

# Report to MKAA Members – February, 2014

**1) Over the past couple of months most people have, because of the weather, found their fishing limited largely to the canal. And those who have chosen the right areas have had some great sport.**

Bletchley boatyard/Willowbridge marina has been a case in point with the top four in our winter league first round totalling more than 40lb between them – and that's not counting a 13-9 pike that 4th-placed Mark Haynes had on single maggot and size 20!

A DATS club match, fished in the same area, was won with nearly 16lb of caster roach (Ernie Sattler) followed by 12lb+ of skimmers and 8lb of roach third.

On the Bradwell to Black Horse section Paul Jones, reporting through Gonefishin, had carp of 20-10, 20-4, 17-2 and 13lb in a daylight session. Not bad for the humble cut.

Another angler, reported by Willards, is understood to have had some 50 pike between 8lb and 14lb in five sessions deadbaiting between Fenny and Portway, and there is unconfirmed word of a 20 from the Simpson area.



For those 'toughing it out' on Furzton, there have been some good carp out. Karl Bean had a 27, pre-Christmas, while Ed Rainbow and Paddy Sheehan shared a catch headed by a 21 and a 20-8 last month.

One Furzton catch which has only come to light fairly recently is still worth reporting even though it dates from the summer. **Pete Newell and Neil Richardson shared 52 fish to 20lb+ – for around 800lb – in a 48 hour session!**



● Above: winter league first round winner Steve Rose with 12-9 Boatyard net

● Left: Paul Jones with 20-10 (one of 4 carp for 70+lb) in one daylight session on Bradwell cut

**2) At MKAA's request the Parks Trust agreed to start opening up the worst affected swims on the Tear Drops (thank you, Parks Trust) and get rid of the 'tackle trap' branches overhanging some of them.**

Contractors moved in in late January and, on TD 1, took a chainsaw to the really substantial 'self-set' trees and boughs which had been choking pegs at the narrow end on the path side – opening them up to a degree which means they probably won't need further attention for several years.

On other pegs they took encroaching bushes off at ground level, to ensure that each peg is now in a 4 or more metre wide gap, with nothing overhead. They were expecting to be able to do the same on Tear Drop 2 during the time available.

Tear Drop 4 is due the same treatment next year, along with Lodge.

We are also hopeful that we can get a swim-blocking fallen tree removed from the pond at the back of Lodge well before then.

**3) The bad news from Wolverton Mill is that, during the continuing floods, an intermittently visiting otter appears to have made it its private larder.**



● Making a splash as another 'tackle trap' is removed from a peg on Tear Drop 1...

more follows....



● Followed by clearing away

Quite how many fish we have lost is hard to estimate, but the total to date is probably at least 30. Otters are one of the most legally protected species in the UK.

People walking their dogs round the lake seem to have failed to deter it, and the only real, practical, hope is that when the river subsides it will go back to eating its food of choice, crayfish in the river.

**4) In a positive attempt to get MKAA's junior coaching team into more local schools,** we have taken advantage of an opportunity flagged-up by the Angling Trust and are distributing custom produced

advertising material among delegates attending a forthcoming Bucks and MK conference of PE and senior teachers.

**5) Plans for this year's Furzton Festival are well advanced** thanks to vice chairman Gary Maton. Willen Hospice is likely to gain an extra benefit this year due to a 48 hour match (all species count) being planned for Willen (both lakes) in May. MKAA is lifting its ban on keepnets on Willen South during the traditional close season for the duration of the match. Organised by his friends, it is being staged as a memorial to the late Dave McKnight who, sadly, died last year.

**6) MKAA has not had any reported water quality problems since the turn of the year...**just rather too much of it in the wrong place at the wrong time.

**7) Among the many external meetings routinely attended on behalf of members, MKAA is to be represented at an upcoming Canal & River Trust gathering** by executive member John Hewison and assistant secretary Ian Greenhood.

**8) The Angling Trust has recently issued a statement announcing its success in getting an improvement in the red-tape/difficulties of getting consent to 'control' (shoot) cormorants.**

While progress has been made, there might have been more had not the previous environment minister – who appeared to have become quite favourable towards fishery interests – been moved out of his post in a cabinet reshuffle.

His replacement is unlikely to be so well aware of our problems...though because of the furore surrounding the flooding in Somerset, he may not be much longer in post. Listen out for Mr Cameron saying 'he has my full support'. If the PM says that then my guess is that the minister will probably be out of a job shortly afterwards. Who would replace him is anyone's guess.



● Karl Bean with Furzton winter 27



● Ed Rainbow & Paddy Sheehan with pair of Furzton winter 20s

Back to what is being proposed: two or three new regional Angling Trust officers (probably externally funded) will be building up dossiers on cormorant numbers to be used as a basis for allocating shooting-to-kill licences which will be divvied up among applicants from a national cull-total of 3,000 birds (the same figure as last year).

While many – including the AT – will

*more follows....*

think 3,000 is not enough nationally, the real downside is that the regional officers will be relying largely on anglers' reports of cormorant sightings to build their picture of the predation problem.

**Generally anglers as a group, while keen to moan, have proved woefully inadequate at making such reports, leading to significant under estimates of cormorant numbers.**

If there is an upside to that tendency, it is that where fishery owners/clubs and anglers ARE prepared to make the effort to report cormorant sightings, they are likely to get an enhanced quota while the rest go largely without.

**So it is up to all of us to do our bit if we value our sport.**

9) In mid January the **Environment Agency again added several hundred more small barbel to the local Ouse**, this time in the Olney area.

10) February 1 saw the Tackle Hub tackle opening in the premises vacated by the former MK Angling Centre, which should ensure that MKAA and its member clubs continue to have a ticket sales outlet in the Bletchley area.



11) Work on establishing an Upper and Bedford Ouse catchment partnership – **with the aim of tapping into large sums of government and European money** (and other sources, too) **for major improvements across the river network** – is proceeding.

It is one of 100 such partnerships across England and Wales and is based on the rational concept of river management, restoration, improvement and flood control work being organised on the basis of 'catchment areas' – the areas from which rainwater drains downhill to feed any particular watercourse.

At this stage, locally its founders are involved in largely administrative and highly complex preparatory work. MKAA and the Parks Trust are heavily involved, together with the likes of Anglian Water, the National Farmers' Union and wildlife groups.

The Environment Agency is very much a major player at all levels, probably THE major player... but, unfortunately, is currently going through yet another cost-cutting 're-organisation' intended to see one in eight of its people losing their jobs ■

Enjoy your fishing

**Trevor Johnson** – chairman, MKAA

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