes that I bought to go over my wellies. I rate them as one of my best ever fishing buys which have stopped me from slipping or falling over during the muddy winter months many times. For under ten pounds from a well known South American river online store they make a huge difference.

Should I have failed to get out of the Wye, I would have been in the cold water for a long time before I had any chance of getting any help even though I was lucky that my phone still worked. That is another point that I need to think about as I sometimes fish on another club's water where I don't get any mobile service. So dear members I urge you to have a really good think about how you look after your safety when enjoying your fishing. My experience is one that I never want to repeat. I would very much welcome your thoughts and best of all suggestions on this topic.

Email – [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)

## **The Wye monster mystery**

On a much lighter note, we have a real mystery to solve. I witnessed this first hand when chatting to a member at Weir End when his rod bent round. Wonderful, he reported that it felt like a big one. After five minutes or so he almost got the fish to the net without us getting a



good look at the beast. Just before victory was had the fish took off stripping line at a furious rate. The battle continued for another ten or so minutes. For a while he was able to hold the fish not gaining any line before it took off again stripping even more line heading off to what seemed like Lydbrook! Having stripped a mighty chunk of his line from the reel the inevitable happened and his line got caught in some branches. We tried in vain to free the line without success before the 12lb line snapped. We were left confused as to what on earth he had hooked that took such a large amount of line from the spool. Frankly, we have no idea at all, it did not feel like a barbel I am told. We wondered about it being a carp, even considering that somehow he had foul-hooked an otter.

The strange thing is that I have since heard of a very similar report from a member who was fishing our Benhall beat. Have any of you had a similar experience or any thoughts? Let me know, at this point it just remains one of those wonderful pub fishing tales.

Email – [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)

### **Committee news**

The club's AGM was held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March, we would have loved to see more of you attending as just twenty-two were present. I have to admit that I was not there due to me being out of the country. You can find the minutes on the club website:

<https://rossanglingclub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ROWAC-AGM-Minutes-5th-March-2024-v-FINAL.pdf>

Please take some time to read the AGM minutes to update yourselves.

Following on from the previous newsletter regarding concern about the access track to the Benhall car park, work has been completed that improves the track for car owners with a lower ground clearance.



**Benhall access track following improvement works**

The club has its five yearly rent review on our club water due next in March. We will keep you informed on progress on this significant event.

A reminder to all that everyone who wishes to renew their club membership should have done so by now. Remaining spaces will shortly be offered to those on the waiting list which currently is well in excess of one hundred.

Some of the committee members have completed first aid training which included forestry work. We will ensure that there is always someone who is qualified present at club work parties.

We have also purchased more PPE for use by all during our club work parties.

### **Finally...**

Please let me know about queries, questions and concerns, I am here to help. Do not hesitate to get in touch with your stories, issues or with anything that you would like to see featured in future newsletters.

Most importantly, stay safe!

Chris Dowling

Email – [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)