

OLNEY & CLIFTON FISHING ASSOCIATION

Maintenance
update!

2021: A season to
get excited for!



ANNUAL UPDATE

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Olney & Clifton
Fishing Association

2021 Edition

Editor - Nathan Flynn



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Hello and welcome to the second issue of our pre-season review.

Since I first wrote in issue one two years ago an awful lot has happened to all of us. The 20/21 season was difficult for everyone. To you, the members old and new I say a heartfelt thank you for your understanding and support.

Devastating as it is, Covid19 has been good for us as a club. We have doubled our membership thanks to government foresight to allow angling to continue, and the sad fact that people had more spare time due to redundancies and furlough. A huge shout out must also go to the Angling Trust for pleading the Angler's cause.

During the last year, despite restrictions O.C.F.A. has not been idle! Work has continued on improving our waters and the access to them and the results have been spectacular! We were fortunate enough to be able to fish some of the more prestigious matches before restrictions took hold, and it's thanks to our splendid committee and their organisation that things worked so well.

Modern technology has played an important part for the committee this year. All of our meetings have been held on "Zoom" and day to day contact via "Whats App". The fact that it's all come together is testament to the calibre of the people we are fortunate to have running the club. We now also have a fledgling YouTube channel which will grow as we move forward.

The coming new season, 21/22 is looking very good indeed, the waters are in first class condition and a rejuvenated membership all bodes well for a great time to be enjoyed by all of us.

Please enjoy this second issue, make use of the information, but above all, enjoy your fishing.

All the very best for the season, tight lines and I look forward to seeing you on the bank.

Barry Testro

President



Chris Hart

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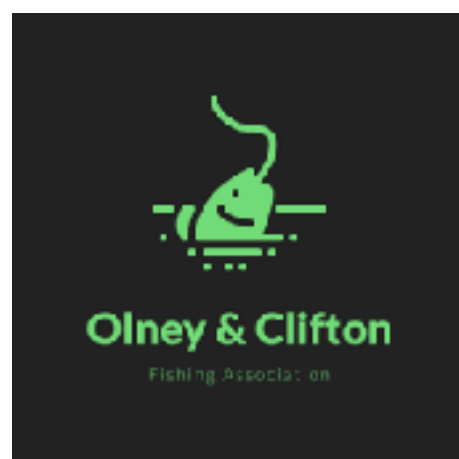
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A VIEW FROM THE BANK

Apart from the makers of masks and face shields, the fishing industry has been one of the few branches of the economy to have profited from the pandemic. Anglers have returned in droves and our club has been no exception. We had a record membership, even surpassing the glory days of the barbel boom, and more than doubled previous season's figures.

The current committee inherited a healthy bank balance but our united view is that our role is not to make that grow unnecessarily but to use the money from our members to improve all aspects of their fishing experience. So last season we spent nearly £6000 on materials to build new platforms, setting up a much-needed carpark at Lavendon Mill and great work turning the carpark at the Goosey from a quagmire to how it is now. We all wish for an end to the pandemic and as a club we accept that our membership numbers will suffer when this happens. However because of the concerted efforts to improve the pegs, river access etc made over the last few years then hopefully most of our annual expenditure in the future will just be maintenance, unless anyone has a lake they're selling cheap...

Damon Flynn - Club Treasurer



SECRETARY UPDATE

The 2020-21 fishing season was an exceedingly busy one for the club. As club secretary, I was tasked with dealing with memberships purchased online, as well as all of our social media platforms and website and any correspondence, of which there has been plenty!

One key recent development has been the introduction of our club YouTube channel. With video introductions to each of our sections of water, along with our online AGM, we needed a database to store the content. Making the channel has offered us a platform to both promote our club, but also inform members with instructional videos. The channel has only been active a few months, but has had some really good traffic. The channel will be added to regularly, with additional breakdowns of our waters, along with some match footage and any other content that may be of interest!

As a club, we are lucky enough to have had some excellent exposure in various forms of media. We have a strong relationship with editors of angling magazines who are in touch with our Facebook page to keep close tabs on any stories. In addition to this, we were lucky enough to feature on Talk Sport Radio, discussing our 'Barbel Bounty' along with some developments within our club. All of these opportunities not only promote our club, but also helping to increase the participation in the sport that we all love.

Finally, our Facebook page and website have seen some incredible stats! When I started the Facebook page back in 2018, I set a target of 100 followers. We are currently looking at around 700 people following our page, a true testament to our beautiful river and the amazing fish it produces. Likewise, the website sees traffic coming from all across the globe, coupled with many messages about our waters.

These are really exciting times for the club and our sport as a whole, so long may the hard work continue!

Nathan Flynn - Honorary Secretary

MATCH UPDATE!

2020-21 was a very mixed bag for matches on OCFA waters, similarly to the rest of the country. With the lockdown restrictions, a number of matches simply were not possible, so let's hope this current season's matches will not be disrupted by this terrible pandemic. Regardless of the situation, we did get to fish a reasonable number of matches, of which some of the highlight are discussed below.

For starters the evening points series took place, it was a close run competition with Paul Caton and Pete Laughton battling it out at the top of the leaderboard, with Paul just edging Pete out. We also managed to get in three weekend matches, the Fiesta open, the Brimley Cup and The Royal British Legion open, these matches each attracted thirty to forty anglers. A fair number of Tuesday opens took place with attendances averaging twenty anglers.

All the qualifying matches for the end of season Grand Final got fished, the downside was that due to the restrictions the final did not take place, meaning that the re-arranged date is now scheduled for early this season.

The Pike and Perch series was badly affected with only one match being fished out of the three rounds. Even so, Andy Crouch put together such a big catch he would have been difficult to catch anyway, so the trophy was awarded to Andy.

The Garner Gas Services two rod match was fished on very VERY windy day and our own President Barry Testro was the overall winner on the day.

Our biggest match The Ron Bull Open was extremely well supported with all the 70 tickets selling out within a couple of days. The winner was Grant Howie with a twenty pounds plus net of silvers. On the day 449 pounds of fish were caught with an average of over 6 pounds per angler, which testifies the amount of silvers in the river.

All being well this season we will continue to provide a full match schedule, with the qualifiers & grand final, a number of weekend opens and our Tuesday opens along with the successful evening points series that has already been fished.

We look forward to running The Ron Bull Open in September, a competition which relies on lots of help from the members of the club which we are most grateful for. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page to see if you could help us out with some of the prep work closer to the time.

For those of you that like to fish in a different sort of way we have the any method pike and perch series of three matches. Another any method match is the Garner Gas two rod match with any species of fish counting.

On a slightly sad note last season we lost a much loved member, Les Wallis. Les has fished matches down Olney since the early seventies and will be very much missed. We have spoken to Les' family about have a match in his honour and this has been agreed. This is going to be a team of four match, something a little different for us and which I am very excited about.

Thats enough from me - here is to a great season!

Barney

MATCH UPDATE!

Results



The Evening Points Series

The points series saw an excellent number of anglers descend on our river over a four match evening series. With matches being only three hours, there were some incredible weights caught over the series, including a 16lb haul of dace by Paul Caton. Heading into the final match, it was all to play for with three anglers in line to potentially take the glory. Despite tough draws in the final match, previous weights were enough to mean that all the top three remained the same. Paul Caton took the top prize with Pete Laughton equal on points (lost out on weight), and Dave Tebbutt taking the third place.

The Ron Bull Open

Our flagship event, the Ron Bull Open, saw another sellout after just 24 hours of tickets being on sale. The 74-peg big money match in memory of a club legend, saw some hot temperatures and low clear water. Despite this, the weights were surprisingly impressive. A real reflection of the star-studded line up! Fished throughout our waters from the Goosey through to Lavendon Mill, certain areas definitely seemed to produce, even with the conditions. Grant Howie won the match from under Lavendon Weir with a huge 20lb 8oz, taking home over £700 for his efforts. Second place was Paul Abbott in Clarke's with 16lb 2oz. Mark Pollard managed 14lb 10oz also in Clarke's, with James Lewis managing 14lb for fourth place, again under Lavendon Weir.



The Garner Gas Services Two Rod Special

The GGS cup really bucks the trend in terms of match fishing. With two rods, any method and all fish counting, it really is something for all anglers. Backed by Garner Gas Services along with some donated prizes from Inspired Angling and James Smith Angling, there was plenty of money and prizes up for grabs. The match was won by Barry Testro from an unexpected peg with a couple of nice pike amongst some smalls for 13lb 11oz. There were also bonus £100 payouts for the biggest fish which went to Barry also for his 6lb 7oz pike, and £100 for the fish that was the biggest percentage of an OCFA record, going to Pete Lima for an eel at 3lb 6oz.

The Royal British Legion

Delayed due to COVID, the annual RBL fixture was fished on a bitterly cold December day in 2020. With the river running high and pushing through due to the rain the previous day, the match venue was moved at short notice to be fished in a number of different sections to help ensure all areas were fishable. With the conditions on the main river, it was no surprise that a number of anglers struggled. The majority of the fish were caught on the backwaters, with some excellent weights being put together.

On the day, the winner was Stuart Cheetham who produced an incredible haul of small bleak for 15lb 9oz. A really impressive and hard earned win working the whip to hand in the 'Pensioners' pegs at the Goosey. In second place was Graeme Prince with 13lb 6oz of roach from the next peg along. Dave Mawby managed third place with 10lb 15oz, followed by Roger Clutton in fourth with 10lb.



FIXTURES

2021				
June	19 th (Sat)	Grand Final (2020-21 postponed match)	10-3	LR/ MILL
	22 nd (Tues)	Bob's 6 peg social	TBC	LR
	23 rd (Wed)	Evening (Points)	6-9	LR/ MILL
	30 th (Wed)	Evening (Points)	6-9	LR/ MILL
July	7 th (Wed)	Evening (Points)	5:30-8:30	LR/ MILL
	14 th (Wed)	Evening (Points)	5:30-8:30	LR/ MILL
	24 th (Sat)	Ficsta Open	2-7	WR
	25 th (Sun)	Junior Match	12-3	TBC
August	1 st (Sun)	Visitors	10-3	WR
	3 rd (Tues)	Midweek Open (Qualifier)	10-3	LR/ MILL
	7 th (Sat)	Junior Match	12-3	TBC
	14 th (Sat)	2 Rod Special (GGG Cup)	TBC	TBC
	22 nd (Sun)	Les Wallis Shield (Team Match)	10-3	TBC
September	5 th (Sun)	Visitors	10-3	LR/ MILL
	7 th (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	WR
	7 th (Tues)	Bob's 6 peg social	TBC	LR
	19 th (Sun)	Ron Bull Open	10-3	ALL
October	5 th (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	BP
	24 th (Sun)	Spooner Cup (Qualifier)	10-3	BP
November	2 nd (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	BP
	13 th (Sat)	RBL (Qualifier)	10-3	TBC
	13 th (Sat)	Pike & Perch	11-4	WR
	21 st (Sun)	Visitors	10-3	BP
	30 th (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	BP
December	11 th (Sat)	Christmas Open	10-3	BP/ WR
2022				
January	9 th (Sun)	Pike & Perch	10-3	BP
	11 th (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	BP
	22 nd (Sat)	Two Brewers Open (Qualifier)	10-3	BP/ WR
February	6 th (Sun)	Pike & Perch	10-3	WR
	8 th (Tues)	Midweek Open	10-3	BP
	12 th (Sat)	Willen Open	10-3	BP/ WR
	20 th (Sun)	Visitors	10-3	BP
	26 th (Sat)	Knight Shield Grand Final	10-3	TBC
March	14 th (Mon)	Last Day of Season		
May	4 th (Wed)	AGM	8pm	

Key: BP=Bathing Place LR=Lavendon Road MILL= O'rey Mill WR= Weston Road

All dates, times & locations are subject to change. Please check Facebook for updates.

JUNIOR SUCCESS!

The 2020-21 season saw a revamped structure to the junior matches. While the traditional 'catch a fish, win a fiver' prize still exists, the club decided to rethink the structure of the matches. Sticking to a three hour match, we stopped for a 15minute break for hotdogs and drinks in the middle, something that seemed to go down well- especially with the parents! Further to the structure review, we decided to run both junior matches in the middle of the summer holidays with the view of making it a real social event.

Between the two junior matches, the club saw a huge increase in junior participants. Added to this, over the season we saw a record number of juniors take up their FREE membership with us. While the boom in juniors taking up our sport is certainly a step in the right direction, it is through the support of some local members and businesses that we have been able to provide such a good provision for juniors to participate in the sport and hone their skills.



Charlie Moroney



Alfie Nicholls

THANK YOU's must go to our loyal sponsors Gone Fishin' tackle shop who provided free bait for the junior matches, as well as supporting with prizes. To Dean and Clare in the Mill House for kindly allowing us access to 'park behind your peg'. To Dax Miller at Wold Farm Fisheries for offering us a free match on one of his private lakes (something that we are planning for in the near future!). And finally to the individual members who provided donations to allow us to purchase kit and offer prizes for the juniors - Thank you all!

Between the two junior matches the club saw 17 & 20 juniors respectively, participate for not only their fivers, but also some excellent prizes, made up of cash and tackle vouchers. Match one was won by Charlie Moroney with an impressive 3lb 11oz. The second match was a less glamorous affair as the weather took a turn for the worst. Alfie Nicholls ran out the winner with 3lb 1oz off a tough peg. Well done to all involved!



MAINTENANCE

Those of you who have been following the club's progress in recent years will be fully aware that maintenance and improvement have been high on the agenda. With one of the club's primary focuses being improving access to our waters, the last 12 months has seen the committee and a number of amazing volunteers make a real effort to improve our waters. With some ambitious projects along side regular maintenance, our river has never been more accessible and well maintained. The support of a number of volunteers and some very kind locals who have donated materials has been fundamental to the success of the club in our quest to develop out waters, so thank you to all of you! While strimming, dragging and mowing have been a standing item, check out some of our bigger projects over the last season!



Doff's Field

Doffs field has long been an area of interest to anglers in Olney. With big catches of silvers, huge carp and a good few tench coming out from here over the years, the club decided to ensure that access to the field was maintained. The field, home of Olney Rugby Club, has been taken advantage of in the past by the hundreds of people who use it as a summer paradise, despite it being private property. The small fence that previously offered a minor obstacle to the general public has now been replaced with a full fence and locked gate, meaning that members have exclusive access. The bridge into the field has also been upgraded to allow easy access and enough space to pass a barrow through. In the field itself, the existing platforms have been given a facelift to allow for many more years of use. To go with this, we have also added in additional platforms to create and improve pegs in this area. The area itself is naturally quite weedy, so regular work parties have kept on top of it, ensuring a good balance of natural habitat and dragged pegs. This has also been supported by regular trimming to provide a well maintained riverbank.



The Railway Bridge

Those acquainted with the history of Olney may be aware of, or even remember the old railway line that ran through Olney. The station itself fully closed in 1964 with the bridge being removed soon after. Since that time, the area has been inaccessible, home to building developments and an overgrown area by the river itself. With further building developments temporarily limiting the access to Brock's & Coulson's fields, the club decided to get experimental! Despite the jungle and water inlet, many man hours have been put into clearing the area and building a bridge from Doff's field, into the railway bridge and subsequently Coulson's and Brock's. This increased access gives continuous access to the river from Olney Mill all the way along to Brock's field. The locked gate also limits entry to fisherman only, making the area a tranquil and secluded haven for a quiet day's fishing. The railway bridge area itself is a beautiful space offering some excellent fishing. Big hauls of roach, a near club record tench and also a good size carp have come out of this area since access was created at the start of the 2020-21 season.

MAINTENANCE

Continued...

Lavendon Mill Parking

A huge area of focus for the club in recent years has been improving access to the river. Lavendon Mill has long been an area that despite excellent fishing potential, parking was always a concern. The club have managed to work with the local land owner to rent a parking area in the existing paddock car park. This excellent addition provides secure parking for three cars (6 if parked in tandem). The club has built clearly marked parking bays for the exclusive use of OCFA members. To access the car park, members will need to use the code that is printed in your membership book (same as Doff's field & the Railway bridge). A key point to remember is that the padlock must be locked padlock-to-padlock to ensure that equine club have access to their carpark also. With this additional secure parking, this area is really starting to become a favourite for many club members.



Platforms

The nature of a river bank means that access can often be limited. Added to this, the ever-changing shape and course of the river leaving old platforms in inconvenient positions, the club has taken it upon itself to look to change this. Many new platforms have now been built to provide access to pegs that have never before been fished. Even current platforms have been developed and improved to offer added comfort to a fishing trip. Platforms around the sheep wash area, the Railway bridge and Coulson's field in particular have proven to be really good additions with match anglers, specimen fishermen and pleasure anglers alike all enjoying the additional comfort.

The Winter River

Maps of the River Great Ouse through Olney in the mid 1900's show the river taking a different course than what it currently does. The river formally had a main flow through the middle of the Mill fields creating a dissection under what is now known as 'the second plank'. Nowadays the main flow goes around the fields with the now called 'winter river' only filling up in floods. Following consultation with the Environment agency and in hope of supporting the ecology and habitats of the rivers fish, the club opened up the entry to the winter river that had become full of silt and gravel deposits, thus creating an all-year-round flow through the winter river with the aim of offering fry a greater chance of survival.



FEATURE PEGS

The Tree Peg

As mentioned in the maintenance section, the Railway bridge area is untouched land. For many years the area that you would send a 'long cast' towards, this tranquil section is now accessible and home to this beautiful peg. Situated close to the cover of a tree, this peg is made comfortable by the recently built platform. The peg itself has a large space all around it with zero foot traffic other than the very occasional angler that passes by. A flat surrounding makes the positioning of kit simple and convenient, even for those who like to take the kitchen sink!



Location - The Railway Bridge

The Tree Peg offers a range of different lines to suit all different anglers. The trees on the far bank offer a nice long chuck for those hunting the specimen fish. The flow down the middle of this wide stretch provides an ideal line to trot a float down or even to fish the long pole. To accompany this, there is ample space behind to make shipping a pole a breeze. Closer in to the bank the calmer slack water is often home to shoals of silvers that inhabit this section. The whip to hand, often being a viable option. Finally the sunken tree close to the bank offers ideal cover for specimen fish. Tench and perch seem to be caught in this area on boilie and lobworm respectively.

The peg itself, although new to the club, has seen some excellent catches in its maiden season. A number of good size tench have made an appearance, with the largest weighing in at 6lb 8oz. A number of 2lb+ perch have been snagged both in matches and also in pleasure sessions, both on ledgered and float fished tactics. Finally this peg has also been an increasing favourite for the match anglers. Framing in matches, this peg has been some big weights. Nets made up of roach, dace, perch and skimmers seem to be the main bulk of weights, really showing how the area provided a vast array of fish.

Lightly fished, this new peg is definitely one to try out!



Tench - Jason Bull

Tench - Matt Tysoe



Pete Laughton with a big haul of roach, dace, skimmers and some really good size perch, all caught in a five hour match.



FEATURE PEGS

Borton's Old Hole

Clark's field is home to a number of beautiful looking pegs. Each providing similar features, this particular peg stands out from the rest as it has a tendency to repeatedly produce some excellent fish. Although a fair walk from a parking area, the peg boasts a flat surface and simple approach with a platform to make fishing it easy and comfortable. With plenty of space around the peg itself, there is enough space for a bivvy or trolley without being in anyone's way. The peg itself provides a nice wide area with a variety of options. Suited to the match fisherman, pleasure angler or specimen hunter, this peg makes a nice option for both day and night fishing.

Location - Clark's Field

Borton's Old Hole as it has become affectionately known, provides the angler with a range of options. Typically a slower moving stretch of the river, the gravel bed provides a feeding ground for fish to graze over. Suited to a pole, this peg provides a long line and a shorter line to build up a weight of silvers. The reed beds and overhanging trees on the far bank also provide a long chuck for the hope of some bonus fish. With ample space to the next peg down stream, there are options to have multiple lines out at once for those inclined to search for the specimens.

This peg has been exposed to the match scene for the first time in many years. With the approval of Joe Roberts - former veterans' world champion, and Mark Pollard - former England International, the peg clearly is capable of providing a good days sport. Both featured anglers managed to catch mid-double bags of silvers, framing in their respective matches. Simple tactics using ground bait, maggots, pinkies or hemp all seem to do the trick.

While the match anglers all seem to like the peg, it has also been a hit with the specimen anglers. Long being touted as an area for the bream, local angler Josh Spearman managed to snag a beautiful carp from the peg, demonstrating its ability to throw out a range of different species.

Despite the walk, this peg is well worth a go!



Joe Roberts



Mark Pollard



Josh Spearman

FEATURE PEGS

Lavendon Weir

All anglers are able to appreciate the magic of a weir. The unpredictable nature and potential of some bonus fish is enough draw in itself. The weir at Lavendon Mill provides some excellent sport. Despite the steep bank getting down to it, the concrete step bank provides a solid base for a day of good fishing.

The concrete step provides space for up to three pegs depending on spacing, or one for multiple lines. As with any weir, the central track provides some fast flowing water with slacker areas to each side. This wide expanse of water has varying depths from a deeper area close to the weir to shallower gravel tracks further along.

The peg itself provides many options. Those looking to build a weight may opt to fish the waggler in search of the shoals of roach and dace that inhabit the area. A feeder rod is another alternative that has been successful here, luring out some of the better stamp fish, always with the potential of one of the elusive barbel making an appearance. The weir itself is also a favourite of the predator hunters. Lures, live and dead baits all providing excellent attractors to the resident pike and perch.

The Lavendon Weir has been home to a couple of matches in the last year. Most notably the huge hauls in the Ron Bull Open bringing in weights of 20lb 8oz and 14lb in the two pegs positioned under the weir. Further to this, predator fish have been showing in both pleasure sessions and in matches. Large pike have been coming out of this peg along with a vary rare sight in recent years - an eel.

A good day's sport with the chance of a real bonus catch!



Location - Lavendon Mill



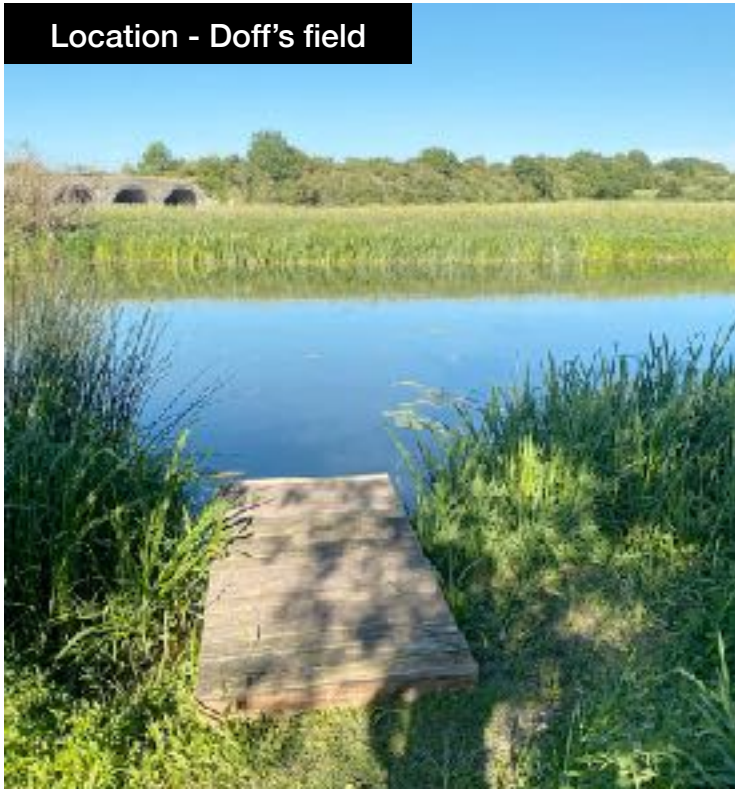
Pete Lima



'Greg'



Grant Howie



FEATURE PEGS

Gazza's Peg

Doff's field has long been a favourite of specimen hunters in Olney. With carp and bream making an appearance most years, it has always been an attractive prospect. The first peg into Doff's field, known as *Gazza's peg* following an impressive match haul is a prime example of comfort fishing. With a good size platform to fit a seatbox, an angler has plenty of room for all attachments and luggage. The manicured surroundings provide minimal obstruction and plenty of space behind for a pole to be shipped appropriately. Furthermore, night fishing is permitted here with a well maintained field behind the peg to comfortably set up a bivvy. Coupled with the convenience of this peg, is also the added beauty of it being private property, hence no foot traffic, unless you visit at a weekend during rugby season!

Gazza's peg provides a variety of lines to fish. A weedy section in the summer, the peg is regularly dragged to provide a good pole line in front of the platform. With this section of river being quite wide, a longer chuck is also an option and tends to be where the carp are often grazing. Going back three years this peg provided a very near club record common carp, so they are about!

The regular dragging of these weedy pegs seems to encourage the fish to feed. Tench are often fooled in this peg with a number of them being caught this season alone. In matches, there have been some huge weights made up of roach, dace, skimmers and tench. Gary Underwood, just one of those matchmen who enjoyed an excellent session to win with a bag of two tench, a number of skimmers and a host of roach & dace. Jim Broadbent was another who managed to take advantage of this peg, also achieving an excellent bag of silvers to frame in a match. Come October time, the elderberry bushes behind the peg are full of produce, making it an ideal bait for the resident silvers - just another reason to come and try this peg!

Gary Underwood



Jim Broadbent

FEATURE PEGS

A1

This peg is located in the Weston Road section known as the Goosey. The peg itself can be found by passing over Goosey bridge, before turning left and heading towards the point looking out towards the church. The peg itself is on the point where the back water of Goosey island flows down to meet the main river before heading over the weir.



Location - The Goosey

A1 provides the angler with a number of options. With the peg changing significantly between the seasons, the summer offers lily pads and weed to the left, providing a feature to fish to on the pole. Come the winter, the meeting of both parts of the river with differing flows often deposits food and seems to be a fish holding area. Some big perch have been caught in this area, often using a small ground bait feeder in the slacks to temp out the monsters. The vast expanse of water in this peg means that a long chuck on the feeder is also a viable option. For those interested in predator hunting, again the large open space provides a number of options to cast towards, supporting many methods of predator fishing.

Paul Abbott



This peg itself has been a feature in a number of matches over the years. With minimal pressure in the past few years, the Goosey featured again on the match schedule last season. A1 once again ran out the winner, similarly to a number of matches going back over the years. With a good weight of silvers and one of the resident tench making an appearance, Paul Abbott managed to take advantage of what this peg can offer.

Pleasure anglers also have experienced some good fishing from this peg. Goosey island itself has long been a favourite for the mobile predator angler. Offering such variety of peg, the perch fisherman in particular have found it to be a haven, but no peg more than A1. The variety of options in the peg, supported by the obvious features, the perch seem to feed well here. With 2lb+ perch a regular feature, A1 is always a place to stop when out with the lure rod.

With all the silvers that shoal up in this area, the pike are never too far away. Again, with the meeting of two different currents, the slacks and creases offer a feeding ground for some good size pike. Ken Plows was just one of those anglers who managed to bag a double figure pike, demonstrating the peg's potential. Live or deadbaiting often proving the best method.

This peg is an old favourite of many locals, so give it a go!

Ken Plows



'Greg'

CHARITY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The local community has always been at the centre of all that we at OCFA do. Being a small club, the impact we can have on the local community may be limited, but we see it as our duty to support our surrounding area, just like they support us. Over the years, the local community has helped the club in a number of ways. Providing flexibility for the club to develop our waters or for more convenient parking on match days. Members of the public offering free hardcore, wood and other materials to help the club to maintain and improve our waters. Furthermore, just simply showing support for the club has been invaluable.

It is as a result of the incredible local support that the club has been able to flourish in recent years. The success of our matches and increased number of membership sales has meant that we can give back to the community in a number of ways.



Damon Flynn (Club Treasurer) presenting a cheque to local Royal British Legion rep.

For a number of years, the club has provided donations to the Royal British Legion. Running an annual match in aid of the charity, we always have excellent attendance to support this fantastic cause. Last season was no different, despite the fixture being rearranged due to COVID-19 restrictions, over 35 anglers braced the cold to fish for this prestigious trophy. As a result of the match, the club managed to donate £100 to the Royal British Legion charity, with Damon Flynn the club treasurer, presenting the cheque to the local RBL rep.

At the start of last season, the club decided it would expand our scope to help support the local community further. It was agreed to take a small percentage from each match with a view to providing a donation to a charity come the end of the season. With the fixture list being dramatically reduced due to COVID-19, we were unable to achieve our full potential with this target, however we were still able to make an excellent contribution to one selected charity. After much thought and discussion, it was agreed that the beneficiary of our donation would be the *Olney is Kind* charity. The charity itself runs a community project. They aim to support local people in crisis, poverty or any tough situation for any reason. They can signpost people to a number of agencies and offer help with lots of matters, along with offering a local food bank. COVID-19 has impacted on all of us, however it is those in our local community who may not speak up who have been hit the hardest. *Olney is Kind* have played a huge part in supporting these people and have helped countless numbers of families who need that extra piece of support. The club's donation to *Olney is Kind* has gone a long way to further provide provision for the local charity to support people. The money that we have raised from local people in our matches has been recycled to give back to the local community.

On behalf of OCFA, we would like to thank everyone for your support over the last season and moving forwards. Participation in matches, buying a membership, offering resources and simply supporting what we do, really does make a difference.



Olney is Kind

@Public group · 2.8K members

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You can follow *Olney is Kind* on Facebook to keep up to date with the support that they give to our local community.

OCFA's RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of our lives. The way we behave, the way we socialise and the way we interact with others and our environment has had to change. Government measures have meant that life as we know it has had to change. With many sports having really felt the pressure from COVID-19, fishing has been one of the lucky survivors. While the last year has been a difficult one for many, it has become clear the incredible benefit that fishing can have on our physical and mental health. The isolated nature of the sport has meant that with careful and considerate participation, anglers can get out on the bank and enjoy the sport that we love. In a period where we are spending so much time in our homes, an opportunity to get out to our green spaces and experience the fresh air in the great outdoors, is essential to our mental health. A number of studies (inc. Stolk, 2009; Barton & Pretty, 2010) have highlighted the significant correlation between the exposure to the great outdoors, and positive mental health and well-being, showing the immense difference fishing can have on each of us.

Not only does fishing help reduce cortisol levels (our bodies stress hormone), it also stretches our brain's thought processes. As we all know, no fishing trip is ever the same with our mind having to contemplate a mental game of chess to interpret and overcome the changing situations that our rivers present to us. Coinciding with the mental benefits of fishing are the obvious physical demands. Despite the perception of sitting still on the river bank, fishing regularly requires significant physical exertion. With access to the riverbank often requiring a fair walk, those who take the kitchen sink with them will know precisely the relief of finally getting to your peg following a long walk!

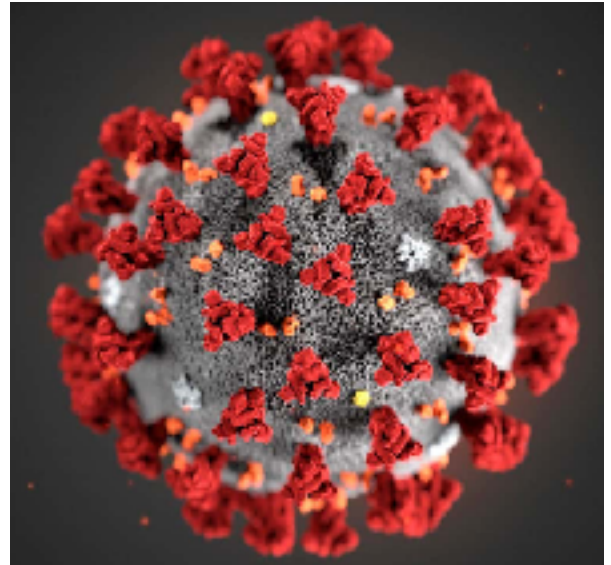
With more and more people recognising the significant benefits of fishing, coupled with the incredible efforts of the Angling Trust to lobby the government to gain support for fishing in the recent lockdown, the number of people taking up the sport has been through the roof! OCFA has recognised the increased demand for the sport and looked to ensure that we can cater to as many members of the public that want to fish our waters as possible. This has resulted in the club seeing record numbers of membership sales for both adults and juniors. The huge increase has provided the club with additional funds which have already been reinvested in maintenance and additional river work to support the sustainability of the club (see the maintenance section). Despite the obvious benefits financially for the club, we have a duty to ensure that our anglers uphold the name of fishing and behave accordingly within the government's COVID-19 restrictions. This has meant that the club has actively worked under the co-ordination of the Angling Trust to adapt to the ever changing situation. Regular posts to our club Facebook page have kept members up to date with the latest instruction, along with offering advice on how to stay safe whilst fishing.

One thing that has had to change most significantly is match fishing. With many clubs stopping all match fixtures, OCFA decided to adapt and overcome while sticking stringently to the COVID-19 requirements. Following liaison with other clubs and governing bodies the club made some wholesale changes to keep our anglers safe.



The purchase of weighing cradles (see image) has meant that bailiffs can weigh in fish safely, keeping appropriate distance and minimising the amount of contact with equipment. Changes in the draws have seen our big matches adopt an improved system where-by we have used the rugby club carpark to operate a one way system for anglers to stay in their cars, pull up to the table to be allocated a peg, given a map and be on their way; a system that has seen some really positive responses. Despite losing a number of matches to tier restrictions and lockdown itself, the club has still had a really positive year.

With the ongoing support from our members and local anglers we have really proven the importance of fishing. As we look forward to a life without COVID, we ask that all of our members continue to respect the restrictions currently in place, to ensure a safe fishing experience for all.



NOTABLE CATCHES 2020-21

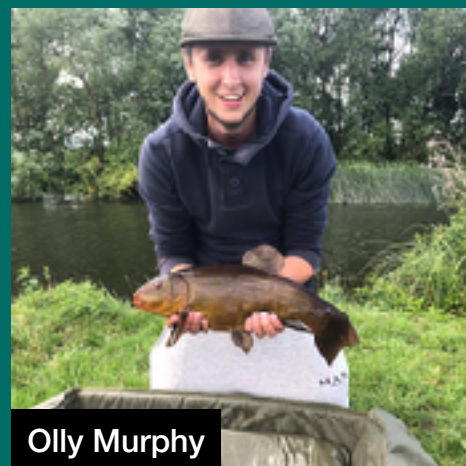
Callan Webb



Nathan & Damon Flynn



Olly Murphy



James Warner



Ian Barnes



Nathan
Flynn



Andy Garner



Matt Farr



NOTABLE CATCHES 2020-21

Josh Spearman



Sean Drury



Andy Garner



Jamie Knight



Ian Barnes

