

# S & D A C Newsletter

May 2023



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Dear Members,

### **Game Waters Summary.**

Welcome to the May 2023 newsletter and below you will find the first piece from Baz Reece, an associate game member of long standing and our new associate member representative on the committee. Baz has written extensively on the forum and will now take a lead on the newsletter for us.

Our club was formed for local anglers and at a critical point in our history the committee made a brave decision to invite associate membership. Most of our associate members are on the game side and it is fair to say they provide a very good chunk of our income enabling us to hold and manage the water that we do and for the game fees to support the coarse side. Coarse fees raise only about 10% of our income but expenditure is around 20% varying a little every year. The balance comes from our game members some of whom are all-rounders and also fish the coarse waters. Others fly fish the mixed fisheries before the weed gets too much in the summer. As I said this was a brave decision because at the time there was a fear that the character of the club would be changed if it moved from its local principle. Constitutionally therefore the management of the club was kept in local hands by the committee being elected from and by the full members, those living within 14 miles of the cathedral spire. Nonetheless the associate members are an important part of the club, attend and speak at the AGM and have a representative with voting rights on our committee.

It was me who wrote in the last newsletter that conditions were looking perfect for the start of the game season. That was in March and since then it has rained, the wettest since 1946 and the third wettest since 1861. A cold wet start with high water levels and fishing has been slow. Conditions for the keepers have been difficult but we opened all our game fisheries for April 1<sup>st</sup>, in part because of all the work that has gone into the banks in recent years, they are now easier to manage. Weed cutting has been a difficult job with the first cut being restricted to Amesbury. There are stirrings in the air about the whole weed cutting issue so watch this space. This season will see things carrying on as in the last few years, the same trout stocking levels, and the same regime for weed cutting and the maintenance of the banks. Our catch returns have held up well over many years despite our anxieties about water quality and fly life. Detailed reports of the 2023 season will be made at our autumn game meeting as usual but in the meantime, you can catch hold of any of us if you have any questions and we will be available at the game fisher's open day later this month.

Ben Bentley our hard-working coarse side vice chair has contributed the coarse and mixed waters update and dare I say that although it is a long haul from the algae and fish kills of a few years ago back to healthier waters results seem to show we are getting there. Too many clubs and owners are having serious algae problems for us to push our luck too much with the pace of recovery but there has been a lot of investment of time and money for netting, stock, siltex, aeration equipment tree clearance and more. This will continue under Ben's leadership.

John Stoddart

Vice Chair Game.

### **Fly Fishing Open Day – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Less than two weeks to go before our Open Day!**

**The event will be held on Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup>, on the grounds of Amesbury Abbey Nursing Home, Amesbury, Wilts, SP4 7EX (map 4 in your yearbook).**

**It is a full day event starting at 9:30 am, open to all members, game and coarse, and their guests.**

**The participants get divided into four groups:**

- 1. Fly Fishing tackle.**
- 2. Fly Casting.**
- 3. Fly Tying.**
- 4. Entomology.**

**The groups rotate in the morning and by lunch time, every participant has the chance to experience the full spectrum of fly fishing.**

**We are planning to have BBQ plus drinks, coffee and tea.**

**In the afternoon there is plenty of time to engage with fly casting instructors, fly-tyers, entomologists and other members of the club and indulge in your special area of interest.**

**There is also a customary raffle with various prizes to be won. If you attend, please bring something for the raffle.**

**The cost of attendance is £25 per participant, which includes lunch.**

**To Book Your Place Click Button.**

**BOOK HERE**

## Fly-Fishing Academy Training Courses

Five Academy training courses were successfully completed in April, attended by thirty members. The courses were a real success, and we thank our instructors Lindsay Moore and Rob Doyle for leading these courses. Each training session is a full day's event combining classroom instruction in the club's office and field practice on the adjacent beats at Durnford. We are planning more courses at the end of the season, so watch this space. The cost of each course is £40 per participant for the full day and there is a waiting list in place. If you are interested, please email the office on [office@salisburydistrictac.co.uk](mailto:office@salisburydistrictac.co.uk) to add your name on the list.

A few comments below from the course attendees.

*"Many thanks for organising the training course last Sunday.*

*I realise that I have to go back to the beginning again with my casting and practice, practice, practice in order to eliminate my hard-earned poor technique.*

*Well done to Lindsay and Rob for a very informative and enjoyable day." Tony*

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*"Just thought I'd drop you a short message to pass on my thanks to both Rob and Lindsay for their wise words and guidance on Sunday.*

*The information and tutorship was pitched at exactly the right level and they adapted their delivery to meet the needs and experience of those that attended. As was set out in the opening few minutes, the aim was to prepare us all as best they could to arrive at the river bank with the best chance of catching fish. I'm sure I can speak for the whole group and say that our chances of success have been very much increased by their sharing of experiences and knowledge and it is now in our hands to put into practice what we have been taught. "Shaun*

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*"Just a quick note to say I was one of the lucky few who attended Rob and Lindsey's most enjoyable day on Saturday.*

*Please can pass on my thanks, in true fishing style time seemed to run at double speed and indeed three times work speed.*

*I came away feeling much more confident and with a feeling I had previously been over complicating everything in my mind.*

*One of our Ghillies on the annual family trip to the Spey always says "the one thing I know for sure if yur flea is neigh in the wotta yell neigh catch a fish". A sentiment that seemed to be echoed . Stop worrying about which fly. Try it and see.*

*Once again please thank the gents very much for their time and wisdom.” Scott*

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### **Coarse and Mixed Fisheries**

It doesn't seem like yesterday, and I was saying farewell to the river season, now it is early May and it seems as though the water levels have hardly dropped along some of our stretches, and we are counting down the days to opening day again.

As usual this is a short newsletter piece for the mixed fisheries, we are continuing with general maintenance across the waters, Hands Lake will be closed for a couple of days at the end of May so that we can deal with some of the lily growth and open up a few more swims. Please keep an eye out at the fishery and on the forum for dates.

Petersfinger has been opened this spring for the first time and it is fishing well, catches up to 20 tench in a day are being reported, plenty of decent perch and roach are also being caught in mixed bags. We have had a select few anglers targeting the carp on Hands to move them into Clarks, this is part of the plan to reintroduce crucians, if you have any questions please stop and ask when you see me on the bank, to date three mirrors of 10lb, 22lb and 28lb Mirrors have all been transferred.



Steeple Langford, there are good bags of rudd and perch being caught with fish to over a pound being reported to the bailiffs. We are also getting some positive reports back from Dandys and BT lakes with mixed bags of fish and plenty seen....

There have been a couple of discipline issues that have led to rapid clarification of rules, please ensure that you understand the fishery rules and boundaries for all our waters as a thoughtless deed could have severe ramifications for the club.

The Small fry events are growing again this year with support from the Angling Trust they have been published on the AT website and are filling up fast, please think of these evenings when you renew as any contribution goes towards the tackle and bait that enable these events to run. There are also some Saturday morning sessions going on that we are looking to expand over the coming year.

We also have a several schools and local groups using Hands Lake in the summer, again dates will be displayed at the fishery, on the forum and on Social media closer to the time for all these events. If you are interested in getting someone

participating or involved with helping please get in touch with the office or myself (contact details in the club book).

As previously mentioned, there is a good selection of used fishing gear at the Cart Shed, much has been donated by members and it is available at sensible prices. All the money raised will be ploughed back into the fisheries and into the Small Fry Club to benefit our junior members. There are rods, reels and more for most disciplines and of various qualities so please enquire when you visit.

(I picked up a near perfect Drennan Mk1 Tench Float rod this year, it is really amazing what can be found there!)

That's about it really, quite short and sweet, if you catch anything please send it to the office, on Facebook or use #salisburyanddistrictanglingclub on Instagram. Thank you to all the bailiffs, keepers and volunteers that put up with all my bright ideas and I hope to update you at some point in the new river season.

Ben Bentley  
Vice Chair, Coarse.

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**In the light of incidents on other fisheries in the not too distant past and the inherent risks involved, the climbing of trees is banned with immediate effect and fishery rule 13 (Page 17) will be changed to:**

**Members must not CLIMB, cut or damage trees, vegetation or other property, light fires, carry guns or use personal audio equipment other than those fitted with personal headsets on the club's land or rented fisheries, except when duly authorised by the Management Committee.**

Ben Bentley  
Vice Chair, Coarse.

### **The Musings of Baz.**

At the A.G.M I made a suggestion that the associate members should have a representation within the club which was said to be something the wise elders would think about. After some deliberation and no doubt a few too many whiskies, they invited me onto the committee to perform that role. I have been a member for thirty years and have made the journey to the waters too many times to count and like to be involved in the forum discussions and post my angling ineptitude and visits as a ray of hope to those who feel that perfection catches fish. Rest assured it doesn't as my chronicles will tell you. Obviously still under the influence Andreas asked if I would add some thoughts to the newsletter and perhaps a few experiences.

So here goes....

Now we are into May the main event for fly fishers is mayfly and anticipation of this yearly bonanza is high on the mind. The forum has had comments that it has been a

poor start to the season which is not unsurprising due to the water levels. We grumble if there is too much water and then again when there is too little, so let's be grateful that the aquifers are filling nicely, and the rivers are getting a good flush. As for the fishing reports of good grannom hatches come in but the visits and returns are poor yet there are fish being taken if you know where to look and pay attention to what is happening around you as much as watching for rises. There has also been some hawthorn in the air as well which is also good news if they hit the water. The fish may be hunkering down on the bottom as rising to a fly in the fast and heavy water is not worth the effort. Hopefully the mayfly will bring them up and feed, but it will be interesting to see how things pan out if the levels remain as they are. As I write there is rain and a bit more to come but the levels have stabilised and showing a small drop. Reports on the Wylde seem to indicate the same and is becoming fishable and signs of rising fish. There has been a cut at West Amesbury which was quite difficult due to the conditions, which did result in a small drop in the level. The keepers have been really busy as always and press on regardless of the conditions.

Once the jungle drums indicate the showing of the first mayfly I am sure that there will be a stampede to the waters and some will be particularly busy. There was mention on the forums about leapfrogging, which is once someone settled and anticipated moving upstream an angler moves ahead and takes a position. All that can be said is that there are rules, which I am sure you have all read and also an unwritten etiquette which has served well to ask the angler if they are spotting a fish, state intentions and show due consideration.

Like many I have my mayfly pattern that I would not leave home without which I evolved after sitting at the tying bench for ages. The body was easy but getting the wings and hackle right took a few years. Eventually I had a pattern and on a visit to Durnford I tried it out. My friend was with me and I cast it onto the water. It looked just right and we were commenting on it when a trout jumped out of the water and engulfed the fly on the way down! Several more followed and it is has slight variations as I tie to catch the fish and not the eye. I cannot say how many trout it has caught but before you ask...No. I am sure that you all have something that is as successful and when the trout are on them it can be about presentation as much as the fly.

I had a trip to the Derbyshire Wye for a competition at that time and had an afternoon on the water the day before. The rule was dry fly only and I spent time walking the banks and having the odd cast. I chatted to other anglers but most were tight lipped due to being in the competition. I did spend time watching them and did find a local who was more forthcoming with information as he indicated some dries I could use but said that there was mayfly about still although the hatches were small. I had a bit of luck on the dries catching browns, wild rainbows and also stocked. I did see the occasional mayfly and while walking the banks came across a pool that had rising fish and thought they were on mayfly. With no specific mayfly pattern, I tied a White Wulff pattern that was taken almost immediately followed by a few more. I managed to lose the fly and didn't want to risk the only other one I had in the box so looked for something similar. I found the fly, ginked it up and the fish loved it.

I was then set for the next day and my draw put me on a section I hadn't fished so I chose a start point that looked fishy. I had a controller who was to measure the fish

and ensure rules were complied with, being a local chap he clearly knew the water and indicated I had picked a good spot. I put on the dry I had caught on and, as rules allowed, a nymph below to see if it would get a grayling. The chap looked at my choice of dry and, with a quizzical look said 'Interesting'.

On the second cast I had my first rainbow and the day went well catching mostly rainbows along with browns and grayling in the three sessions. My controller said I had a good score as he had been talking to the others as they passed. He was bemused by the dry but agreed it worked well taking two thirds of the fish.

At the end I met up with the other anglers in my section for the coach back to the hotel for results. In my group was none other than Oliver Edwards the renowned fly tier and angler. There was talk of the mayfly and he produced a box of his amazing flies. He had caught on mayfly as had a couple of others who proffered their creations. As I had said I caught on the mayfly I was asked if they could see it. I took the still damp fly out of the box and held it out to disbelieving eyes. Oliver shut his box and ceremoniously threw it down saying he didn't know why he bothers as mine was so far removed from a skilfully tied pattern, or any known pattern come to that. The results came in and I had qualified to fish for England.

Oh, I suppose you want to know what this amazing dry was – it was an appetizer. They don't call it duffers fortnight for nothing so have faith with what you have and fish it right....



Baz Reece.  
Associate Member Representative.

**WARNING:** Using this fly during a mayfly hatch on Club game waters could seriously damage your chances of remaining a member!