



Highdown Rodders News

April 2021

From the Editor (Dave)

I think seven *Lockdown* editions was enough, so this one is just going to be called the *April Newsletter*.

It is good to hear that members have been out fishing and catching some good fish too, initially staying local, and then further afield. 'Local' was an interesting concept, and I met people on the Loddon from Bristol and London during the last few weeks of the season.

Given the average age of club members, I would imagine that many of us have had one or both of our jabs now, so hopefully if the metrics continue to head in the right direction, some of the planned UK trips will take place. As a former employee of AstraZeneca, I was pleased to get that jab!



Chairman's Corner (Keith)

Well fingers crossed we seem to be making progress towards some sort of normality, although clearly overseas travel still has a way to go (sorry about the pun!).

Although unable to enjoy my usual spring trip to the Spey, it is good to be able to fish locally at least and I know some of you have already enjoyed a number of outings. I had a rather strange day at Haywards a few weeks ago with Mike – the first four fish I contacted all came off after seemingly being well hooked. Meanwhile Mike, using a similar set-up and fly, landed all those that he hooked, and my final fish, which I managed to land to much rejoicing, was well hooked in the roof of the mouth. Just one of those mysteries that keep us guessing, I suppose (or maybe just plain incompetence).

We are now able to make tentative plans for the recommencement of Club activities, all subject of course to the relaxation of restrictions progressing as planned.

We start at Barn Elms on 16th June, which is already well subscribed although a couple of places remain. Rosemary is unable to provide catering on this occasion, but I am hoping to arrange something in terms of a replacement, subsidised by the Club as usual. Manningford has also been provisionally booked for 4th July as a second outing and Mike has already sent out details.

Thanks to Steve we have a provisional date of 11th July for our Summer Lunch, full details to follow later.

In view of the uncertainty over, and probable heavy demand for, accommodation, it may be that our usual reservoir boat outing in September will be on a one day rather than overnight stay basis this year, with Draycote or Farmoor as the viable options. Hopefully, we can reinstate the very enjoyable weekend away next year, maybe for a change in the late spring rather than September.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these various events and wish you all good fishing in the meantime.

Membership (Mike)

I am delighted that Mark Blackburn who is Tony's son has joined the club. Mark interest in fishing is extensive and apart from fly fishing is an experienced sea and coarse fisherman. Last year he caught his first Salmon on the River Deveron. Mark has already confirmed his attendance on the trip to Barn Elms on the 16th June.



Comment from Mark!!

It was 30lb! It was almost at the end of the day, Dad and I had been at it all day without even a knock and then bang! Dad netted it for me but it took both of us to lift it into the boat onto the mat. I remember thinking about how to get the hooks out but as we put the pike down on the mat, the trebles just fell out!!

A great day!!

During the last year we have recruited four new members which takes our total membership up to thirty one. This is I believe the highest number for some years, but we should still continue to attract committed new members. The constitution does limit the number to thirty paying members, but we have not reached that number yet!

“Mini” Highdown Rodders Outing to Haywards Farm (Mick Berry)

A chance conversation with our Secretary in early March, in which we discussed the possibility of meeting each other at this fishery when the conditions were better, lead to this event. Rain, winds, and the cold temperature meant that 2 weeks passed before this date was eventually picked and by this time it looked like we were to be joined by Keith Johnson and Tony Blackburn and his son. I spoke to Micky about the trip and he decide to join us.

My last fishing trip had been 6 months earlier, also at Haywards Farm, which I thoroughly enjoyed, prior to going hospital 5 days later for a cancer operation on 28th Oct – probably the longest gap I had ever had since I took up fly fishing in 1982 - so was really looking forward to the day. Unfortunately, the weather was not as good as the Weather Forecasters had told us it would be and as this was the only fishery open almost anywhere. I knew we would not be alone even though the rule about fishing is allowed as long as it is local to you and I was a bit worried that this would not be classed as local for me. However, I was amazed at the

number of cars that were turning up at 9am and always being slow to get myself organised I was one of the last to get to the water. John Meighen and Kelvin had also decided to fish there.

Nearly everybody had made for the left-hand side of the lake and so as the breeze was stronger than I would have liked but coming from the North I went to my favourite spot with my back to the railway. I had spent the time since Xmas going for fairly long walks (for me 2 to 3 miles!) and doing exercises indoors on my arms in particular but I did think I had lost my ability to cast any distance like I found I had. Very frustrating and I kept trying different spots but with no success. I stayed at the fishery till 3.30 pm but never had a single bite all day. I spoke to one nice chap (from Twickenham – local?) who had only taken up the sport 5 years ago and who knew so much about rods, reels, and tackle in general and could cast further than most who could not catch anything on this side – only one fish was landed, and one person got broken by a fish for the 4 other anglers on this bank.



After lunch I managed to get on the left-hand side but so many fish had been hooked up to lunch time they had gone quiet in the afternoon. One thing certain was that the fish in the lake had all shoaled up on that side.

All the other five Rodders did well - both John Meighen and Mike Hammond got into double figures doing Catch and Release and one of Mike's fish was a double (his biggest ever there!). Micky on a 4 fish ticket had his 4 by lunchtime and went home straight away after lunch – he is usually the last to leave a fishery! Kelvin and Tony were still there when I left, and Kelvin had 7 and he believed that Tony had got into double figures too.

It certainly was not my day and all I can say is I cannot wait for Manningford to reopen!



Club Sec with Hayward's double

Postscript to my Hayward's Farm rant (Mick Berry)

Exactly a week later Micky and I decided to go to Manningford that had been open 2 days already (in separate cars of course) and I got there at 9am to find it was like the HRFFC Xmas Fish and had been open since 8am. Spoke to a chap from Frome who was weighing in his catch of 6 fish – “my freezer is empty!” I therefore decided to put on one of my little barbless nymphs and walked to the far end of Manor Lake as it was the only place I could get in. After about an hour I had caught 2 fish on my 2 fish ticket and had played another 7 before they got off. Micky was there as well at this end and was on a 4 fish ticket and doing okay as well.

It was overcast and with no wind and my casting had improved since last week's disaster and so I saw Fenn and for a Tenner plussed up to a 4 fish ticket. However by this time so many fish had been caught it had become harder and at lunch time I still only had my 2 fish. Because of having a cataract op in 4 weeks' time I cannot see too well lately and so did not change flies and in my spot the fish had seen my offering. After lunchtime, a lot of people had left so you could move about and by about 3pm I had 2 more escapees before I caught my last 2! We then went down to Squires and I just watched Micky for some time before leaving. Normally we use small flies there and that's how he started but on his first fish – a 4" Perch - it was almost snatched by a Trout on the way to the Net. He put on a large Olive Snake (debarbed) and caught 10 by that method walking round that little lake!

Speaking to Malcom as I weighed in, he added up the returns and 75 fish had been taken that day from the main lake and currently he is stocking every day because of that sort of figure. Only disappointing thing for me was I lost my Cocoons sunglasses. What a difference to the week before for me, though

Name that Fly No 3 (and last ... I'm running out !!) (Keith)

1. Big shady type of oil.
 2. Best with a spoonful of sugar.
 3. Middleton F1 car.
 4. Mad e.g. Chaplin.
 5. Hangman.
 6. Shady chap at greyhound track.
 7. Knockout pill.
 8. Radioactive worker.
 9. Hopefully does what it says on the tin!
 10. E.g. Lancaster, Wellington
 11. Touch glasses and wallop.
 12. Black Death.
 13. Grass pig.
 14. E.g. McLean of the McLean.
 15. Nutcracker.
 16. East European water fairy.
 17. Dick's weapon.
 18. Wanderer.
 19. What's said as you hook one!
 20. Carriage rider.
- P.S. I've popped in a couple of 'salties' for Mr Meighen's benefit.

Recipe corner

Avocado stuffed Rainbow Trout

4 Rainbow Trout, cleaned & gutted
sunflower oil for brushing

Stuffing

1 ripe avocado pear, peeled, stoned & chopped
1 teaspoon lemon juice
25g pistachio nuts, finely chopped
1 tablespoon clear honey
1 tablespoon soy sauce
salt & pepper

To garnish

lime slices
coriander leaves

Mix all the stuffing ingredients together, adding salt & pepper to taste. Divide the stuffing between the trout, place it in the cavity of each fish.

Place the trout in a roasting pan, brush with sunflower oil & cover with foil. Cook in a preheated moderate oven, 180° C, 160° C fan for 20 minutes or until tender.

Transfer to a warmed serving dish. Garnish with lime & coriander & serve immediately.

Club Branded Clothing Prices of items on the members only section of the web site. *Blade Printing* are based at Swallowfield and offer club sweaters and hat in Green and Blue. Blade Printing 0118 9883038.