

Mid-Northants Trout Fishers Association

A History Summary

The Mid-Northants Trout Fishers Association was formed on 9th January 1952 when 100 anglers held an inaugural meeting at the Angel Hotel in Northampton. Colonel S W Miller was elected Chairman of a temporary committee including Tom Ivens (Secretary), Cyril Inwood, Mr E Nutt, Mr C C Robinson, Mr R P Swannell and Mr W Izzard. The prime reason for the Association was to negotiate on behalf of anglers for improved fishing at both Hollowell and Ravensthorpe with the Mid Northants Water Board. Key topics of the day included, increase rods from 6 per day to 9, weed cutting to allow more room, re-stocking and fishing through till one hour after sunset.

Once the permanent committee was approved and meeting once a month they quite quickly took action and appointed a bailiff duty rota for Ravensthorpe and paid the Hollowell bailiff extra to stay later in the evenings. They also formulated proposals for the Water Board on netting, stocking and rule changes. Subscriptions were 3s.6d in the first year and quickly rose to 10s in the second to help with bailiff's costs. In November 1952 they managed to get 5,500 brown trout stocked into Hollowell and the first 2,500 rainbows stocked at Ravensthorpe.

The first netting of Ravensthorpe was in March 1953 where they moved 15,000 Rudd to other areas in Northampton and then another 40,000 in May. Ravensthorpe and Hollowell were struggling to fish well with catch returns in 1953 being 164 fish from 796 rods and at Hollowell 275 fish for 955 rods. A little better these days! For this a days boat fishing would have cost you 12/6 if you lived in Water Board catchments area, 25s if not.

Chronicle & Echo 10.1.52

FLY-FISHERS FORM AN ASSOCIATION

More than 100 local and visiting fly-fishing enthusiasts attended the inaugural meeting of the Mid-Northants Trout Fishers' Association, at the Angel Hotel, last night. Mr K. Waite presided.

The chairman outlined some of the aims of the association.

Mr. W. Izzard moved that the association be formed. The proposal was carried unanimously. The rules were then read and adopted.

Canon J. Trevor Lewis then stressed the delicate nature of the negotiations with the water board who were the riparian owners, and suggested that the rules should be acceptable to them. Replying, the acting secretary laid emphasis on the fact that the proposed rules sought to support the water board, and he stated that no prescriptive rights over the water were sought.

Mr. Izzard then proposed that in order to save valuable time at the meeting the rules be thrashed out in committee, and for that purpose a temporary committee be formed. This was agreed to.

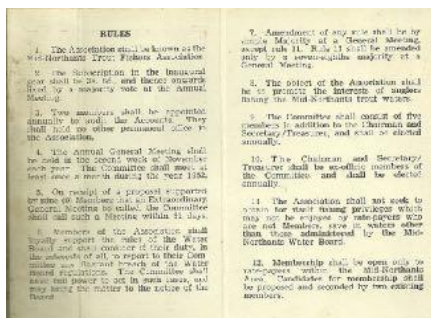
Colonel S. Miller was elected chairman. Mr. F. C. Ivens was appointed secretary, with Mr. C. C. Robinson as his deputy.

Members for the temporary committee were then elected as follows: Messrs. C. Inwood, E. Nutt, C. C. Robinson, R. P. Swannell and W. Izzard, were elected. The chairman and secretary being adopted ex-officio.

The chairman then asked that the committee be given a mandate to formulate rules for submission to a general meeting, and to approach the water board for help.



The first Club card



Tom Iven's our first secretary in action

Early in 1956 there was a new Chairman Mr R J Bell and new secretary Mr B J Rowe. At this time a decision was made to open Pitsford as a coarse fishery so the Club's emphasis turned to turning Cransley Reservoir into a Trout fishery and also spending some of their own money to better stock Hollowell and Ravensthorpe.

By the AGM of 1957 there were a number of members lobbying for Pitsford as a trout fishery and Mr Snelson read out a letter that advised that Nene Angling Club has suggested how this could come about. This then focussed the club's attention to join forces with the Nene AC.

During the next few years the association put forward a whole host of suggestions and advise to the Water Board including: developing stocking, waterside management, on site tickets, fishing limits, price changes, coarse fish management, Pitsford as a trout fishery and predator management. There were many issues on which they did not agree with the board and this caused constant frictions. This was a time when the club were keen to get back to previous good relations while helping to improve the fishing. If they could not make this happen then they made plans to ask for a lease to run the fishing themselves.

PITSFORD: TROUT OR COARSE FISH?

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE fishery men have started a new campaign in the battle for Pitsford Reservoir.

The latest development, which has sparked off anew the coarse fish-trout controversy, is a letter to the Mid Northamptonshire Water Board from the Nene Angling Club.

Trout and coarse-fishermen it seems have now reached agreement, and the letter, in effect, reveals the club's original recommendation that the reservoir should be used for coarse fishing.

After reaching a conclusion at their annual meeting that "the desirability of coarse fishing are insuperable," members now want the board to stock Pitsford with trout.

However, Mr L. M. Brown said today: "At the moment, the board is holding to its original decision to stock Pitsford with coarse fish."

"This latest offer has not to be considered by the committee and I cannot comment on it."

STARTED TWO YEARS AGO

Secretary of the Nene Angling Club, Mr G. V. Daw, said: "This controversy started two years ago when the club asked the water board to allow coarse fishing at Pitsford."

"In November last year, we pointed out in a letter to the board that nothing seemed to have been done to make the reservoir available to coarse fishing."

"The members, by this time, had had an opportunity to consider the facilities at Pitsford and decided that both coarse and trout fisheries should be made available at the reservoir."

It cost time the water board decided to adhere to a previous resolution that the reservoir would eventually be made available for coarse fishing.

The club's latest recommendation is supported by Mr B. J. Rowe, secretary of Northampton Trout Fishery Association, who points out that within a 12-mile radius of Northampton there are about 240 miles of canals and rivers available for the coarse fisherman.

Trout, however, on the other hand, have only Ravensthorpe and Hollowell reservoirs in which to fish.

"In any case, only 20 people are allowed to fish for trout in this area on any one day," said Mr. Rowe.

£10,000 A YEAR

He estimated that with a capital outlay now of about £10,000 to stock Pitsford reservoir with trout, in two or three years the water would be producing an annual revenue in the region of £10,000.

The cost could be further cut, he said, if the water board would release their trout hatchery at Ravensthorpe. Originally very productive, the hatchery had been allowed to fall into disuse, he said.

He added that the wide expanse of water at Pitsford would allow between 75 and 100 trout fishermen to fish there on one day.

"If the reservoir were stocked with both types of fish, there would always be the possibility that coarse fishermen would catch trout."

"Trout is a game fish and we believe should be fished for as such."

RESERVOIR'S ANGLING: NEW PLANS

BOARD'S PITSFORD RULES DECISION

NEW PLANS for allowing fishing in the reservoirs under their control came before the Mid-Northamptonshire Water Board yesterday. A special sub-committee, it was reported, gave full consideration to points raised by deputations from Northampton Nene Angling Club and the Mid-Northamptonshire Trout Fishers' Association.

The sub-committee also bore in mind that Hollowell and Ravensthorpe reservoirs are stocked with trout, and that a part of the water feeding Pitsford reservoir would be obtained by abstraction from the Nene, which already contains coarse fish.

TROUT FISHING

The board yesterday decided to permit coarse fishing in Pitsford reservoir and trout fishing in the Cransley, Hollowell and Ravensthorpe reservoirs.

It was agreed that coarse fish in Cransley reservoir should be netted and put in Pitsford reservoir.

Rules and regulations regarding fishing in Pitsford are to be drawn up in consultation with Northampton Nene Angling Club. Similar action, in consultation with the sailing club is to be taken with regard to sailing which, as reported yesterday, is to be permitted on Pitsford reservoir.

Consideration will also be given by the board to additional stocking with trout fish of the Cransley, Hollowell and Ravensthorpe reservoirs.

In the early 1960's it had been agreed that Pitsford would be a trout fishery and the club helped in the formation of the rules prior to it's opening and when it did there was a list of improvements that were then put forward including the provision of toilets, car parks, general facilities and the first stocking of trout were too small and not enough.

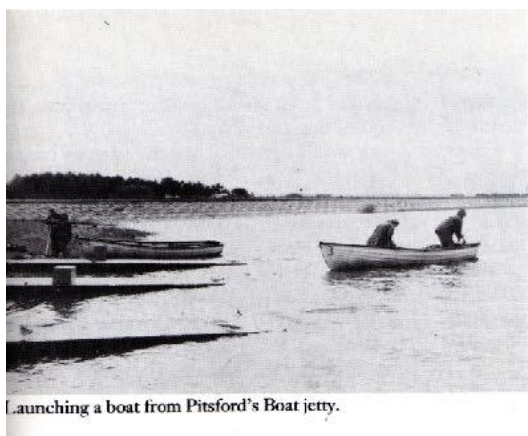
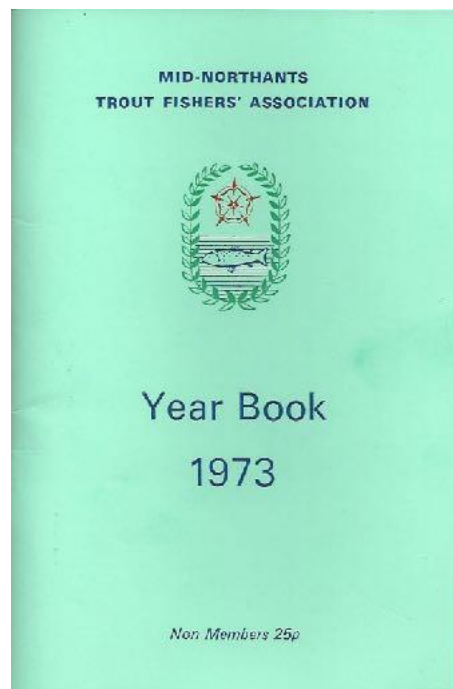
In the late 60's the club continued with it's social evenings and film nights as well as arranging trips to Blagdon and Draycote. Many more fisheries were expanding now and letters and correspondence were sent to encourage these rather than direct action. The waters included Diddington (Grafham today), Draycote and Empingham (Rutland). Negotiations with the Water Board continued especially around costs, car parks and stocking for Pitsford and Ravensthorpe. Much effort was put into keeping Ravensthorpe as an open fishery rather than for local residents as had already happened with Hollowell.

In 1970 there was a move in the club to depart from "militancy" to developing as a social club. James Bell who had been Chairman for 16 years was defeated at the AGM and Mr P Draper took over with a new committee including Terry Broughton as secretary and Dick Shrive the only committee member to continue. In recognition of his services Mr Bell was invited to be the clubs 3rd president after Sir John Pascoe and Alderman Strickland.

In the following years the club went from strength to strength as they introduced a new logo, a year book, boat competitions at Pitsford and Ravensthorpe with best fish prizes, a club tie, a newsletter, a summer outing to Chew, Fly Tying evening and a winter social evening. The club was on the up and had increased from 60 to 120 paid members in 3 years.

Early in 1970 the Federation of Midland Fly Fishers was formed between Kettering & District, East Midlands, Peterborough and Mid Northants and initially the prime objective was to try and secure Rutland Water as a Trout Fishery. Over the years many committee members put an enormous amount of effort to this body.

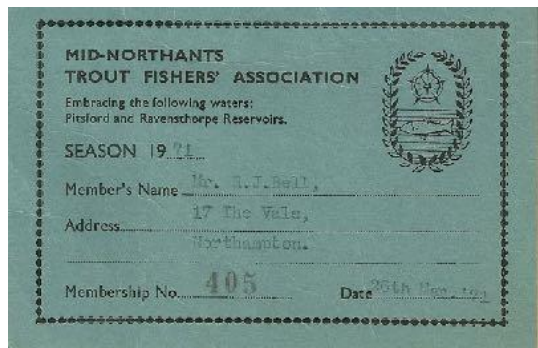
With the additional Waters available the fishing numbers had increased but sadly the catch returns hadn't. The catch returns for 1971 were Ravensthorpe 4289 tickets for 3787 fish and Pitsford 5230 tickets for 3406 fish. Pitsford fishing was in the small half only and had not fulfilled the expectations for a premier UK fishery. This prompted a letter from Richard Walker to the EMTFA and then passed onto the Water Board and negotiated by the club. It seemed to do the job as stocking rose from 8000 to 24000 the following year.



The first club trophy was presented at Pitsford to Mr D Allen by Rex Bryan & Son purchased from donations of friends and work colleagues of Stanley Harrison who died after illness in 1974. It was intended to be for the best catch of the day and to be a more social than competitive event.

During 1974 there were many discussions on the best way to organise International events and the CEFF was created. In the first year the club was asked to put forward 2 fishermen to represent England in Ireland for 1975 and they were Mr W V Church, reserve Mr P Dobbs and Mr C A Bigalos, reserve Mr C Rowe. The following year the club created it's first eliminator on Ravensthorpe in April and after elimination 5 members qualified for England, Bob Draper, Tom Bilson, Bev Perkins, Don Fulcher and John Snelson.

During 1977 Mr P Draper resigned as Chairman and was succeeded by Mr W V Church who stated it would only be for 2 years. His first action was to agree with the sailing club that fishing could be allowed in the big half on certain days and paved the way for an extension to this.



A revised club card

The club continued in the same vein in the early 1980's with Tom Bilson succeeding Viv Church as Chairman and Jim Collins taking over in 1982. The secretaries role also changed to Herbie Cave. The competitions had increased now including the Bruce Richardson Rose bowl, Eric Goodman Trophy, the first Pitsford bank match and a Midland Final in the eliminators. Malcolm Eade as Competition secretary also helped to draw up our competition rules.

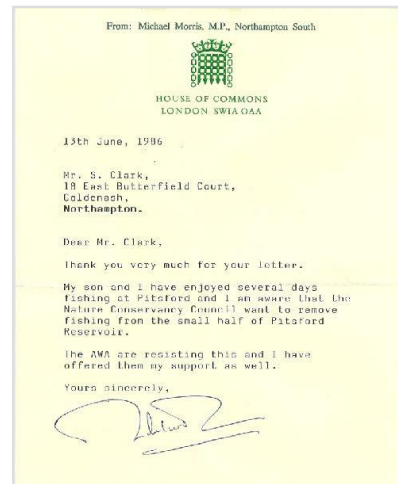


A superb 4lb 2oz rainbow caught by Jim Collins on a Black Chenille Lure at Blagdon Lake:



Hector Woolnough

In the late 1980's Terry Broughton and Hector Woolnough took on the Chairman's role with Sam Clarke as secretary. During this time the Pitsford users panel was set up and the small half was lost to fishing when it became a SSSI without any consultation. The club were in communication with the House of commons and retained some fishing in the small half and an extension to the fishing times in the large half. Beginners courses at Pitsford were also founded and run by Hector Woolnough and planning permission for chalets around the water were defeated.



Early 1990's the Chairmen were Hector Woolnough and Herbie Cave. The competition scene was rising towards it's height and there was conflict with the social members but also with other clubs as the Benson and Hedges event increased the need for smaller clubs to compete as teams of 6. This was also the time of Blue Green algae and the resulting effect on fly life.



Grant Gibson and Julian Davies

In the late 1990's Julian Davies and Grant Gibson were the chairmen and Malcolm Eade and Kevin Rowley as secretary. With the competition scene and the need to be members of large clubs reducing the club decided to build on the social side of the club and introduced a new rule where your two best fish are weighed in, a fur and feather competition, food introduced at the winter programmes, other club members invited to functions and the newsletters were expanded. The cycle track was built around Pitsford and Hector Woolnough consulted on behalf of anglers to ensure it did not cause too much disruption.

In 1997 Hector Woolnough retired after 17 years on both the MNTFA committee and the Confederation Committee, making an outstanding contribution to promote trout fishing in the area. He also ran fishing courses for beginners at Pitsford Lodge which included lectures on fly life and aquatic insects, and all aspects of equipment, casting, boat craft and fly tying. He then continued as President of the club.

Malcolm Eade resigned after 18 years on the committee in various roles as Vice Chairman, secretary, and organising competitions and talks.

Julien Davis took over as Chairman of the club until 1998 when Grant Gibson was elected Chairman. At this time, Ian Pow was Competition Secretary, Kevin Rowley was Club Secretary and Mike Philpott was Treasurer. Mike Jeyes also took over as Winter Programme Organiser which covered the four months from Oct to Feb with the AGM in March, the meetings were held on the second Thursday of each month, at the Old Northamptonians Rugby Club.

2001 Ian Pow organised a Fun Day of a mornings fishing followed by an excellent BBQ which was prepared by his wife Pam. The day was a great success and continued as a regular event for some years.

2005 was a sad year with the passing three members John Butt, Peter Searle and our President Hector Woolnough. Jim Collins took over as President and provided great leadership and guidance on club protocol.



Kevin Rowley fly tying at Pitsford

2007 Membership secretary Ashley Cooper developed the website <http://www.mntfa.co.uk> which was designed by Orange Fire and owned by the club.

With pages for Home, Membership, Competitions/Results, Club Nights and a Gallery.

In 2009 Bev Perkins who was nationally known for his articles in the angling press passed away and a memorial bench was erected by some club members on the Gorse Bank at Pitsford in his memory, to be used in memorial of other future members.

The venue for the club meetings on a Monday evening was moved from the White Hart to the Pioneer public house where fly tying tuition took place and was looked after by Cyril Lineham and Kevin Rowley.

In 2006 Mike Philpott was elected Club Chairman, Kevin Rowley as Vice Chairman and John Clarke as Treasurer.

Also, that year Cyril Lineham passed away. He was a member for many years and was the club guru for information on trout fishing. As an avid fly tyer he taught many members of the club over the years.



Left to right-Phil Cross, Grant Gibson, Mike Philpott, Roy French, Mike Jeyes, Jim Collins

2010 saw the introduction of club fishing shirts which members could purchase at a special price with the club name embroidered on them. Also fishing caps with club logo with the idea of giving members more identity and promoting the club's image when fishing.

Mike Philpott stepped down after 10 years as treasurer and 5 years as chairman, handing over to Kevin Rowley as Chairman who served till 2012 with Seumas Halliday as secretary.

The club was well represented in 2011 with the England team being managed by Richard Slater and captained by Ed Foster. Also, Richard Slater, Brad Gifford, Nick Dunn and Ian Donaldson qualified for the 2012 England Team.

The Angling Trust took over the Confederation of English Fly Fishers in 2011 and with it the organisation of the national competitions and England Team selection. It was decided by the club to join and support what should be a new approach and development of the sport.

2012 Ian Pow was elected as Chairman, Phil Cross took over as Competition Secretary and Don Moore as Vice Chairman.



It was also a significant year as the 60th Anniversary of the club's foundation and there was a commemorative badge for members and the club also arranged a day's fishing see right followed by a Dinner held at the Griffin Pub which was celebrated by 50 members attending.

The Winter Programme for 2013 started with a change of venue with the club moving from the ONC Rugby Club to the more lavish surroundings of Kingsthorpe Golf Club. Congratulations were given to our club members Richard Slater as the 2013 England Captain, to Mick O'Farrell who qualified for Ireland and in 2014 winning his 5th cap and to Dave Currie qualifying for England.

Because of growing interest, the club organised two days fishing on the River Test fishing for grayling and this was attended by 16 anglers who enjoyed the day and evening activities and became a regular event.

Phil Cross resigned after 3 years as competition secretary and Terry Bayes took on responsibility of managing our competition programme of 10 matches per season handling 20 to 30 anglers at each event.





Seumas Halliday

The last ten years has seen the club move into a more proactive role of promoting fly fishing, instructing and training the personal skills of the angler. This has been taken on by Seumas Halliday since joining the club in 2005 and from 2010 has managed and developed the club into providing coaching courses on the bank and boat fishing techniques. Organising coaching days and beginner's courses in conjunction with the AWA, Angling Trust and Sport England. This has promoted the club on a new level and also secured new members.

A number of other club members have taken Level 1 & 2 coaching courses to help deliver-coaching activities and mentoring new members.

2015 Another addition to MNTFA Website at <http://www.mntfa.co.uk>

On the membership page is the option to be able to join or renew membership by paying Online. People that took M.N.T.F.A. course or an Anglian Water course could sign in for free membership for the rest of the season.

Our Vice Chairman Don Moore promoted the club's involvement in the 2016 Kelmarsh County Fair and the club took a stand to promote our activities. This included inviting people to a coaching session to try casting and overall it was a successful and regular event.

2016 saw the passing of Jim Collins our Club President and a committee member for many years. He was a past England fly Fisher's team captain and his involvement in the club has been significant. Grant Gibson was voted in as the new president.



Jim Collins

2017 The chairman Ian Pow stepped down after five years due to ill health. As competition secretary for over ten years put the fun back into club competitions, making them more light hearted, e.g. with the duck race and smallest fish prizes. As chairman, Ian was instrumental in raising the club's profile in the angling development and coaching community through the Angling Trust and the Northants Angling Action Group. This is a valuable source of new members and funding for the club. Don Moore stepped up as Chairman with Seumas Halliday moving to Vice Chairman.



Ian Pow

2018 The club moved its venue from the Kingsthorpe Golf to the Yeoman of England at Wooton for its winter programme.