



Dorchester Fishing Club

July Newsletter

2008

News

Last years Newsletter reported that the Loud's Mill fish pass was currently being built, unfortunately the construction company encountered problems and work stopped! Over the winter months there have been frantic negotiations to ensure that the project got back on track. With a huge thanks to all those involved, I can now announce for certainty that it is again being built and will be completed in the next few weeks. (fingers crossed!)

When I first heard the Duchy were planning to develop the Red Cow Farm, St. George's Road I was not surprised, but I was very worried on how it would affect the River. John Aplin and I were invited along to attend a public consultation exhibition and to chat with their landscape architect.

First sight of the plans and what a relief, the field next to the river will be used for extra allotments, they will also be extending Lubbecke Way to join St. Georges Road and this will become the main route to the tip & industrial estates. They (the Duchy & Natural England) would also like to improve this stretch of river in the same way as our Lower Water Project – so we came away feeling confident of the future of this stretch of water.

A few topics from our online diary: -

15/01/2008 Damp spell: As I am sure you are aware we are in the middle of a somewhat damp spell, even the Grayling fishing has been slow

16/02/2008 Many hands, make light work: Our task for the day was to remove the fence above 10-Hatches, ready for the contractors in March to come in and erect a spanking new fence.

01/04/2008 Opening Day: Woke to an overcast, misty & windy day, thankfully by 10am the sun was out and it turned into a wonderful warm spring day.

22/05/2008 SOS!! I've lost my priest, and it's my favourite, I've had it 25 years. It's a staghorn priest, quite slender, with a bit of string tied through the hole in the end - if only I had tied it to me!

27/05/2008 Fished Well, BUT: Another wet mayfly morning greeted me as I drove to take a photograph of the swollen and coloured river. riverfrome.blogspot.com

Twenty One Years Ago - Jim Chalmers (Honorary Treasurer)

While throwing out an old writing desk that had lived at the back of one of my sheds I thought that it might be a good idea to do a final check on the drawers. There I found it, almost invisible in its black leather cover in the dark recesses of the drawer, my old fishing record book that had been lost many years ago. Its disappearance had been the cause of quite a bit of angst as it had all the records of my fishing trips between 1983 and 1988 to the Frome and elsewhere. Wife and children were all suspects in its disappearance but I suppose it must have been me who left it in the old writing desk before it was relegated to the shed.

Many happy memories came flooding back as I scanned through its pages. Days on the Frome teaching my children how to fish, accidentally catching a salmon while pike fishing and various expeditions to lochs in my native Fife.

The diary also provided an interesting insight into the fishing on the Club's waters 21 years ago. So what does my diary tell me about the Frome in the mid 1980s? Well, there would appear to have been a lot more large wild fish about. In the 1980s I regularly caught trout weighing 2lbs or more whereas nowadays a 2lb fish (for me at least) is a rare occurrence. The biggest fish that I caught at that time was over 4lbs and trout of 3lbs were not uncommon.

According to my records the average size of the trout population has significantly declined and I ask myself why this has happened. It is certainly not for the want of good river management. John Aplin maintains our fishing to a much higher standard than was ever done 21 years ago. Interestingly, some members who fish for grayling say that these have also decreased in size.

One possible cause may be a fall off in river fly life. The fish may not be getting enough food to grow to larger sizes. Perhaps I only remember the good days but, if my memory serves me correctly, the fly hatches used to be more frequent and with a greater density of flies. Most days during the mayfly season would produce a good hatch. Sometimes the flies were so prolific that towards the end of Duffer's fortnight the fish were so gorged that they began to lose interest. During the mayfly season this year I had the opposite experience. I caught fish when no natural flies were hatching by speculative casting into likely spots. Continued.....

Here is an extract from my diary for Tuesday 2 June 1987.

I started at Loud's Mill and walked down river. I met a member above Bockhampton who said that he had caught a fish of 3 lbs 14 ozs on that part of the river on Bank Holiday Monday. I caught several fish of around 2 lbs adjacent to Roger Sturge's pond. After lunch I landed a trout weighing 3¼ lbs from above Loud's Mill. Despite the rain and the rather cool South wind a prolific mayfly hatch came on about 1400 and a lot of fish were moving above and below Long Bridge. At the tail of the deep pool above 10 hatches I had a most amazing experience. A trout that was rising strongly next to the bank took my fly at the first cast. It went off upstream and into the depths with all the power of a big fish. A minute or so later I saw a huge back and tail break the surface about 10 metres upstream and I thought that I was into the trout of a lifetime. After another few minutes of tussle the monster swam towards me and I was quite astonished to see a pike with a trout in its jaws. After a few more minutes of keeping my rod tip up and applying as much pressure as I dare, the pike made another attempt to swim past me but I was ready with my net. With one frantic scoop in it went head first. The pike had almost swallowed the hapless trout but after some time on the bank the trout was slowly disgorged. The trout weighed 1½ lbs and the pike took my 7 lbs balance off the scale. I was fishing with a 6 lbs breaking strain leader.

Keepers Corner

I received an email from John Grindle reminding me to write Keepers Corner, June already, surely not, Mayfly all over, six months of the year gone! And I have only caught a handful of Trout, maybe I need to get out a little more, we all spend far too much time thinking about going fishing but then I suppose it means a lot more when we actually get there.

I think I can safely describe this seasons fishing so far as nothing short of steady, nothing to extreme, a chalk stream doing exactly what chalk streams do, really a text book season everything on time.

Ah I forgot, the end of April was a little chilly as I recall, as a consequence nothing much growing, all our beats neat and tidy, with a false sense of security I sped off to the Florida Keys to spend a few days battling with the Silver King (what a trip!) only to return to beats that looked like they had never seen a mower, my apologies, fortunately I managed to catch up before the Mayfly finished.

The introduction of a few stock fish in May seemed to liven things up a little and credit to Hooke Springs for producing such hard fighting fish.

I am sure some of you noticed an increase in the amount of small Rainbows, we did not stock any small Rainbow trout, but I think a few escaped not far from us, they make particularly good eating, I have cooked a few in my Snowbee smoker with pleasing results!

The fish pass at Louds mill is well under way as I am sure a few you will have noticed when out fishing, this will co inside with one or two river improvement projects that are in the pipeline for the Dorchester area, watch this space

Bass Fishing

Friday 4th July 6.00pm meet at Ferry Bridge

Saturday 30th August 4.00pm meet at Ferry Bridge

Dorset County Show

5/6/7 September. A great weekend (I could do with a couple of helping hands on the stand)

John E Aplin

Riverkeeper

www.RiverWorks.co.uk

Frome, Piddle & West Dorset Fishery's Association

The Association focuses on the preservation, promotion & development of fishing activities within our area. The Association is recognised by many fishermen, riparian owners, by English Nature and the EA.

If you are not yet a member, please consider subscribing to this most useful local focused lobby group which, by harnessing the resources of local fisherman can speak with a far clearer single voice.

For more details please contact: Secretary—Tony Medley. Cliff Cottage, East Burton Road, Moreton, DT2 8RL. Tel: 01929 462270

Website: www.riverfromeappeal.co.uk

www.grhe.co.uk