

The Hunstrete Fishery



THE HUNSTRETE FISHERY

(Pages 2 to 29 inclusive)

EDITORIAL NOTES / CHANGES

This book was first published in 2008 so there have, inevitably, been some changes since; especially with good friends of the club passing on. Therefore, we note the following for readers' interest.

Page 4. Column 1. Paragraph 6. Line 2.

“(and he still is)” to be deleted as Dave died in December 2015.

Page 4. Column 2. Paragraph 1. Line 3.

“(and is)” to be deleted. As indicated above, Dave died in 2015.

Page 5. Column 1.

The asterisks should be ignored as they are no longer applicable in many instances.

Page 5. Column 2. Line 9.

As at November 2016, Graham Biles and Mervyn Hill have also passed on.

Page 6. Column 1. Paragraph 4. Line 9.

Luckily, Dave made a good recovery from the heart attack and went on to complete 35 years as secretary before his sad passing in 2015.

Page 11. Column 3. Paragraph 5. Line 4.

Mervyn Hill and Graham Biles have also passed away (as well as Mike Palmer and Fred Woodman).

Page 22. Photo caption.

Dave Crookes. RIP. Our best secretary ever.

Page 27. List of names.

The following members have also passed on and are sadly missed

Phil Amos, Graham Biles, Andy Coombes, Tom Coulson, Dave Crookes, Mervyn Hill, Dave Winter.

INTRODUCTION

AN EPIC TALE OF DICKENSIAN PROPORTIONS SHOWING HOW AN ORDINARY FISHING CLUB CAN ACHIEVE THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE.

This is an unashamed testimonial to the dedication and hard work of all the VOLUNTEERS who gave up literally thousands of hours of their time to produce a fishery to be truly proud of.

It also gives a good insight to what was involved in getting to where we are now.

Many will not appreciate just how many problems were involved and had to be overcome. [If only all we had to do was dig two big holes and fill them with fish]

Therefore, we are making this record so that club members – present and future – as well as anyone with a passing interest in our sport will have some knowledge of the story of the project. Then, perhaps, when enjoying their sport give up a silent word of thanks to all those who helped create the Hunstrete Fishery.

Dave Crookes

[General Secretary 2008]

THE EARLY DAYS

Older members will remember Norman Moore who was secretary for many years in the 1950's and 1960's, and it was Norman who originally obtained the fishing rights of Hunstrete Lake for the club all those years ago.

At the time, most anglers joined the club for the river and canal fishing. Norman proved himself to be "ahead of his time" on many occasions and he definitely surpassed himself with Hunstrete.



There was always good fishing, with big carp, lots of crucians [there was even a "Crucian Corner" by the dam] along with tench, bream, roach, rudd and big perch.

Dick Walker is still one of the most celebrated anglers of recent times and he fished the lake in the fifties,

although he struggled to catch anything worthwhile.

However, he must have enjoyed the experience as he wrote about it in his famous book 'Drop Me a Line' where he refers to Hunstrete as 'Lackeys Leap'.



'BLUSH' IS THE CARP ANGLERS FRIEND, USUALLY AT 30 LBS PLUS



A SIMMO 30 LB. STOCKED IN MAIN LAKE IN 2006



Then the lake gained national recognition in 1968 when it produced a British record eel of 8lbs-10ozs. However, forty or fifty years ago it was "busy" if there were ten anglers on the lake and the only available parking was in the lane outside the fence – just imagine that now!

Also, in those days there were no comfortable swims being regularly maintained as they are now, just gaps in the bushes and anglers having to often knock down the bankside rushes before fishing.

There was a Bridge Pool as well in those days but it was a tiny pond where pegs 18, 19 and 20 are now located. Full of small rudd, perch and some tench and small carp, it was difficult fishing in the summer, being overgrown with lily pads, and a few winter swims when it wasn't worth fishing anyway.

The first Withy Pool wasn't established until 1987 [see "The Timescale"] but it was all happening during the next twelve years.

THE TIMESCALE – HOW AND WHEN IT ALL HAPPENED

1975

Chris Rolfe, who was then General Secretary, really started it all off. With the support of his committee, Chris completed all the groundwork and negotiations for the purchase of Hunstrete Lake and some extra land. In the November of 1975 the then Sports Council confirmed a loan of 40% of the cost. Once again due to Chris's endeavours, it is unlikely the club could have afforded it without this help.

At the time of writing, (2007) he was

retired from work and, consequently, is an even more regular visitor to the club's fisheries at Hunstrete Lake and the Avon at Claverton, where he successfully targets the big carp and barbel. As well as the fishing side, he maintains a keen interest in the club's progress.

The club will always be indebted to Chris for this [among all his other good works] as it provided the foundation for all we have now at Hunstrete.

1987

Fortunately, Chris also had the foresight to include a large area of derelict ground, known as the "withy beds" at the same time of the purchase of Hunstrete Lake. This was located at the top end of the lake and was completely overgrown, but Chris and his committee could see the potential and, in 1987, a new lake was opened.

Many, many hours of voluntary labour were required to clear the site before digging could start, then Roger Penny [who cleared Newton Park and dug the new Bridge and Withy Pools] moved in with his tractors and diggers and, in a short time, had created another attractive lake for club members. The bare mud banks soon became green with grass and foliage, and there was a good size island in the middle, which improved the fishing. This island then became an important feature of the new Withy Pool and remains a haven for various wildlife.

Wessex Water Authority stocked it with 800 bream and 1300 crucian carp and it soon became a favourite venue for many members, with twelve comfortable swims.

Dave Crookes was General Secretary by now [and he still is!!] and he



THE "ORIGINAL" WITHY POOL



JUST A FIELD THEN. NOW TWO LAKES

oversaw the development of the first Withy Pool. Luckily for the club, Dave was [and is] on the same wavelength as his predecessor when it came to "looking after" the future. Another loan was arranged from the Sports Council. This time for 46% of the value of the work and, although it was a serious commitment, the committee could see no problems with the careful control of club affairs. And so it proved. Also, there was no way for the Sports Council to make such large loans if they didn't have complete faith in the club's management.

1988 [START OF PHASE 1]

Another stroke of good fortune was when the farmer who owned the land on the south side of Hunstrete Lake offered it for sale at a fair price.

Once again, it was too good to turn down, so the progressive committee authorised Dave Crookes to complete negotiations and, with the aid of a bank loan, the club were proud owners of 11 acres of grassed field.

It said a lot for the club's committee that the Bank had enough faith in its plans for the future to provide a loan. These plans involved creating new lakes on the extra 11 acres so, with the costs of day to day running of the club, repaying a large Bank loan and building a fund for the new lakes outlay, a good few years of very hard work was necessary for the officers and committee. Luckily for the club – then, now and in the future they were up to the task.

For the record, the committee in 1988 was



THE ORIGINAL BRIDGE POOL



BOREHOLES PROVED ALL OK

Dave Crookes (General Secretary) *
 Ian Mock (Treasurer)
 Alan Gilbert
 (Membership Secretary) *
 Dave Bell (Publicity Officer)
 Stewart Knee (Head Bailiff) *
 Keith Rippin (Fisheries Officer) *
 Mike Nicholls (Junior Organiser)
 Dave Winter (Match Secretary)
 Mike Jones (Chairman)
 Lionel Edwards (Committee)
 Malcolm Murfet (Committee) *
 Tom Coulson (Committee)
 Mike Palmer (Committee)
 Pete Connors (Committee)
 Dave McCormack (Committee)
 Fred Woodman (Committee)
 Graham Biles (Committee) *
 Chris Rolfe (Committee)
 Brian Weeks (Committee)

And those with * are still there, working for the club. (Keen or daft or what? – probably a large portion of both).

1989

An obvious move next was to form a "Fund Raising Sub-Committee" with a mandate to raise as much money as possible, and as soon as possible, for the new lakes. With the **late, great Mike Palmer** as chairman, ably assisted by **Graham Biles, Mervyn Hill, Malcolm Murfet, Tony Stone** and the **late lamented Fred Woodman**, they set to work and raised many thousands of pounds. At the time, the National Lottery did not exist so every penny was vital; and it was only after Lottery grants became available did their efforts mean so much for the club and its present standing.

1991 [START OF PHASE 2]

Test bore holes had been dug in the field and, although there were few doubts previously, we now knew for sure that the ground would hold water to an acceptable depth. There was already plenty of evidence of clay and, in fact, different types were to be found all over the field to a depth of fifteen feet. Perfect.

Funds were accumulating now, and as we knew a project of such significance would take ages to get planning permission it was decided to go ahead. All those SPECIAL people who were so heavily involved still ask themselves, if they'd known then of all that was to be involved if, in fact, they would have started it. Then they look at the complex now and all doubts disappear.

Whilst there were plenty of trials and tribulations, as described elsewhere, the good fortune continued when **Nigel Sands** became involved. Committee member **Rod Bracey** remembered Nigel as a club member who'd turned up to help on a swimclearing outing and during conversation it had been disclosed that Nigel was "something to do with planning landscapes". Enquiries soon realised that he was much more – actually a very highly qualified landscape architect. A couple of phone calls and meetings later and Nigel was on board and kindly agreed to draw up the plans and written submission to go before the planning authority.

The club believed then, and the evidence is now there for all to see, that we could not have found a better person for the job. Nigel's opening statement says it all – "As a landscape architect, environmentalist and angler, I will also be looking to create a landscape setting which

provides as pleasant an environment for anglers and as diverse a habitat for plants and animals as I can achieve; with an obvious emphasis on the creation of a balanced eco-system for fish growth and reproduction.

1992

By June, Nigel Sands had drawn up four different proposals and after lots of meetings, arguments and discussions the committee chose one to go to the planners. This one actually showed four lakes, but due to unforeseen circumstances, we eventually had to submit another plan with only three lakes.

1992

August arrived and, full of hope and optimism Dave Crookes the General Secretary, sent the plans to Wansdyke Council Office. It was for sure, a major project for such a rural area and, we were told, could be as big of its type as any they had previously experienced. Because of this, the club were expecting a few hiccups along the way but certainly nothing like the problems that were thrown up and had to be overcome. It was a further 2½ years before planning permission was eventually granted.

1992

In the November, secretary Dave Crookes was hospitalised with a serious heart attack. Little wonder considering that he was running one of the largest clubs in the country [like running a business] as well as all the extra work and worry of the Hunstrete Project [and keeping a full time job]. Luckily, he made a full recovery and as can be seen from the opening page is still in command 16 years later. [He actually completed 25 years as secretary in 2006].

1993

Fourteen months later, in October,



BRIDGE POOL PART ONE

we are informed by the planning department that a "decision has been deferred pending submission of an archaeological investigation of the site".

1994

A further six months delay before the investigation is complete. The outcome is we have to re-submit plans meaning two new lakes instead of the hoped for three.

1994 [START OF PHASE 3]

What was to prove to be the turning point and, eventually, the answer to all our prayers when in October the Sports Council announces funding for sports projects will be available from early 1995 when the new Lottery starts. We register our interest immediately.

1995

February can be a depressing month, but this year it was smiles and congratulations all round when we finally/at last/eventually/in the end and once and for all receive confirmation that planning permission for the lakes and ancillary work has been granted.

All we have to do now is find almost one third of a million pounds and get the work done. That is all?

1996

After much more frantic work and preparation the application for Lottery funding is sent. [In the April].

Then in November, they ask for more information. Only seven months for them to realise they want more information. Oh well – it is a government department – grin and get on with it.

We send the required information in December.

1997

April arrives – one year after original application – and we've heard no more. So we phone and they reply that they have not processed it any further – no reason given but, at least they apologised. Then, would you believe it, they ask for a further two lots of information. Keep smiling; at least they haven't rejected our application.

1997

Another landmark in the club's history, with lots more celebrations and high-fives. Its September and, at last, the Lottery Sports Fund/English Sports Council confirms a grant of £172,338.

1997/1998

Separate plans have to be made for the toilet block through the

Environment Agency and local council – twice as much bureaucracy – so here we go again. Documents for consent sent to EA in December. Approval granted September 1998. Only 10 months to process!! [and that's before planning approval].

1998/1999

Planning application for toilet block sent in February 1998. Approval granted in March 1999. That's everything covered now. [Almost, but not if the planning authority has anything to do with it]. See "problems overcome".

1998/1999

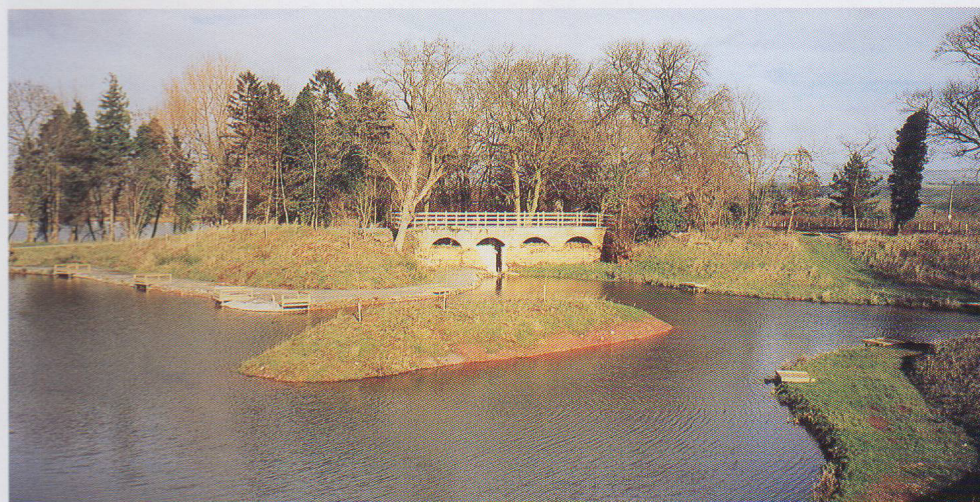
Construction actually starts in November 1998. Massive plant machinery on site. Roger Penny's men are superb workers. Everything soon starts to take shape and the work is completed just six months later in April 1999.

1999

The date is Saturday 1st May. The sun is shining and the official opening of the new lakes takes place. Councillor Tim Ball [Chairman of Bath and North East Somerset Council] does the honours and, with a good attendance from guests, helpers, contributors and club officials – past and present- we have a drink or three to celebrate. The whole fishery looks a picture in its spring glory and all those involved had every reason to feel proud [they still have, too].



BRIDGE POOL PART TWO



BRIDGE POOL PART THREE



"MOVING HOME"

DESIGN AND PLANNING

In 1991, when Nigel Sands became involved as our Landscape Architect, little did we realise how much his involvement would mean to the club in terms of money and time saved. One major advantage was that Nigel was a fisherman so he could easily translate the committee's requirements for the fishery into a scenario that would be acceptable to the planners.

It worked well the other way too, in that, with his vast knowledge as well as experience of planning matters, he was able to make viable suggestions to enhance the scheme which would improve our chances of it being accepted.

There are several outside agencies involved in such projects [as we were to find to our cost] so Nigel had to

take all these into consideration when compiling his proposal.

Eventually, we were ready with Nigel's design and presentation finalised and posted to the planning department. [It was decided not to send £5,000 in used notes with it as an inducement to "speed-up" the go-ahead. In retrospect, it might have been a good idea to have done so!].

Hundreds of hours of planning, meetings and preparatory work were condensed into Nigel's proposal consisting of maps, designs, drawings and 36 pages of typed A4 sheets.

The written part consisted of:

Introduction [2 pages]

Site Survey [3 pages]

including land survey; tree survey; other woodland area shrubs etc; lake margins – plants etc; animal species – birds, fish etc.

Landscape Appraisal [4 pages]

Apparently, planning authorities like to see lots of trees in rural applications and this suited us as we knew that not only would trees on the new hills improve the setting, but were important for the roots helping to secure their steep face.

Over 1,800 trees were proposed and eventually planted including

374 Oak
468 Ash
223 Wild Cherry
56 Small Leaved Lime
169 Field Maple
187 White Willow
169 Crack Willow
56 Scots Pine
56 Hazel
56 Dogwood
56 Guelder Rose. That is a lot of trees!



BIG PERCH BEING STOCKED



WITHY IN ALL IT'S GLORY

Description of the Proposal with General Principles and Objectives including wildlife habitat creation; landscape character – existing and proposed – recreational amenity including provision for persons with disabilities. [5 pages]

Existing Landscape Character [1 page]

Proposed Landscape Character [5 pages]

Car Parking; disabled access; toilets; engineering structures such as bridges; monks and pipework, spillways etc., *Protection of existing trees.* [10 pages]

Tree Survey [new]

Removal of Spoil

Four [4] Lakes

Extended Bridge Pool;
Extended Withy Pool;
Hunstrete Lake unchanged and
NEW Folly Pool.

[Yes, it's true – we had hoped for four lakes originally. See what happened under the ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY heading]

At this stage, our APPRECIATION SOCIETY consists of Nigel Sands, the committee and officers who gave up their time for numerous meetings and those members who provided their front rooms for special meetings and not forgetting the wives who kept the refreshments coming.

There were a number of times during



EXCAVATIONS FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

intense discussions when someone would glance at their watch and exclaim "Is that the bleeping time?"; and it would be the early hours of the next morning.

After concentrated 'jaw-jaw' for hours, then driving home and going to work (maybe) a few hours later it can be imagined the state they were in. Bathampton A.A. has a lot to answer for to some local businesses for lost production due to over-tired / non-appearing workers.

Newer members may wonder why there are steep "hills" alongside Bridge and Withy Pools, bearing in mind that originally, there was only a flat field. In fact, these "hills" consist of all the spoil resulting from digging out the lakes and if it had to be

removed from site the cost would have made the whole project financially impossible. So, once again, it's thanks to Nigel for calculating and designing this alternative. With all the trees becoming well established, many members comment on how good it looks.

We were on our way. The plans were in and the normal procedures were instigated by the planners. Objections were lodged by others, but these were expected so we were able to show, with some minor amendments, that there was no further cause for opposition. And approval was forthcoming from the "green" agencies which had to be consulted.

Then came the first bombshell:

The following are extracts from a communication headed PROJECTS BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL EXCAVATION. They're worth printing here, if only for its implications and outcome for our original plans. Paragraphs 1 to 3 show what we had to contend with, and Paragraphs 4 to 7 are interesting if into local history.

1. Under Central Government Advice issued in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 [DoE 1990] and Avon County Structure Plan [Third Alteration] Policy BE4A, the possible presence of archaeological structures and deposits on an application site has become a material consideration in the determination of such application.

2. PPG16, as reflected by Policy BE4A, and details as laid out in the County Structure Plan Third Alteration [Explanatory Memorandum pp84-86] indicate that the conservation of the archaeological resource should be the primary goal of archaeological resource management [including the planning system]. Policies KCV33 and KCV33a of the Keynsham and Chew Valley Local Plan apply.

[Talk about "gobbledegook" !!]. Does anyone out there make head or tail of this? Most of the "team" didn't have a clue but, Keith Rippin is a solicitor and was heavily involved in all club procedures and, consequently, was able to decode this fine example of Non-Plain-English. Otherwise, we would have had to employ an interpreter (i.e. someone who can translate official hocus-pocus into understandable language).

3. All three documents also lay out an appropriate staged archaeological response to the assessment of the archaeological potential of proposal sites. In particular, both make plain that archaeological evaluation and

assessment work to inform planning decisions regarding any application for planning consent should be carried out prior to determination of the application.

WHO SAID DIGGING A FISHING POND IS STRAIGHT FORWARD?

At least, we now know how to spell "archaeological" sorry "archaeological".

4. Hunstrete was owned by Glastonbury Abbey from 936 AD at the latest, and a boundary charter of this date mentions a park or game enclosure and associated dwellings, possibly a precursor of the medieval Hunstrete Park. A manor house at the site was described in 1400 as "a chapel, a hall, chambers, buttery, kitchen with a house on the south side of the hall called the gatehouse and describes a sequence of other medieval structures, including the setting of the manor house with a great moat.

5. Immediately to the north of the application site is an eighteenth century house. This, when complete, had a front of seventeen bays, and included elaborate plasterwork, statues and carvings. The site also included formal gardens and landscaping, which is illustrated in a manorial map of c1820. The work of construction was continued until at least 1797, by which time substantial elements of the house had been completed.

6. By 1831, the house had decayed so much that it was decided to demolish it. Certain of the more decorative elements were removed for use elsewhere, but later reports claimed that substantial elements of the house remained at the site.

7. The potential of the site for



WITHY POOL PART ONE



WITHY POOL PART TWO

medieval occupation is high. If this is the site of the medieval predecessor of the modern Hunstrete House, then there are likely to be other unrecorded medieval structures surrounding it, relating to the agricultural and economic aspects of the site.

What it all meant, in short, was that THE CLUB had to pay for much of the area of the proposed new lakes to be excavated by experts, in case there was anything of archaeological significance. Although we pleaded poverty we couldn't get out of paying, so after getting quotes for the work ranging from £6,400 to £3,000, it is obvious which one we accepted. [And there was plenty of "comment" about the diversity of the quotes].

At the time, it was annoying,

heartbreaking and frustrating; Not least because £3,000 represented many, many hours of hard work by the club's fundraisers – all for something beyond our control.

Then came the second bombshell:

Even though special prayers were offered up before every committee meeting, our worst fears came to pass.

The final report indicated that significant elements of the property demolished in the late 18th/early 19th century do survive, namely a backfilled moat, approximately 80 metres of revetment wall, an entrance with steps, wall footings, cobbled surfaces and paths. These represent a significant archaeological resource.



WITHY POOL PART THREE



So full preservation was defined over one and a third acres which meant £3,000 "down the drain" and significant delay, not only because of the time for the survey but [and this is the worst aspect] we had to re-draw and re-submit the plans. This was because the preservation order applied to part of the new fishery. Basically, we had lost an acre of fishing area which meant two lakes instead of three alongside Hunstrete Lake.

This meant more meetings, lots of discussion [after reducing stress levels with much swearing] and Nigel Sands having to re-draw the plans. What a star he was – the new plans were excellent and were sent back to the planners with fingers and everything else crossed.

The year 1995 arrived, two and a half years after first submitting the plans and we were still in limbo – just waiting patiently – and then it happened – February arrived and planning permission was granted. After we received the required funding [see "Lottery"] the contractors moved in and we were on the way.

Nothing could stop us now, could it? Could it? Could it? Oh yes it could!

Yet another bombshell

We're still not sure if we were the "victims" of some dastardly conspiracy but when the contractors started to dig out the ponds and creating the "hills" with the spoil the planners decreed that the height of the hills exceeded that for which

approval had been given. The site engineer argued differently but the officials had the last word.

So we had to find another location for a lot of soil. We couldn't afford to move it off-site and, eventually, our neighbour, Mr Tim Warren agreed to have it dumped on his land. Even then officialdom tried to stop this saying we didn't have the necessary authority. More hectic chasing around and, luckily, we consulted a planning expert – Mike Swinton – who negotiated on our behalf. In the end, we were left with no alternative than to call the planners' bluff by continuing to dump on our neighbour's land and let the officials do their worst ie. court action. Thankfully, they saw sense and withdrew all objections and the work continued to completion. **Special thanks here to Dave Crookes, Alan Gilbert, Keith Rippin, Tim Warren and Mike Swinton** for their involvement and commitment to the cause. Without them we would probably have lost everything.

FUND RAISING

It was back in 1989 when the committee decided to "go for it" and start raising money to pay for the new lakes on the recently acquired land, and this was five years before the lottery started.

Plan 'A' was to dig one lake at a time – as and when we had the money – and end up with two new lakes adjoining Hunstrete Lake and the original Withy Pool.

It had to be a long-term project so a Fund Raising sub-committee was set up. And so it was that Mike Palmer and Fred Woodman, both now sadly passed away, along with Tony Stone, Mervyn Hill, Graham Biles and Malcolm Murfet got to work. Short of

robbing a bank, they tried every ruse possible to raise money. In fact, they were so keen it would have been no surprise if they hadn't, at least, considered a bank raid.

A week rarely passed when they weren't planning or organising tackle auctions, raffles, angling road shows, car boot sales etc. They even pre-sold numbered plastic ducks and raced them down the river at Claverton – crazy days but highly memorable and very lucrative. Who will forget the tackle auctions which were so popular, filling large halls time after time. Word had quickly spread that there were hundreds of bargains at each event.

With the inimitable Graham Biles as auctioneer, Mervyn Hill as recorder and members of the committee as "fetchers and carriers" the evenings flew by. With raffles included they were very profitable for the club as well.

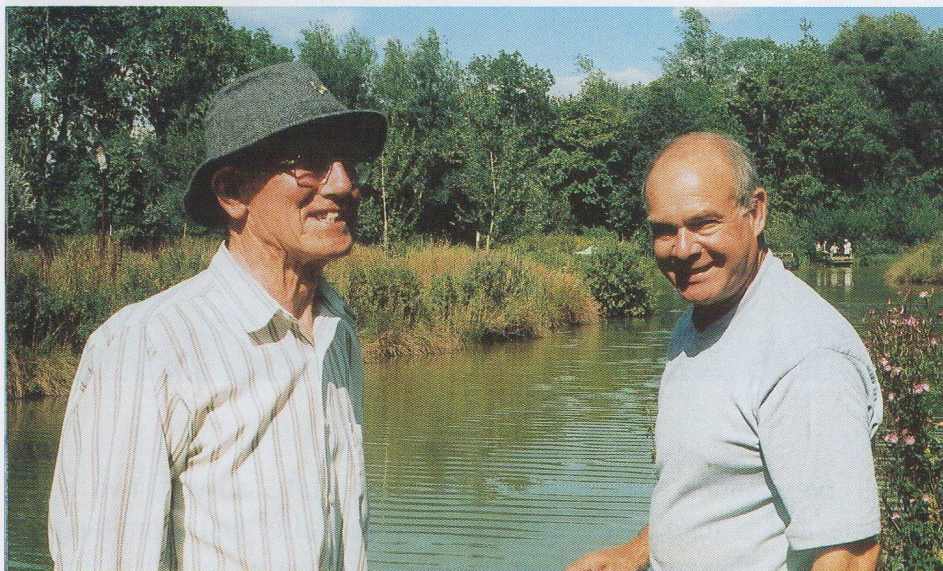
Attended by families with youngsters just starting to fish, along with matchmen, specimen anglers and pleasure anglers, there was something for everyone. Even market traders started to appear, but they didn't stand much chance. Graham, the auctioneer, could be a right so-and-so and when he cottoned on to their presence he "failed to see their bids" on many occasions; bringing his gavel down quickly to register another successful purchase by a delighted youngster or 'proper' angler.

This may have meant some lost income, but it certainly kept the majority happy.

Car-boot sales could also be worthwhile, especially when the weather was good; but such was commitment of the fundraisers that they sold at one at least once a



TOPPER WITH HIS FAVOURITE SPECIES - NOT HE SOLD OVER £500 OF RAFFLE TICKETS FOR THE NEW FISHERY



MERVYN AND TONY – PART OF THE FUNDRAISING TEAM (THANKS GENTS)

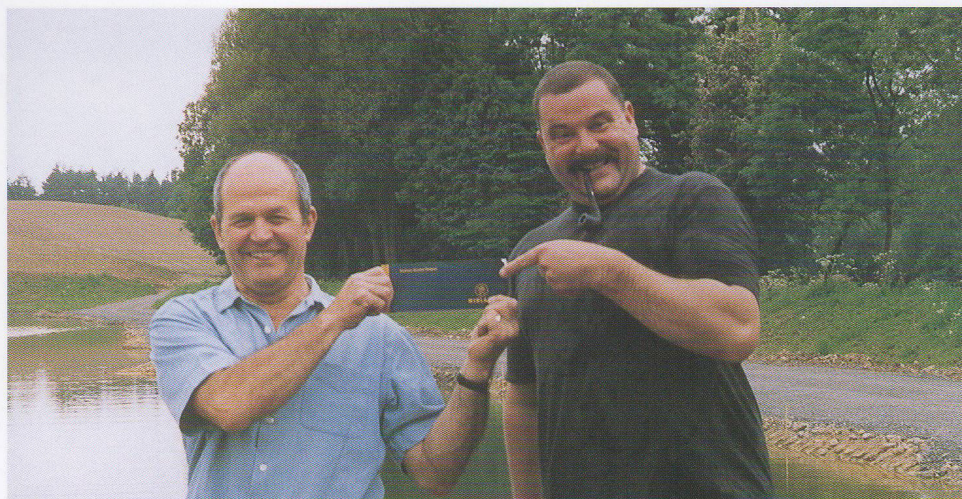
fortnight all year round. There were times in the winter when the weather was so bad that they went home with less cash than they started out. This was when hardly any public attended but the refreshment van selling tea, coffee and bacon butties did. At least it was an advantage being fishermen as they all had quality protective clothing and big fishing brollies to keep dry and warm.

The result of all that hard work was many thousands of lovely pounds in the bank, all ready and waiting for when the Lottery came along. The word "thanks" is a small word in

print and the longest, most meaningful, when passed on to those six blokes.

Although not directly involved, it is worth a note here about Mervyn "Topper" Haskins – committee member and life member – who sold over £500 worth of raffle tickets in just over a year.

Then the club introduced the Gold, Silver and Bronze Membership Scheme, whereby anglers could purchase 80 year, 25 year or 10 year memberships for a "one-off" payment. This also proved to be a



ANOTHER DELIVERY OF FISH PAID FOR
A RARE SIGHT – THE CLUB’S CHEQUE BOOK !

success and raised thousands of pounds towards the new lakes.

One aspect of club finance which is easily forgotten is all the hours of voluntary work undertaken by everyone involved, before, during and after the project. From free legal advice by the club’s solicitor Keith Rippin to members “borrowing” time on their works photo-copiers and all else imaginable in between which would have added up to literally thousands of hours and which, if they had to be paid for, would have set us back years.

Top class management by the committee and careful control by the Treasurer, Alan Gilbert, also contributed greatly to the growth of the bank balance.

And we had a very nice surprise when, soon after the project was started, a substantial anonymous cheque was sent to the club’s solicitor specifically for Hunstrete. Keith Rippin, our solicitor, kept it in his company’s account; earning good interest all the while. Then when the club had a use for it, it was worth in excess of £17,000. We don’t know who the donor was, or even if he was a club member. All we do know is that it was very welcome and gave

everyone a big boost as well as helping with the lottery application [bearing in mind that we had to find 40% of the total costs].

As noted elsewhere, when we finally submitted our application for Lottery Funding, we had to show assets of at least 40% of the costs of the project as well as keeping monies in the banks for the day-to-day running of the club, such as paying rents.

A special appeal was made to membership for loans and the generosity of many made a huge difference notably as the majority declined to claim any interest.

Then Bath City Council paid for the toilet block, Wessex Water covered all the costs of making and installing the fifteen disabled platforms on Bridge Pool and Bath and North East Somerset Council gave a grant of £5,000.

So we got there in the end; it was a lot of money and everyone involved can justly have great pride in their achievement.

FINANCE

The money spent makes impressive reading especially when it is

remembered that the overall control was in the hands of the club’s management committee – all volunteers – who started from zero; zero plans and zero £’s in the bank.

Everyone involved did it simply for their passion for Bathampton Angling Association, and their interest only in securing the club’s future for present day members and their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and on.

Purchase of the land	£22,630.00
Earthworks	£174,922.25
Construction of Spillways	£22,824.37
Construction of Monks and Pipeworks	£18,506.25
Car Park and Road	£14,805.00
Erecting Bridges	£3,701.25
Fish for 2 New Lakes	£28,520.19
Professional Fees	£7,632.32
Toilet Block	£10,281.25
Archaeological Survey	£3,000.00
Other Costs	£540.46

£307,363.34

Further expenditure in first year after lakes dug [before opened for fishing]

£14,462.00

£321,825.34

The actual total submitted to the Lottery was £284,733.34. We had to “find” at least 40% of this. We “found” £115,781.25 [40.66%].

Due to the time difference – from original application to the Lottery - to when they eventually gave the “thumbs-up” the project cost had increased from £284,000 plus to £301,007. We received £172,338 from the Lottery, meaning we had to find £128,669 which, history shows, we did. So a marvellous outcome on the financial front.

THE LOTTERY

At the time of writing this it is quite likely that the fishery as we now know it would still not have been completed had it not been for the Lottery Award. It is also safe to say that if we'd had to find all the money ourselves the finished product would not have been a shadow of what it is now.

Over the years, the Lottery has had its critics, but it has done Bathampton AA proud and we don't accept a word against it.

It was established at the perfect time for us as, having already obtained planning permission, we were ready to start again on the next massive task of completing our application.

The first task was to appoint a Project Co-ordinator who would be the club's point of contact to and from the Sports Council. Luckily for us Alan Gilbert volunteered. At the time, Alan was already Treasurer and Membership Secretary so his contribution can never be forgotten, nor underestimated.

The next step was to obtain quotations for all the different workings, with a minimum of three being required for each job. The highest for the excavation and associated work was £487,000; some £200,000 higher than the most competitive. Maybe that firm didn't want the work and purposely priced themselves out; just as well otherwise we would have had to raise another £80,000 ourselves if this had been the best quote.

An impossibility.

Then came completion of the Application Form. On its own, it consisted of eleven A4 pages of



JUST CHECKING



THE ORIGINAL BRIDGE

questions. There were a total of 190 questions, and to be certain that every answer was correct and unambiguous, to counteract possible delays, every single one was discussed thoroughly before a response was written down. That's how seriously it was taken; it had to be so.

Then, as the total project cost was over £150,000 we had to provide additional management information as part of the submission. This consisted of seventeen typed A4 pages by the time it was finished. Once again it was a task that had to be done properly and thoroughly and even though it made for plenty of headaches the final presentation was something to be proud of and, undoubtedly, made a big difference between success and failure.

The information required was split into six sections :-

1. PROJECT BRIEF

to include aims and objectives
philosophy of use and management
user profile
space requirements
demonstrate that equity issues and sports development play a key role

2. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

to produce evidence of the need for the proposed facility ie. support from Local Authorities, Governing Bodies, Sports Councils etc.
clear evidence that an existing facility or facilities in the area cannot fulfill the same need

3. USAGE/MEMBERSHIP POLICY STATEMENT

an outline draft programme;



ANOTHER BREAM COMES TO THE NET ON WITHY



JOHN STRUGGLES TO LIFT HIS NET
(NO FISH JUST HIS NET)

demonstrate the proposed usage policy in the day to day programming of the facility estimates of the increase in use with a detailed explanation of the method used to calculate the estimate

4. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

provide details of the overall management philosophy and proposals regarding the day to day operation of the facility including

management/committee structure – identifying key partners, involvement and responsibility agreements how the facility will be operated proposed staffing structure – management team details information on how any special function facilities will be managed

marketing strategy – budget, pricing policies, promotional plans health and safety policy

5. OPERATIONAL COSTS

staffing costs
premises management
provision of fund to replace/upgrade facilities
income projections

6. MONITORING AND MEASURING PROGRESS

how the financial targets for the scheme will be monitored
how the usage and development aims and objective will be measured

If any officials of other clubs who are reading this are considering applying for a Lottery Grant we believe that

probably the most important section was NO. 2 – ASSESSMENT OF NEED. It is most unlikely that favourable consideration would be given to any application without support of the governing body; in our case the National Federation of Anglers.

The following are excerpts from the Federation's recommendation to the Lottery/Sports Council :-

"The National Federation of Anglers, as the Governing Body of coarse angling recommends this proposed development, as it fills another gap in a long sought after network of facilities to provide top class facilities for those anglers with disabilities and an excellent venue for the development of angling education.

The development is within easy reach of a large number of people and can serve as a focal point. The design, layout and access show a great understanding of the needs of the target groups.

Bathampton Angling Association has a long history of involvement in angling development and willingness to help the disabled and to encourage young people in particular to take up angling and become good anglers. The Club has numerous committee and other members who show their commitment to education by being involved in national proposals and will follow this commitment through. Evidence of this can be seen from the letters from schools in the area. They will on completion of the scheme have the facilities to increase and widen their work.

The Club shows the need to make angling readily available to all by the subscription policy. It is not pricing people out and in fact with the management policies being pursued is able to offer top quality angling at

a very reasonable cost. The proposals and management policies will mean that youngsters are in a safe environment and parents will be re-assured of the children's safety.

Angling clubs have been slow to react to the Lottery for many reasons including ownership of the land, restrictions on development and the time and commitment required to raise the finance. This club has overcome these difficulties and the NFA believes presented an excellent case for lottery support for the requested amount."

One interesting extract from the completed Project Brief, concerns the "FIVE YEAR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS".

In this we had to show that the project would be self-financing within five years as well as providing funds for developments within the club. One of the conclusions was that the cost of the daily permits would have to be increased to £3 each within three years of opening.

Due to good management and the resulting greater popularity of the fishery than expected, we were able to delay the increase to £3 for over 7 years!

TALK ABOUT DROWNING IN PAPERWORK!

In addition to the Application Form and Project Brief we also sent in a 14 page Sports Development Plan and a 23 page Hunstrete Development Project Briefing.

Every paragraph of every page required careful thought as the whole enterprise could have failed with a single careless statement.

Finally, to show we were doing a



WITHY POOL

"Proper Job" we appointed the following :

Architect, Civil Engineer , Quantity Surveyor, Solicitor, Accountant - to ensure everything was carried out correctly. We also had close connections with the National River Authority [now the Environment Agency] in an advisory capacity.

So everything was ready and it was with a massive feeling of relief when a parcel of paperwork was posted to the Lottery Sports Fund in April 1996.

We'd done everything we could think of to ensure success. It was now out of our control. All we had to do was wait..... and wait..... and wait..... and wait.

Another roller-coaster ride followed. It took them seven months to ask for more information. Another five months passed with no word so we phoned to ask about progress; and they admitted that it had not been processed any further - many apologies - then when they looked at it again decided they wanted two more lots of information. The only consolation was that the application was on-going.

Five months later - September 1997 - celebration time - confirmation of

£172,388 Lottery money for the work. Words cannot describe the feelings of elation and satisfaction within the club.

At the time of writing, this is one of the most valuable Lottery Grants awarded to an angling club which is a commendation in itself, and it says a lot for the good name of Bathampton Angling Association.

HARD LABOUR FOR SOME

In addition to a talented team of 'pen-pushers' we were most fortunate to have a committed team of members who were ready and willing to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty with all the manual work that followed.

Once the lakes were dug and the machinery moved off site, some major tasks were still to be completed. We had to rely on more voluntary work for these to be completed in order to save the club from significant expenditure.

For the record, some of these jobs are noted here so that the efforts of those involved are recognised.

Probably the most important task was to work out the locations for the platforms on Bridge and Withy Pools.



TONY'S ON FORM



PHIL (OUR CHAIRMAN) IN ACTION

In the first place, it was decided that wooden platforms would be the best. Visits to other fisheries provided good [or bad] design ideas, so we chose the best points for the construction of ours. The main reason for installing platforms is to protect the banks and weed growth and, so far, this has been justified.

Then the location of each platform had to be carefully worked out. We saw that many similar fisheries had positioned their platforms just ten to twelve yards apart; or even less in some cases. The thinking, obviously, was to cram in more anglers and make more money but, rightly or wrongly, we decided this wasn't for

us and that our members would appreciate the extra space that we allocated. Time has proved this to be a good policy as it has also improved the fishing overall.

In fact, there are 74 platforms on Bridge and Withy Pools. We could easily have installed an extra 20 to 25 and are now pleased that we didn't; and we know that many members are regular visitors because of this.

For safety reasons and to make them long lasting, the platforms had to be substantial and of quality, rot-proof, wood. We had our own design and measurements so they had to be cut and assembled then installed. For

"substantial" read "heavy" so it meant a team of grafters had to work on each one and there were no short-cuts as, when in position, their safety and security were paramount.

Bridge Pool was fairly straight forward, but Withy Pool was a different story with the banks being of shale and hard rocks meaning the hiring of a mini digger being necessary to clear an area to put in the platforms. Anyway, we completed the work in good order and every angler now has a good size and flat area to fish from.

In fact, all the platforms are of such good size that we can allow under-12's to fish for free, provided they share a platform with an adult member.

When the heavy plant machinery finished, all that was left was a "gert-big" area of mud, including the new hill overlooking Bridge and Withy Pools. The next step then was to cover the whole area with grass seed. No problem on the flat, but great fun!! spreading the seeds by hand on the hills where, in some places, they were almost vertical and liable to slipping before they were binded with tree roots and plants. Luckily no one ended up in hospital.

With part of the fishery bordered by a public footpath it was necessary to erect several lengths of barbed wire fencing to maintain our privacy and this was no five minute job either.

Then a programme of establishing water plants and rushes was carried out. Bridge Pool was comparatively easy due to the mainly mud make-up of the bottom; easy to put in the various plants and they soon grew providing natural food for the fish, assisting good water quality and providing cover for the fish.

As with the platforms, Withy Pool was not so easy as the stony lake bed made it so much more difficult for planting. Plus, "our" swans enjoyed pulling them up almost as soon as we put them in. Anyway, the plants and rushes eventually became rooted and grew with the result that both lakes now look so natural. It is difficult to remember that they were just big muddy holes in the ground.

During all this, there was a regular team of workers and an amazing camaraderie existed. Friendships grew because every one was grafting for a common cause. These were the "Bathampton Bonding Weekends", epitomised by Tony Dawson. Tony was an "ordinary" member and an "extra-ordinary" person. He turned up one day at an early working party and offered his services. It was apparent that he was unwell but he always insisted on joining in and doing his share. Then it became known that he was suffering from terminal cancer and he died before he could enjoy the results of his invaluable input.

At a later date, his wife informed the club that his being involved with the work and such good people had really helped him through his later days, and that he had wanted to put something back into a sport which had done so much for him. These are the sort of unsung people who make our sport so great.

On a lighter note, the 'craic' was always brilliant with jokes and stories being shared at tea breaks – waiting for the Kelly Kettles to boil for tea and coffee – somehow it always tasted better out in the fresh air.

Then there was a memorable mishap for >>>>>>>> whose name remains a secret to avoid his blushes. It was



NEW PLATFORMS FOR WITHY

an amusing incident for those present but definitely not for poor old >>>>>>. Bet his eyes still water at the thought of it!!!

It happened on a fine sunny day during a working party. >>>>>> must have drunk too many cups of tea so he disappeared out of sight, to have a leak. A few minutes later he reappeared, white as a sheet, clutching his private regions. "I've been stung by a wasp" he whispered. Laughter soon changed to concern when it was plain that he was in agony. Anyway, he went to hospital but nobody knows what followed or what treatment was given. Everyone hoped he saw a beautiful nurse and that he enjoyed it whatever she did to him.

And the work continued. Laying out the car park, re-building swims on Hunstrete Lake, putting up a new gate by the access to Bridge Pool, preservation work on the bridge from which the lake gets its name, putting up fences on the bridge. Plus all the small jobs which made the whole such a success.

Someone [we forget who] once notably said "Genius is one percent

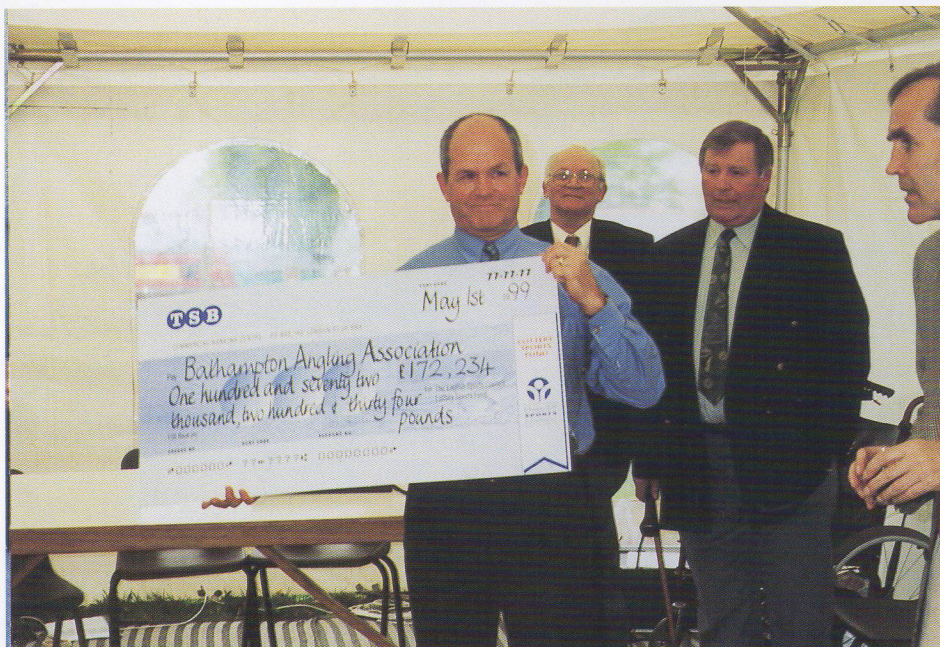
inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration". If that's so, then we've got an awful lot of geniuses in our club!

And so it happened – May 1999 when the fishery was opened to club members. We were expecting to open October 1997; only? 19 months late. Although no official explanation was given for the delay we can only conclude it was because of the "newness" of the Lottery Grant procedure and changes of staff at the Lottery offices. Anyway, all's well that ends well.

The fishery was up and running, and we thought that was it as far as the Lottery was concerned. Was it heck! February 2001 – nearly two years after opening – and out of the blue, a letter from the Lottery arrived, headed "Post Completion and Evaluation".

It indicated that Sport England is required by law to undertake monitoring and evaluation exercises for all projects that have received Lottery funding.

This involved completion of [another] questionnaire – all of nineteen A4



WORTH WAITING FOR

pages – and a site visit by specially appointed consultants who were to be given access to all key individuals and all records.

This all took place with no problems and we eventually received another letter from Sport England in May 2001. It was very complimentary; here are some extracts :-

"The monitoring consultants have now reported to us and their comments regarding your project are very positive. Both teams of consultants have highlighted the facility as examples of "best practice" for being –

- *Well designed, with good disabled fishing provision*
- *"This is one of the best examples of its type that I have monitored"*
- *In light of the ever increasing opportunity available for juniors and seniors I'm pleased the Association has developed and increased the number and standard of the coaching"*
- *"and on behalf of the English Sports Council I would like to congratulate the Association for bringing such a worthwhile*

development to fruition and for providing valuable new sporting opportunities for the local community".

Signed by Darren Letford – Monitoring Manager.

Another accolade – oh, are we totally brilliant, or what?

SINCE THE OPENING

The club's management always knew that a fishery of this size would be continually evolving and with a total of 115 fishing spots making it one of the largest, a great deal of work would be necessary, and some simply to improve members' enjoyment.

Probably the most significant development from the angling point of view has been the growth rates of the fish, especially the carp.

When selecting suppliers, the first requirement was quality. This probably meant paying more but we were confident it would be justified.

Consequently, the carp were the famous "Simmo" strain from Mark

Simmonds and the very high quality Fishers Pond carp. The biggest carp of the initial stocking was no bigger than 4½ lbs – most around 2½ to 3lbs – look at them now. Dozens of doubles; many big doubles and several twenties having been caught with Withy Pool producing most of the twenties.

Since the new lakes were opened it has become apparent that many members have found their favourite and have, in many cases, stayed with it.

With Bridge Pool being the closest walk, it was always going to be the first choice of many. Combined with the superlative sport to be had and the "intimacy" of the islands which are, in many instances, just "pole" distance away from the platform it is not surprising.

The sensible distance between platforms, and prolific weed growth means that, in many pegs, members can also achieve a fair measure of privacy.

Many commercial-type fisheries have an average depth of less than five feet but, for several reasons, we chose to have deeper water [up to 8 to 10 feet average] and this has paid off in various ways, not least that there is more consistent sport to be had all over the lake, and any of the 34 comfortable platforms can produce arm-aching sport.

Withy Pool is literally yards away from Bridge Pool, but it is so different. Whereas the bottom of Bridge is essentially muddy, Withy has, for the most part, a shale and rock bottom. There is more open water in front of many pegs making it, possibly, more of a challenge. However, the fish have thrived here too and huge

catches are regularly reported. The high natural food content, good average depths and the size of the lake, with 40 platforms, seems to be very conducive to fast growth rates especially of the carp, and twenty pounders were being caught well ahead of Bridge Pool.

Carp were the "in-fish" when we started and still are as far as the vast majority of our members are concerned but other species are present in good numbers. Tench, bream and roach provide good sport and there are even chub to 3lbs plus which show from time to time.

There have been problems from cormorants which have been costly in that we have had to purchase more fish. Cormorant-proof size fish are expensive but fully justified and with various deterrents ongoing the difficulty is, hopefully, under control.

One very good reason for obtaining Lottery Funding was our commitment to juniors and disabled anglers, and we have kept our promise in this respect.

Junior Coaching sessions and competitions are held regularly at Hunstrete and we are very fortunate to have a team of dedicated coaches and helpers. All the coaches are fully qualified including for first aid; and the youngsters probably don't realise how lucky they are to have such expert tuition.

Then, at least once a month, there is a junior competition and these are exceedingly popular and always well attended. Some of the matches are sponsored with tackle shops and manufacturers providing prizes. The prize list and trophies that are awarded at every event are the envy of most clubs and, combined with top



THE FIRST BATCH

class fishing, accounts for the large attendances.

We have always enjoyed good links with local schools and youth clubs and some supported our planning application and request for Lottery Funding; no doubt making a difference.

The relationship was built on providing fishing for their pupils and members and regular visits are now made to Withy Pool. They invariably enjoy themselves meaning more club members of the future.

Disabled membership is the highest in the club's history solely because of the facilities provided at Hunstrete. The club does have other suitable fisheries but Hunstrete is the diamond venue.

Fifteen disabled platforms – suitable and safe for wheelchairs – were originally installed at Bridge Pool [donated by Wessex Water] and now we have ten more on Withy Pool and two on Hunstrete Lake; thanks to the Environment Agency.

A total of twenty seven specially

designed disabled platforms means we are pleased and proud to offer these facilities to anglers who are less able than most of us.

In addition, regular matches are held there for Over 55's and Disabled members which are always well attended, with a good proportion of competitors being disabled; and they often feature in the prize list.

With the development of Bridge and Withy Pools it should not be forgotten that the original Hunstrete Lake remains a most important part of the Complex.

Much work has been carried out on the swims in recent times and regular tree surgery is a necessary component of its management

It is primarily a 'big-carp' water and is widely accepted as best of its type in the area. It is noted for its large stock of quality twenty pounders, plenty of high doubles and a realistic chance of a "thirty".

In recent times Hunstrete Lake has also become a noted big tench fishery with plenty of seven and eight



DISABLED PLATFORMS ON WITHY



MAINTENANCE WORK IS NEVER ENDING

pounders as well as a ten pounder – a new club record.

Huge catches of big bream and roach are also a big attraction, especially in the colder months.

Ways and means of improving the fishery have become apparent [as well as the actual fishing] and, no doubt, will continue to do so.

Since the opening, the main entrance has been improved and re-positioned. NOW, members no longer have to park in the road whilst unlocking and locking the gate; a much improved safety measure for members and passing motorists.

The pathway alongside the lake on the far side of Bridge Pool was a problem – always wet and muddy due

to springs and natural fall of water from the hillside after rain. Various remedies were tried including a proper drainage system but none were successful until the existing pathway was built over a special stone/drainage base.

Now anglers can walk to all the swims in comfort and, if necessary, take their trolleys along a smooth and flat pathway.

Having seen how well accepted the path around Bridge Pool has been it was decided to do the same at Withy Pool. Once again, a flat path was built enabling easy access [with a trolley] all the way round and this has increased the lake's popularity.

Now a new car park has been built alongside Withy Pool. Initially, it was

provided for disabled members but it is hoped that, at some time in the future, vehicle access may be opened up for all members.

The Environment Agency has provided considerable financial support for many of the improvements and we will be eternally grateful to them. However, there will always be necessary expenditure for something or other and, whilst charges will always be under review, members can be assured that the club's priority will be to provide VALUE FOR MONEY.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW [2008]

A fishery of this size can be classified as a business in its own right and with so many different things to attend to it soon became apparent that a separate operational system was necessary.

And so the Hunstrete Management Team was established. Consisting of existing members of the Management Committee and Bailiffs' Section, the Team is responsible for the day to day administration of the complex.

Every member of the Team has a special affection for Hunstrete so club members can be confident that their actions will always be with the club's best interest at heart.

Much of their work can be classified as "menial tasks" with necessary jobs such as cleaning the toilet, collecting litter, tidying the car park, keeping the dip tanks topped up, and so on.

Other tasks include scaring off cormorants, keeping reports of cormorant sightings for the annual report which has to go to DEFRA when re-applying for a

licence to shoot them.

Regular inspections of all the platforms and swims have to be made and repairs completed when necessary – for members comfort and demands of the Health and Safety Executive, as well as for insurance requirements.

All the pathways have to be checked regularly, also for Health and Safety purposes.

The complex is surrounded by fences. These have to be checked and maintained especially to keep out deer which inhabit the surrounding areas. They cause extensive damage to the young trees.

Vermin control is an important task. One of the rules states “no unused bait to be left on bank after fishing”. If anyone wonders why this rule exists, it is because any bait left behind attracts rats. Unfortunately, we have people who break this rule – meaning rats are present – meaning our team of volunteers have to bait rat boxes and then get rid of the horrible things – just to improve members’ conditions.

Regular checks on water quality are carried out and records kept so that any variation is highlighted and, if necessary, action taken. Another basic but important job, because if there is a problem, early action could easily save many thousands of pounds worth of fish.

A large collection of tools and equipment has to be maintained and serviced regularly to [a] ensure they are always ready for use and [b] save money by not having to replace broken-down gear.

These are regular tasks which need to



DAVE, OUR VENERABLE SECRETARY



WAITING TO HAVE A GO

be carried out continually to ensure the well-being of the fishing and, it is certain, the unexpected will always be occurring as well just to keep things “interesting”.

So if anyone introduces himself as a member of the Hunstrete Management Team when anglers are fishing at Hunstrete, the anglers should say “thank you” for the work being done on a voluntary basis, and for members’ benefit.

THE FUTURE?

The future certainly looks rosy and the club’s management are committed to maintaining, then improving the

quality, to ensure that members gain as much enjoyment as possible from their visits. Of course, this applies to all the clubs waters as well as Hunstrete, and long may it be so.

BUT, there is always a shadow hanging over us – potentially an extremely serious problem and one over which we have no control. This is the matter of fish disease. There are two or three common and transmissible ones including Koi Herpes Virus [KHV] and Spring Carp Mortality Syndrome [SCMS] and we continually live in fear of them appearing in one or more of our lakes. Any single one can mean a virtual wipe-out of carp, then the



WEED CLEARING ON MAIN LAKE



NEW STOCK FOR BRIDGE POOL

lake having to be de-watered, limed and left fallow for at least a year.

It is impossible to obtain insurance so we have had to build up a substantial fund to cover the possibility of such a disaster. At least, reasonable interest on this fund provides money for us to spend on the necessities.

MEMBERS CAN HELP TO AVOID THE PROBLEM:

Firstly, by ensuring that all their nets are dried out – preferably in sunlight – as soon as they get home from any fishing trip, and definitely BEFORE they visit any of our club waters.

Secondly, they MUST dip all their nets in the tanks provided at the club lakes before fishing. This is a specific club rule and anyone who fails to do so can expect severe sanctions.

A big wish for the club management is to build a Training Centre on our land at Hunstrete. These are increasingly popular enterprises at fisheries throughout the land and have many uses for furtherance of our great sport. There will be many problems to overcome first, not least its financing but there is always the Lottery [hopefully]. Having been “lucky” once, who’s to say we

shouldn’t be again. If it can be achieved it will be another marvellous legacy for future generations.

There is also a proposal in hand to install CCTV in the car park to aid security. This would be a worthwhile expense and is being actively sourced and costed so don’t be surprised if you see the cameras there soon.

Also, we have to be aware of “global warming”. The jury may still be out on whether it is “fact or fallacy” but the management wouldn’t be functioning if they didn’t take it into consideration.

The average depths of Withy and Bridge Pools are greater than many similar new lakes and this is to our advantage as the water temperature does not rise so quickly and there is less risk of oxygen depletion with more underwater movement/flow resulting from wind action.

However, we must be aware of the possible problems, so even though they are very expensive, we will probably install aerators. They will help to protect fish stocks, so once again, it is better to be proactive rather than be in fear of losing expensive fish.

All this should show members that their fishing is in safe hands.

TESTIMONIALS

Several expressions of appreciation have been received and to round-off the story we print them here for general interest.

FROM CHRIS ROLFE

The highlight of my tenure as Secretary of Bathampton Angling Association was, without doubt, being in a position to purchase Hunstrete Lake on behalf of the club.

I had always had a good rapport with Sir Christopher Chancellor who owned the lake, so when I heard he was selling up I immediately registered the club's interest in buying the lake. Eventually, I received a phone call telling me he would sell the lake with Bridge Pool and the adjacent Withy bed to the club. The committee didn't need much persuading and, after many phone calls and hard work to secure funds, the purchase was completed.

We then established Withy Pool and opened-up Bridge Pool and now had a three lake complex.

Our next acquisition was the land south of the main lake. The farmer was a personal friend of mine so making the initial approach was fairly easy; the financing of what was to happen next wasn't! But, as they say, the rest of the story is history and documented on these pages. I'm only too pleased to have had the chance to play my part.

FROM DAVE CROOKES

Many times I have sat on the bench seat that is dedicated to the memory of Mike Palmer (whose contribution is well documented) and marvel at what we, as a club, have created.

I have seen youngsters being taught how to fish, and the look on their faces when they are playing and landing their first fish.

I have taken walks around the lakes and have stopped to talk to the 'not



PROPER COACHING PAYS OFF
CHRIS ROLFE AND EXPERT OF THE FUTURE

so young', they tell me how much they enjoy their day at the fishery, whether they catch or not, can you believe that !!!

I have watched several of the Over 55's and Disabled Matches and witnessed the big nets of carp and silver fish that have been weighed in.

And then there is the Veterans Outing that I help to organise every year and I see the enjoyment that it gives to all those that attend.

I am sure the fishery will be enjoyed for many years to come and I am tremendously proud to have been a part of such a dedicated and hard working team who let no obstacle (and there were many) stand in their way in creating the Hunstrete Fishery.

FROM COLIN GOLDING

I have fished at Hunstrete for over 50 years and have always enjoyed the sport there right up to the present. I can remember fishing evening matches on the main lake when punched bread was the main bait and the man to beat was Willie Weeks.

Then there was the original Bridge Pool which was always coloured and teeming with little rudd and where we caught the tench on paste. And Withy Pool was often very weedy and difficult to fish.

Now it has changed out of all recognition and for the better; with comfortable swims on Hunstrete Lake, and roomy convenient platforms on the much enlarged Bridge and Withy Pools.

You can now walk round Bridge and Withy in your best shoes instead of "wellies".

Sadly, the crucians have disappeared from Hunstrete Lake but the small skimmers are now two to three pounds and bigger, with big tench and good roach.

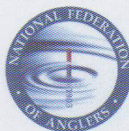
Bridge is very popular, and Withy is the 'dark horse' with big bags of carp and back-up from tench, bream and roach.

Where else can you catch all year round in all conditions? Bathampton AA have truly done a wonderful job in creating this fishery



National Federation of Anglers

The Governing Body for Freshwater Angling
National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane,
Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham NG12 2LU
Tel: 0115 981 3535 Fax: 0115 981 9039
NFA Web: <http://www.nfadirect.com> Email: office@nfadirect.com



21, Cornwall Crescent
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 5HG
21 3 07

Dear *Dave*,

Angling knows no barriers it can be enjoyed by all within our society regardless of age or ability. It is against this background that Bathampton A.A. has been successful in ensuring the future of angling for the people living in and around the beautiful city of Bath.

Like many angling organisations the Clubs fishing was based on river, canal and the Committee had the foresight to invest in the Clubs future when they took on the fishing rights at Hunstrete. What started life as a very simple lake complex has now been developed into one of the finest fishing venues in the Country and is a credit to the hard work and dedication your Committee. Hunstrete is a living ongoing project which anglers will enjoy for many generations to come. I have been proud of my association with Bathampton A.A. over more years than I care to mention. During all these years the Club has retained the service of Dave Crookes as its Secretary who has been pivotal in making the Club into the success story that it is today and on behalf of the National Federation of Anglers I wish to place on record our thanks to Dave for his hard work and efforts for angling at both local and national level.

Tight Lines

T.W. Fell
T.W. Fell JP
President NFA



Working For Angling



COLIN IN ACTION

and I look forward to many more happy days at Hunstrete.

FROM KEITH POPE

I specifically remember the weekend work parties who laboured and sweated over many months, making many new friends and having a good chat waiting for the "Old Kelly Kettle" to boil.

The jobs involved re-building swims on Hunstrete Lake, installing new platforms on Withy and Bridge Pools, putting in a new gate at Bridge Pool, a new fence on both sides of the bridge and completing the layout of the car park.

Work parties consisted of club members – all volunteers – and their children – and everyone got stuck-in.

My own involvement included building the framework for the swims on the main lake using telegraph poles and tree trunks and then filling in with gravel.

Then, when we were putting the platforms around Withy Pool, my job was to dig out the areas to place the platforms. The ground was so stoney that the club had to hire a mini-digger for me to operate.

And the work on the gate and fences at the Bridge Pool entrance was actually completed over the Christmas Holiday.

The platforms on Bridge Pool were much easier to put in and we had a great team. Four members would be making the platforms from basic pieces of treated wood, and three or four would be putting them securely in position. 59 platforms altogether.



MORE STOCKIES



CLUB COACH, ROD, WITH PUPILS

One of the last jobs was the layout of the car parking areas. I used a digger to drag long telegraph poles into position whilst other members fixed them in place.

A lot of work, all done with pride in the job.

FROM MALCOLM MURFET

I am very proud to have been a small part of the SUPER TEAM who worked together – all persevering and achieving mini-miracles – to produce a fishery being enjoyed by hundreds of members now and,

hopefully, for generations to come.

I am also very happy to see management of the whole set up to be in the most capable hands – through the Hunstrete Management Team, Bailiffs' Section and Management Committee. Long may it last.

VEALS FISHING TACKLE OF BRISTOL

are proud to have been associated with Bathampton Angling Association for well over fifty years, and during that time we have complemented each other in many ways.

Now the club has surpassed all previous achievements with the establishment of the Hunstrete Fishing Complex which has been of great benefit to the local angling scene as well as the tackle trade.

Consequently, we at Veals, congratulate all concerned with such a successful project and are pleased to provide our continued support, especially in the development of junior angling.

Jeremy Salisbury
Director
Veals Fishing Tackle

HELPERS

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge all those who helped us – volunteers and professional organizations. As it is impossible to say that anyone did more than anyone else, we have shown the names in alphabetical order;

A MILLION THANKS TO EACH AND EVERYONE.



CLUB COACH KEITH POPE REGULARLY PRODUCES STARS OF THE FUTURE



ALSO THE LATE LORD COCKS OF HARTCLIFFE [FORMER BRISTOL LABOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, MICHAEL COCKS] WHO PULLED SOME INFLUENTIAL [BEHIND THE SCENES] STRINGS ON OUR BEHALF.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, ALL THE UN-NAMED WIVES, PARTNERS AND GIRLFRIENDS WHO KEPT THE TEA AND COFFEE FLOWING AT MANY MEETINGS, SOLD RAFFLE TICKETS ETC ETC.

We believe we have mentioned everyone but, if not, we sincerely apologise; and assure anyone we've omitted that we think none the less of them.

GAVIN ALSOPP
ALEX AMOS
PHIL AMOS
DAVE BELL
GRAHAM BILES
ROD BRACEY
DAVE BURNHAM
DR COATES
DENNIS COLLARD
PETE CONNORS
ANDY COOMBS
RAY COOPER
TOM COULSON
DAVE CROOKES
FRANCES CROOKES
TONY DAWSON
[Deceased & sadly missed]
KEVIN DICKS

LIONEL EDWARDS
[Deceased & sadly missed]
MRS LEE ENGLAND
CRAIG FLETCHER
STEVE FUIDGE
ALAN GILBERT
RICHARD GREEN
MERVYN HASKINS
MERVYN HILL
DEREK HULL
MARK HULL
BRIAN HUNT
MIKE JONES
STEWART KNEE
SHANE LOVELL
DAVE MCCORMACK
PAUL MALIN
IAN MAY

IAN MOCK
PHIL MORRIS
ROGER MORRIS
MALCOLM MURFET
KYLE NICHOLLS
LAURIE NICHOLLS
MIKE NICHOLLS
MIKE PALMER
[Deceased & sadly missed]
RICHARD PATRICK
H PHILLIPS
JASON POPE
KEITH POPE
MARTIN PREEDY
KEITH RIPPIN
CHRIS ROLFE
NIGEL SANDS
WALLY SARGENT

J SEAGER
PETER SHINER
JASON SHIRLEY
TONY STONE
MIKE TAYLOR
TIM WARREN
PAUL WATERTON
BRIAN WEEKS
[Deceased & sadly missed]
RON WHITE
MR & MRS TERRY
WILLMOTT
DAVE WINTER
FRED WOODMAN
[Deceased & sadly missed]
G YOUNG

PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS HELP

Many businesses and professional people took a great interest in the project; from providing fund raising raffle prizes / specialist advice / and financial help, and we recognize them here with sincere thanks to all.

AVON ANGLING CENTRE
AVON AQUATICS
AWNHAVEN
BACONS TACKLE BOX
BANES COUNCIL
BARBOUR
BATH CITY COUNCIL
JOHN BRADFORD [AVON AC]
BRISTOL ANGLING CENTRE
BILL PUGH PETS AND FISHING
CHEW VALLEY TREES
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
EUROPEAN GROUNDBAITS
FORESTRY COMMISSION
GARDNER TACKLE
REX LADD
LEEDA TACKLE
MARBY
ROY MARLOW
MUSTAD
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ANGLERS
NORMARK
ROGER PENNY
PLUMB CENTRE
PRESTON INNOVATIONS
JOHN RAISON
MR & MRS RAY
NIGEL SANDS
SCOTT TACKLE
SILSTAR
SPORT ENGLAND
ROGER SPURRELL
MIKE SWINTON
VEALS FISHING TACKLE
WANSDYKE COUNCIL
WESSEX WATER
J W YOUNG AND SONS
ZEBCO SPORTS



WHO'S A PRETTY BOY ?
PHOTO TAKEN IN CAR PARK

WILDLIFE AT HUNSTRETE

One important contributory factor in gaining planning approval for the project was the importance we attached to "CREATING WILDLIFE HABITAT".

This always gains the approval of the planners and the various organisations they include in their deliberations, such as the local Wildlife Trust.

Not only did we stress this aspect but it has also come to fruition with a large and diverse number of birds and animals which can be seen at the fishery.

BIRDS:

Barn Owl
Blackbird
Black Headed Gull
Blue Tit
Bullfinch
Buzzard
Canada Goose
Chaffinch
Collard Dove
Coot
Cormorant
Crow
Goldfinch

Great Tit
Grey Wagtail
Greater Crested Grebe
Greater Spotted Woodpecker
Green Woodpecker
Heron
Herring Gull
Jackdaw
Jay
Kestrel
Kingfisher
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Little Grebe
Little Owl
Long Tailed Tit
Magpie
Mallard
Merganser
Mistle Thrush
Moorhen
Mute Swan
Nuthatch
Peregrine Falcon
Pheasant
Pied Wagtail
Robin
Rook
Sparrowhawk
Starling
Swallow
Swift
Tawny Owl
Tree Creeper
Tree Sparrow
Tufted Duck
Wood Pigeon
Wren



TAKE FIVE ! (MORE LIKE AN HOUR)



MAJOR WORK ON THE DAM

ANIMALS ETC:

Badgers
Bats – Daubentons
Bats – Pipistrelle
Brown Rats
Butterflies – various
Damsel Flies
Dragon Flies
Fallow Deer
Foxes
Frogs
Grass Snakes
Grey Squirrel
Hedgehogs
Insects – various
Mink

Moles
Moths - various
Muntjacs
Newts
Rabbits
Roe Deer
Toads
Weasels
Woodmice

Thanks to Keith Pope and other club officials who visit Hunstrete regularly for providing this list; very interesting – especially for anyone who appreciates the countryside.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS ARE DUE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED FOR HAVING THE VISION, DETERMINATION AND SHEER STAMINA TO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN.

LEGACIES OF THIS SCALE AND PERMANENCE ARE RARE, AND HELP GIVE MEANING TO OUR TOO SHORT LIVES.

ALL CONCERNED SHOULD FEEL VERY SATISFIED.

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

ALL MEMBERS OF BATHAMPTON AA - PRESENT AND FUTURE - SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT ALL THIS WAS ACHIEVED BY VOLUNTEERS WHO SIMPLY HAD THE CLUB'S BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.

A TALE FOR EACH LAKE

A club member took his local vicar to fish BRIDGE POOL and it turned into a lousy day for the member with him missing bite after bite.

It was really getting to him and after yet another one he shouted "BLEEP IT, missed another one".

You should watch your language my son, said the vicar who was in the next swim, "or God will strike you down".

Five minutes later and he missed another screaming bite, and again cried out "BLEEP missed it".

The man of the cloth again warned the useless angler about the virtues of silence in adversity; but no sooner had the vicar finished speaking when "BLEEP, BLEEP, BLEEP missed again" echoed around the lake.

The reverend was fuming "That's it' may God have mercy on your soul, for surely He will strike you down". And, as he was speaking, dark clouds built up over the lake and an enormous bolt of lightning forked down - - - - - And turned the vicar to ash.

"BLEEP it!" came a booming voice from the heavens, "Missed".



OPEN DAY AT BRIDGE



After returning from a day's fishing on WITHY POOL, Bill, a Veteran member, is moaning to his wife about his casting. "the distance was OK but my eyesight's so bad I couldn't see where the feeder was landing".

"What do you expect ? you're 75 now" says his wife. Why don't you take your brother Fred with you ?"

"But he's 85 and doesn't fish anymore" replies Bill.

"Well, he does have perfect eyesight so he could tell you where your bait goes" his wife points out.

So, next time, Bill takes brother Fred to Withy. With Fred looking on, Bill's first cast goes right across the lake.

"Did you see it ?" asks Bill.

"Yea, clear as anything" says Fred."

"Where did it go then ? Was it anywhere near the island?"

Fred looks all embarrassed and says "Sorry bruv, I've forgotten".



Woman to husband
[Bathampton member]

"If I died, would you meet someone else?"

Husband: "I don't see why not"

Woman: "Would she sleep in our bed?"

Him: "Probably"

Her: "Would you take her to HUNSTRETE LAKE, as you take me?"

Him: "Probably"

Her: "Would you cast out for her, like you do for me?"

Him: "Probably"

Her: "And would you net her fish, as you do mine?"

Him: "Probably"

Her: "And would you let her use my favourite rod?"

Him: "Probably"

Her: "And would you let her use my favourite reel?"

Him: "No, she's left handed"

BOOM, BOOM!



BAILIFFS

BATHAMPTON AA are very, very lucky to have a first class team of bailiffs who value the club, the fisheries and the members at the highest level.

For most of the time it is a thankless task and very few anglers understand or appreciate the amount of work they put in. Without exception, our bailiffs volunteer their services because they care and want to give something back to our great sport and the club. They also get great satisfaction from seeing the results of their efforts.

There is so much more involvement in looking after a fishery like Hunstrete than just checking permits as this should illustrate. So, next time you see a club bailiff please remember that his priority is to ensure that members gain as much pleasure as possible from their sport by making sure everyone keeps to the rules. There is good reason for each and every one, whether for the welfare of the fish, the good of the environment



BRIDGE POOL



WITHY POOL

or to further members enjoyment.

The following has been "ghost-written" from the words and experiences provided by a long-serving bailiff who wishes to remain anonymous.

A DAY IN THE LIFE, AND THE THOUGHTS, OF A HUNSTRETE BAILIFF

Hi there. My name is Jack and I'm one of the bailiffs who look after Hunstrete. "Jack" is a fake name as I wish to remain unknown, but I chose it as I've been known as "Jack the Lad" in the past.

We all work to a rota system so there is as much cover as possible to spread the workload.

The day I recall now is easy to remember as it was one of those "special" days that occur from time to time and which makes everything worthwhile; even being alive!

It was early morning as I drove up to the gate which, I was pleased and a little surprised to see, was locked. With quite a few cars already parked it was good to note that the last angler to have entered had the good sense to lock the gate behind him.

There was an unusually large number

of cars for the time of the week so I guess that word has spread [it usually does] about how well the three lakes are fishing and, as a result I guess a few had "remembered" an urgent dentist's appointment.

Then a quick drive along to the bailiffs' hut [after locking the gate] and that's a good start my mate 'Tom' has already arrived and, better still, he has the kettle boiling and the frying pan at the ready. Can there be a better way to start the day than with a strong coffee and a bacon butty devoured under a clear bright blue sky?

The bailiffs usually try to work in pairs since it can be very time consuming checking all the anglers spread over three lakes and 115 pegs twice a day, and when many like to have a chat. Also a bad-litter day can take up loads of time.

Breakfast is finished, cup and plate washed so start to think about "work" by booking-in, just like clocking on at work. It's a good system, though, as the Head Bailiff will know that the lakes are being checked, and if not, he can do something about it.

The first job is to clean the inside of the toilet block so on go a pair of protective gloves, find a brush and the disinfectant. The floor's a bit muddy but it soon brushes clean. The WC and wash basin are reasonably clean but a good wash round and wipe down has them looking more than respectable. There's plenty of toilet paper in the dispenser and that's a good job well done. Hope the members appreciate it; bet it doesn't even cross their minds that it doesn't clean itself. Oh well, not to worry.

Now to get ready for my first walk around. Check my "equipment" -

biros, big black plastic bin bag, long arm litter picker-upper and note book. The biros are to mark each anglers membership card to show they've been checked. The bin bag is for litter. Some days I almost fill it up and on others there are only a few bits of rubbish BUT I've yet to do a complete circuit and not pick up any at all. I often wonder if, one day I will; I won't hold my breath though.

The long arm litter picker-upper is a real godsend as I can pick up most litter without having to bend down and getting a bad back. And finally the note book - as well as checking permits I also check all the swims and platforms, firstly for litter and then to make sure they remain in a safe and usable condition. Then if there is a problem or potential problem I can make a note of the peg number and pass it on to the Safety Officer to take the necessary action. Even going fishing is governed by Health and Safety these days!

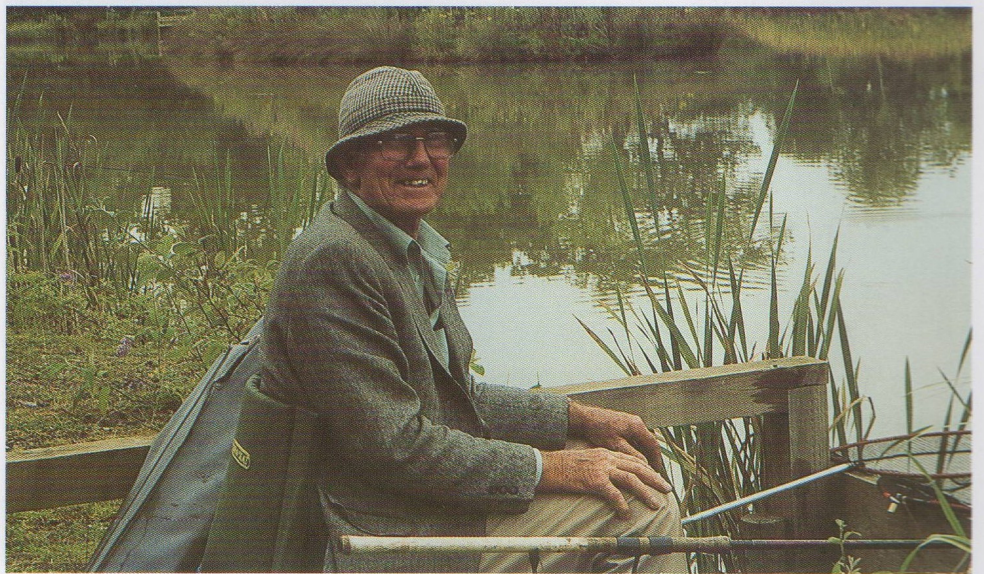
The note book is also essential for recording any details of any rule breaking in case a report has to be made for further action.

Off we jolly well go then. Tom and I work the same bank so that when I stop to check an angler he goes onto the next one, and so on until the whole lake has been done, all the time checking empty swims for litter etc.

We start off on Hunstrete Lake which is the original and biggest lake and where most of the anglers will be fishing for the big carp. There are plenty of twenties so, with any luck, I'll see one or two good fish being landed, but it often depends on who's fishing today. There are some very skilful carp-men in the club who spend a lot of time on the lake with good results, so we'll see.



MAIN LAKE



MERVYN ENJOYS RETIREMENT

I know many of the regulars and which ones like to chat and those who don't. Whilst I respect the "silence" of the latter, it is a fact that the majority of those who do talk about their catches are the most successful ones. They're confident in themselves, their methods and baits so they know they'll catch more than most even when they pass on any information.

This becomes abundantly clear when we have "Junior Carp Teach-ins" No sooner are these experts asked to help the youngsters and they are there passing on their knowledge. To me, they are the REAL DEAL. Bless 'em.

The first five swims are devoid of anglers BUT NOT of litter. It's not going to be a LITTER-FREE day today then as I've already gathered a jam tart box, a small plastic water bottle and a plastic boilie bag from a well known maker. A great shame, but no surprise.

Very soon we're at one of the popular and productive carp areas and there are four anglers in a line - all enjoying the sun, sat in their chairs alongside their rods. Two are reading and two are listening to radios with headphones on; a typical "Hunstrete Day" then. I introduce myself after a cheerful "good morning" and the usual patter of "may I check your



NEW MONK ON MAIN LAKE

permit and membership card please" resulting in permits and cards being shown, checked, signed and put away again. No tins or cans in evidence and polite enquiries reveal that no fish have been caught yet, so I hurry and catch up with Tom.

We remove a couple of big branches from the overflow and after two more successful checks we are on the opposite bank. I stop for a chat with a couple of the regulars I've got to know well over the years. Just general topics, more to pass the time of day than anything else – indicative of the 'feel-good' attitude that is around when the weather is so good.

The only downside is that I'm still collecting litter and it's noticeable that it is only in unoccupied swims. I do wonder if anglers purposely avoid swims with any litter in as they know the rule states that any litter in the swim they're fishing is their responsibility [whether it's theirs, or not].

Next I see Tom walking back to me and pointing across the lake where there is some action, at last. One of the anglers we checked earlier is now

standing up, with a good bend in his rod and, obviously a good fish being played. We hear the angler in the next swim ask if he wants help to land it. He's probably a mate as the answer is "yes" and I carefully watch the other angler, and I know Tom is watching him too.

However, there's nothing for us to bother about as the 'helper' reels in both his rods before picking up his landing net and joining the man with the fish. He's obviously a 'proper' angler and knows what's what. It's amazing [to me] just how many anglers will leave their lines and baits out and go and watch or help another land a fish, even though it's against all the rules. Perhaps it's all the excitement of the big fish that makes them forget; perhaps they don't read the rules, or perhaps they're just plain stupid. I don't know.

The fish is landed, weighed and photographed, and from where we're standing it's apparent that it was well cared for and returned safely. We hear the words "Twenty one pounds, two ounces" drift across the water so that is another satisfied 'customer'. Let's hope it's the start of a good

feeding spell for everyone and they all have great sport for the remainder of their day out. We've just about finished on Hunstrete Lake when "Oh b-----!" there's a length of line hanging from the long branch of a tree and it's complete with lead and baited hook. Looks like a pellet of some sort.

That has to be removed as soon as possible before a bird gets tangled up in it.

Luckily, the swim and the ones either side are empty so we explain the situation to a couple of anglers further along, that we'll be rowing a boat in front of them, but with as little disturbance as possible

So I put on a life jacket [more Health and Safety] and we launch the club's boat with me in it. After a couple of minutes steady rowing I'm under the hanging line but [more swearing] it's out of reach.

We keep some equipment for such emergencies in the store so Tom gets a grapnel and a pair heavy duty gloves which he passes to me. Plan 'A' was to throw the grapnel over the line, hope it would snag the lead or rig and then I'd pull it down. Easy? NOT!. I suddenly realised that when I pulled, I would also haul the boat directly underneath the grapnel, lead and branch if it broke. No thanks.

However, we had a plan 'B' and it worked perfectly. This was to throw the grapnel and rope over the branch, beach the boat and both of us heave until the branch broke. Then we were able to remove the branch and recover the offending line and tackle. Another job well done; we gave ourselves an imaginary pat on the back.

I did say to Tom that I wish every angler who had a break-off would let a bailiff or club officer know, so something could be done instead of leaving it to be a danger to birds or other wildlife. I guess many don't in case they get a rollicking but there would be no blame-game. After all, most of us have done something similar at some time.

The boat, gloves and grapnel are locked away; the line and branch are disposed of, Tom adds the lead and rig to his collection and we're ready to stroll over to Bridge Pool.

On the way we look around the car park for any litter. Not too bad; a few cigarette packets and paper bags disappear inside the bin bags.

Then, as we're about to walk across the bridge another car pulls into the car park, parks up and the driver unloads his gear and prepares to walk off. Tom is younger and quicker than me and he soon catches up with the new arrival.

Politeness personified "excuse me, would you please close and lock the gate" I hear him say. This bloke is obviously one of those "a-----s" that angling is afflicted with and could do without. He doesn't say a word - he doesn't need to - his face says it all; you'd think he'd been asked to do something difficult [perhaps he had; he looked brain dead]. Anyway, he does close the gate and he does lock it. Our "friend" must have realised he'd be wise to do so.

What is wrong with some people? Can't they realise the car park is locked for their benefit in the long run? And I said to Tom "bet he locks it next time, NOT", Another stain on a good day; another typical day.



"PRETTY FISH"

On to Bridge Pool and we can see it's busy from the top of the slope, with five cars parked alongside the disabled platforms. Disabled members are permitted to drive to the lakeside and it's always a pleasure to see them there as they're always cheerful, no matter how serious their illness or disability.

They, more than most, appreciate what the club does and they tell us so. This makes it all worthwhile and the fools like our car park friend become very insignificant in the greater scheme of things.

We soon see that the majority are catching with some landing more fish than others, with carp, tench, skimmers and good roach being mentioned in response to the usual question "Any good today?"

There are plenty of poles in evidence and it then becomes obvious that a good number are practicing for the next Over 55's and Disabled Match. Some well known 'faces' from the past are fishing and enjoying themselves. As they all originally learnt their skills on the Bristol Avon, the way they've adapted to this is

very impressive. I suppose a good angler is a good angler on any type of water.

This is more like it; all membership cards and permits present and correct. Plenty of fish being caught and no-one complaining about anything. I must be dreaming---wonders never cease!

We leave Bridge behind us and move on to Withy Pool. As we approach the first swims it all looks superb with the tree covered hill overlooking the lake, the islands covered in greenery and, best of all, plenty of fish rising - those carp certainly like the sun on their backs and seeing them all now it's not surprising that one of the best methods is fishing on top with floating baits. It's certainly the most exciting way to catch a good carp.

Three more cars belonging to disabled members are in the car park. I recognize them and remember them to be very keen. One is fishing with his ten year old grandson so they're sharing a platform.

The club allows under-12's to fish for free provided they share a platform



with an adult member. It's a brilliant rule and very popular, with enough room for two to fish from all the platforms. And it definitely gets the children into the sport at an early age, especially when there are loads of fish to catch. Even if the carp don't want to know the silver fish will usually take maggots or sweetcorn so there's little chance of getting bored.

We sit on one of the memorial seats, by the point, for ten minutes and can see plenty of fish being caught on this lake as well.

Then we wander to the far side where nine youngsters are fishing from a row of platforms. No need to check their licences; they don't need any as it's a pre-booked school trip – they call it a Challenge Day. Our head coach is with them along with two more adults who look like school teachers and they are advising and demonstrating casting wagglers.

Some of the children know what they're doing and show little emotion when they land a fish. However, others are obviously beginners, first-timers even, and their delight is there for all to see when they catch one,

even it's a small roach. More converts?

These school outings are increasingly popular – long may they continue.

Now a leisurely stroll back to the hut for a bit of lunch. Still plenty of action on Bridge Pool as we walk past.

That's good. The swim in front of the hut is empty so I get a rod out (it's always set-up ready to use – in my holdall) cast out with a banded pellet and settle down for a leisurely couple of hours.

I can see the main gate from where I'm fishing and around 3 o'clock cars are arriving and leaving. I bet some of the arrivals have skived off work to have an evening session and take advantage of this great weather.

We agree to start another permit check just after 6 o'clock. With the closing time at 9 o'clock there shouldn't be too many more arrivals after we've finished.

I've caught two bream around three pounds each and a small tench so I'm happy enough to start again.

Off we go and, as expected, most of the new arrivals are regulars who have their favourite areas and, good for them, they all have the correct permits and cards.

Another full circuit, some more litter [there's a surprise!] and it's 9 o'clock already. The car park is empty so it means the anglers are reading the rules – at least today's visitors have.

Word must have spread that some have been suspended for fishing on beyond permitted times. We know some like to try it on but they'll get caught sooner or later – as sure as "eggs is eggs". Frequent, unscheduled spot checks are likely to be made at any time and just because the regular day bailiffs may leave early sometimes it doesn't mean there won't be a late check – as quite a few have found, to their cost.

Time for a final cuppa, so we get the chairs out sit, relax and unwind in perfect peace as dusk draws in. A pheasant calls in the distance and Tom throws some broken Jaffa cakes a short distance across the lake. The carp love them and they must know nobody is trying to catch them now so they come in really close to feed – they're our PETS. But you can guarantee they'll be a lot more wary if we or anybody else were trying to catch them.

At the same time, we plan out our next day's work and agree that, in addition to the normal tasks, we will check all the boundary fences, empty and replenish all the net dip tanks, and check and refill the rat boxes. This will be more than enough to fill a fourteen hour day even without any "emergencies" like today's episode with the broken line.

That's it, then; the end of an enjoyable and satisfying day.

Everybody appearing to have had a good day, even those not catching lots of fish. Any problems that arose were all taken care of and the sun shone all day. Perhaps the next day will be as agreeable; can only hope. One thing is certain though, no two days are the same, and that's what makes it so interesting.

TERRY BRUTON

BRIDGE POOL, HUNSTRETE

BRIDGE Pool at Hunstrete is one of those lakes that every angler looks forward to fishing no matter how often or whatever the reason or season.

The picturesque, 2.5 acre lake is superbly stocked with a huge head of both silvers and carp. Silverfish catches of up to 40lb are reported most weeks along with 100lb bags of carp ranging in weight from 1lb to 20lb.

Top matchmen, carpers and pleasure anglers of all ages and ability turn up regularly each week to pit their wits against its aquatic residents but records show beyond any shadow of doubt that the most successful to date is Terry Bruton.

The 71 year old retired company director from Stoke St. Michael has dominated the Bathampton AA Disabled and Over 55's series since its introduction by the Association's publicity officer, Malcolm Murfet in 2004. He topped the aggregate list for the 2006 season and retained his title early in the 2007 series after winning 5 of the first 6 matches.

Terry has been fishing since he was big enough to hold a rod. Weekly sessions with his father gave him a



HOLD ON !

solid grounding and by the time he was 12 he had already started to win matches in the South West area.

His first association with Hunstrete was 56 years ago but it was not as an angler. At the tender age of 14 years he regularly worked as a beater for the then owner of the Hunstrete estate, Lord Popham,

He said: "I cycled all the way from Keynsham and was paid £1 and a rabbit for each day's work. In those days there was only one lake and I used to spend hours planning how to fish it.

"Unfortunately I never got the chance until 1975 when Bathampton AA bought the water."

The present day Hunstrete Estate consists of three lakes. Each one is dissimilar but over the years Terry's match tactics have proved equally successful on each.

The original lake is now called Main Lake which although stocked with a wide variety of fish, is frequented mostly by very serious carpers who spend endless hours hunting monster carp.



TERRY BRUTON

WITHY Pool, despite the longer walk, is well worth a visit by any angler seeking good sport. The 3 acre lake contains a good head of both silverfish and carp which attracts pleasure anglers, the occasional match angler looking for that bigger fish and carpers of all ages in quest of their first 20 pounder.

BRIDGE Pool is as good if not better than most match lakes in the south west. It is prolifically stocked with silver fish and bream to almost 5lb, skimmers, roach, tench, chub to 4lb and perch can be caught from almost



any of its 34 pegs. The use of light tackle along with small hooks and baits is advised when fishing for silvers but beware - with both common and mirror carp going on 20lb likely to home in on the bait there is always a good chance of at least hooking a bonus fish.

Terry says: "The important tactic for all methods is to constantly feed little and often although more

feed can be used during the summer months when the water is warmer and the fish are moving freely around the lake."

Fish behaviour at the Hunstrete Lakes, as with every other venue, changes with the seasons but although each time of year has its favourite baits, corn, caster, worm and maggot are successful all the year round and can be used to catch most species.

The 2007 Bathampton AA Disabled and over 55's series started well for Terry who simply picked-up from where he left off last year by scoring a 107-9-0 first round victory at disabled peg 10.

Bridge Pool was as usual in terrific spring form and even long, intermittent showers of cold rain and hail stones failed to deter the fish from feeding. Terry attacked with

straight lead and luncheon meat cast tight to the island's overhanging vegetation and at the end of the fourth hour he had nine quality carp swimming around his keepnet.

Towards the end of the fifth hour he caught six more on successive casts and within an hour of the "all-out" shout knew that he had already netted an unbeatable 90lb of fish.

He continued: "Four more came in quick succession and brought up the ton but then the swim suddenly went dead. I fished the last half hour without even a bite."

The following week the Thatchers Tackle sponsored veteran took second place at disabled peg 2 where he poled sweetcorn both into open water at 11 metres and close to his lakeside margins for 35-15-0 of carp to 6lb.

The carp start to breed in early May or thereabouts and for the most part refuse to feed. The occasional bigger fish may take bait but sport comes mostly from small carp or foul hooked fish.

Terry's tactic here is to pole either corn or pellet tight into the margins and use the lift and drop method to tempt the occasional carp. Thankfully the breeding period lasts only a few weeks and before the angler knows it - he's into the most productive time of the year - summer.

Every angler has a favourite method and Terry's is the pellet waggler. He targets "carp only" in matches by fishing an 8mm hair rigged pellet on a size 12 hook and 0.17 line fished both beneath the float and when using a straight lead.

He says: "The best time of the year for fishing any lake or river is without



doubt summertime. During these warmer months the fish will eat most baits thrown at them thereby luring the less experienced angler into a false sense of ability.

"To win a match, even during the summer is no mean achievement but on the match circuit its consistency that counts."

Terry's first summer win of 2007 came in late May when he knocked-up his third win of the series with a 17 carp catch of 112-5-0 and a best fish of 15-6-0 taken from peg 25 fishing the conker - a hair rigged 8mm pellet wrapped in a fish meal based paste.

He said: "I started the match with a

waggler and hair rigged pellet fished close to the point of the island but all I caught during the first hour was a few small skimmers.

"When I saw a couple of fish rise between the far island and point peg 16 I gave a couple of long casts into the area. I didn't give much hope of catching anything and was surprised when I had a bite on each of my first two chucks.

"After my third cast I wrapped the pellet in paste, catapulted a few hard pellet over the float and immediately struck into my first carp of the day.

"I was soon catching a fish of some sort with almost every cast and by mid match had a good 60lb of fish in my nets. I hit the 100lb mark about



45 minutes from time and was still catching on the whistle."

Terry's second win of the summer came from peg 24 on the far bank. He fished a hair rigged 8mm pellet shallow beneath a waggler over 6 pints of loose feed and brought 26 carp weighing 134-1-0 gross, to the scales.

Fishing the same method brought the master an 88-12-0 victory at peg 28 in the second week of July followed two weeks later by a 63lb win at disabled peg 6 fishing a straight lead and conker.

The days shorten when autumn arrives. Temperatures start to drop and whereas a few weeks earlier carp could be tempted from the shallow island ledges they are now to be found in the deeper water approximately 1 metre off.

However, nothing in fishing is absolute and the first week in September Terry once again headed the scoresheet with a splendid 93-9-0 of carp to 8lb taken from disabled peg 7 with a waggler and hair rigged pellet fished shallow.

He said: "I started fishing the straight lead close to the island but within an hour the fish started to feed up-in-the-water so I switched to waggler, presented the bait shallow and bagged-up with 19 carp to almost 9lb."

From early October through to the following spring fishing becomes rock hard. As soon as the frosts set-in the water clears, the fish shoal up in the deeper parts of the lake and tend to conserve



energy by not moving around as freely. The winter angler finds himself "scratching around" for bites and a pint of pellets is more than enough for a good day's fishing.

Many fisheries ban both meat and pellet from the end of October until spring when once again the fish start to feed up in readiness for the forthcoming mating ritual.

Terry says: "During the winter the angler has no chance of bagging-up unless he is drawn on fish but even though he may have just about every fish in the lake in front of him it still doesn't necessarily mean that he will catch anything."

However, when faced with the said scenario the vastly experienced angler still came up trumps. The fish at disabled peg 10 failed to feed on corn or any other so called winter bait and Terry's favourite method, waggler with pellet fished shallow brought him a superb 108lb catch of quality carp.

To date?????? Not finished yet – could he win the Christmas match?

Like most other top anglers Terry keeps a record of all his match results along with peg numbers and methods. He criticises both his successes and mistakes and counts finishing outside of the top three as a failure.





Terry Bruton at Main Lake, Hunstrete



Newent School Team Red –
Winners of the 2007 Bathampton AA School Teams of Four

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT HUNSTRETE IS ITS CONSISTENCY

A review by foremost angling columnist, Roy Garland

A good angling writer can always find something to write about a match even if there are no fish caught. However, a photographer is only as good as the anglers he is featuring. No fish - no supporting pictures.

In turn the angler has to rely on his experience and how well a lake is stocked. Weather conditions obviously, also play a big part in the end result but as my picture library shows – there are plenty of good sized specimens in all three lakes at Hunstrete.

Over the years I have come to realize that the bigger the fish the more anglers there are chasing them and Hunstrete is no exception to the rule. Big carp, tench, and bream are caught regularly from all three lakes along with huge bags of the smaller specimens.

I remember that my first impression of Hunstrete's Main Lake was how peaceful and quiet it was.

Its shaded pegs brought a welcome relief from a hot midsummer sun and it wasn't until an hour later when a well hooked carp erupted on the surface that I remembered I was there to work.

Normally big carp are the target at Hunstrete's original and oldest lake with the odd big bream or tench coming as a bonus. However, lately I