

## Summer '24 Newsletter

Dear Member

I hope that you have had a good summer with plenty of tight lines. The truly terrible, constant rain of May and June made fishing extremely difficult, and we know from catch returns that many fish were simply keeping their heads down. However, our regular testing programme reassured us that our water is in excellent health and both flies and fish are there aplenty. Happily, the sun is now shining and underneath those branches and in the riffles some exciting sport is to be had.

Thank you again to all those who attended our AGM back in February. You will recall that, to celebrate our 150th anniversary, we agreed to have some special caps made and a book commissioned. The caps are now ready, featuring our 150th logo and we expect the book by mid-August. My thanks to all those involved, especially in the production of the latter with a special shout out to our editor in chief, Ian Evetts. The book is subtitled "Stewards of the River" and, in addition to a forward by Feargal Sharkey and many anecdotes and facts about the club, the river and members, it emphasises our credentials as protectors of the natural environment, thus bringing this important work to the attention of people well beyond the fishing fraternity.

As part of this same mission, and thanks to Peter and Alison Massey, we recently hosted a group of young school children showing them all the creepy crawlies that we examine during our kick sampling and giving them the opportunity to try out waders and casting. Again, thanks to Ian's splendid work, we managed to get good press coverage for this event as we have for others. We are definitely upping our game on winning hearts and minds among important local influencers. This can only stand us in good stead as we protect our waters and environment from predators of all types.

At a recent committee meeting, with full support from our treasurer, Phil Thompson, we agreed that a book and a cap should be made available to all members free of charge. The books are a limited edition and every member will be entitled to the numbered edition that corresponds to their number within the club in this our 150th year. We will be handing these out at work parties and other events including next year's AGM. Jonathan Park, as membership secretary, is coordinating the handout to members and if anyone would like them by other methods please contact him. We are holding a small number of additional caps and books up to number 150 for use in promoting the good name and work of the club.

Another opportunity to collect your commemorative items will be an event that we will be holding at Homesford on Saturday 5th October between noon and 4.00 pm. We hope to attract demonstrators of fly tying and casting and others along for what we hope will be a great day to meet fellow club members and share stories over a barbeque and a few drinks. Do keep the day free and look out for more details in due course.

Speaking of Homesford we are also pushing ahead with our plan to plant 150 trees in an avenue approximately 25 metres from the bank. As well as being an important addition to the ecosphere, this will enable us to create a rough track along the top of the riverbank so that members can reach Costello's and the gate to Doar's Glide by vehicle from the current car park at Homesford. At the moment there are sheep in the field and therefore should you wish to use this track (in a suitable vehicle) please ensure gates are closed behind you. Going forward we plan to remove the sheep and encourage a full re-wilding of

the meadow.

Our membership is in fine fettle. We are full for adult members and have a waiting list of 15, although we will always find room for junior members and would be delighted to see more lady fisherfolk. Among many highlights for members, it is right that we all congratulate Emeritus members Bernard Miller who reached 100 earlier this summer and Tom Saville for whom we look forward to celebrating his 100th in September. Both have made great contributions to the new book reflecting on all the changes they have seen in their many years fishing our waters.

We have added to our honorary members this year and I am delighted to welcome to that group:

Simon Key, whose Key Estates is such an important partner at Cromford and our landlord of the lodge car park.

Alison Bridges, who lives in the house adjacent to our Homesford car park and does a splendid job of keeping an eye on things for us there.

Becky and Steve Walton as proprietors of the Homesford Cafe who again keep a watchful eye on our interests there. Feel free to call in the café for a restorative cuppa at any time! Feargal Sharkey & Neil Patterson for their support and Foreword to our book.

I would also like to thank Christopher Nieper for continuing the invaluable support his late father provided to us around Provosts and down the Lea Road. Christopher is the Honorary President of the club.

Speaking of keeping an eye on things, we announced at the AGM that Keith Griffiths has taken on the invaluable role of watching over the river for us. We have already thwarted several attempted poachers and Keith is doing a splendid job.

In the week in which I write this newsletter we had an incident which highlights the need to be vigilant. Becky at the Café alerted us to possible poachers and Keith immediately attended. With help from the police all three individuals were found to be high on drugs – clearly a potentially dangerous situation for all concerned. Having removed the miscreants, the club is now taking action to obtain restorative justice. This brings to eight the number of poachers in this one week alone!

Keith has produced a guide for all members which is available on the web and at the lodge on what to do if you think you have spotted poachers or other miscreants. In summary the basic rules are:

Do not endanger yourself by approaching the poachers.

Do not engage with the poachers. If you are in contact, do not be aggressive.

Do not challenge the poachers.

Do not call the Police as it is much quicker via Keith as he has a direct line to their Wildlife Officers.

Call Keith on 07950 156060 as soon as you can. He lives locally and will respond immediately to deal with the situation. Put his number in your phone.

We have given Keith a full list of bona fide members. You may find yourself challenged and asked to identify yourself when fishing so he can check. If so, please give Keith your name and all will be well. I hope you agree that this minor inconvenience is for the good of us all. When you have completed your day's fishing, can I remind you to do your catch return while you still remember how many you caught and where. Leaving this to the end of the season inevitably leads to inaccuracies and prevents us tracking activity as the season progresses.

You may not be aware that in addition to hosting their annual day, the club is a full member of the Grayling society. As a result all members are entitled to attend their events. Brian Clarke who is Area Secretary for the society organises interesting talks and demonstrations from October through to March at the Bakewell Golf Club. He also arranges fly tying masterclasses with well-known fly dressers. The masterclasses are held from 10.00 to 4.00 at the Ashford in the Water village hall. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available all day with a hot lunch around 12.30. Details of all the events will be circulated and posted on our website when details are available.

Finally, I am very sorry to give you forward notice that at least three of the present committee have indicated to me that they wish to step down at the next AGM for various, personal reasons. However, this is a great opportunity for you to give something back, enjoy automatic exemptions from one of my letters sent to non-contributors, and help to shape our club as we move on beyond our 150th year.

Even if you don't think the Committee is for you, there are many other ways in which you can help as for instance Peter Massey and others mentioned in this newsletter have done. If you might be interested, please let me know and I would be happy to explain in more detail how you can help.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer and may those lines keep tightening.

Best wishes

Stephen