

Newsletter

March 2012

Survey of members

Members were surveyed at the end of last year and asked about their angling preferences and use of the club's waters. There was a reasonably good response, with 60 completed questionnaires being received by December. Members were generally in favour of not stocking the river as there seems to be a large stock of trout, judging by the results of winter matches. Also chub were caught to 4lb.

Some members commented on the difficulty of fishing the river. We will be putting information on the website on fly hatches, flies to use and the optimum time of year to use them. Comments were also made on the condition of the Members' Pond at Ben Rhydding and an update on this is provided below.

Regenerating the Members' Pond at Ben Rhydding

Working parties held over the autumn and winter resulted in considerable progress at the Members' Pond, and both members and volunteers rallied round, clearing excess growth and making more pegs available. We will be cutting weed as well to ensure that pegs are fishable. We are unable to fell trees after 1 March but will be doing other work over the spring and summer.



We have had problems at the site as a result of the adjacent car wash, which has been polluting the land by allowing the waste water (which is classed as trade effluent) to drain onto it rather than use the correct drainage system. With the assistance of the Environment Agency and the local authority, we hope a satisfactory conclusion will be reached in the near future.

The illegal drainage seems to have been occurring for some time and its impact on the site as a whole is as yet unknown. We have had great support from Wharfedale Naturalists on this issue.

The Environment Agency have offered assistance in regenerating the pond and will be electro-netting it next winter to assist with this

When members catch fish at the pond, it would be helpful if they could log what has been caught and inform either Steve Fairbourn, Barry Moore or Roy Johnson (our Webmaster). All contact details are provided overleaf.

War on Balsam!

Himalayan Balsam is an invasive plant which is obviously not native to this country. Introduced in 1839, it has now spread to most parts of Britain and poses a threat to our biodiversity because it tolerates low light levels and forms a carpet which blankets out all other plants. Bees love it as it has high nectar levels and they will literally make a bee-line for a clump of Balsam, which ensures that it is pollinated and forms seeds. If it is allowed to continue to spread unhindered, evidence suggests that areas which are now rich in native flora will become expanses of nothing but Himalayan Balsam.

The good news is that it can be removed with a bit of well-timed effort and in some areas of the country it has been entirely eradicated. We have colonies of it along the Wharfe and also at the Members' Pond and some **War on Balsam!** days have been organised to try and start the eradication process. We are co-ordinating with other clubs so that their members will also be out on the same days to try and clear a stretch of the river bank. The scouts are going to spend a day down at the Members' Pond to clear growth on the land around it. Wharfedale 'Nats' already have fortnightly working parties on their site throughout the summer and clear the Balsam then.



It is a shallow-rooted annual so pulling it up is the best way to get rid of it, ideally before the flowers open or well-before seed pods have time to form. The plants can then be left where they lie and will just compost down. Once the seeds have developed, it should be left where it is, because the seeds explode when ripe and a tall (10 foot) plant can shoot up to 800 of them as far as 22 feet. This is how it spreads down the river.

The two days for waging War on Balsam on the river are **Saturday 26 May** and **Saturday 30 June**. We will also be sending a press release to the Gazette to ask walkers and members of the public if they would pull up any plants they see, to help the eradication process. The scouts will be down at the Members' Pond on **Saturday 23 June** and we plan to have a barbeque if the weather permits, so volunteers are welcome.

If you are fishing on the river or down at the pond, do pull a few plants up whilst you are down there.

Ilkley Anglers on the World Wide Web

The club's website is now being used much more and Roy, our webmaster, has added more pictures. If you have never used the website, it is well worth a look! The address is www.ilkleyanglingassociation.co.uk



Contact details

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