



Mid Northants Trout Fishers' Association Newsletter July 2024

Dear Member

The Committee are mindful that there is a need for all members to be kept abreast of any news such as competitions, updates, communications, membership and general information. Currently the club has a Website and a Facebook Group Page but also issues emails to members, although the email communication are set up very much a one way "push" form of communication. Therefore the committee is seeking to improve how we communicate and on what forum, such that members are enabled to be better informed.

This Newsletter is very much a draft template and seeks your feedback and input, such that the club members can be more and feel more involved in the Club's activities.

Membership

We are pleased to inform you that the club currently has 85 members. Through our Coaching scheme led by Seumas Halliday, we have recently recruited 22 new members. This is very positive news and we welcome those new members to the MNTFA.

Forthcoming Events

Let me start with an event that has just taken place. Our annual BBQ took place on Sunday 30th June and was well attended. This was preceded by a morning's social fishing session for some with a cracking array of tempting food on offer which was free to members. Not everyone who attended fished as this was very much a social gathering and it was great to see good numbers attending.

Our Fly Casting and Fly Tying coaching programme is continuing throughout the summer with sessions in July, August, September and October. Please see the section on Coaching later in this newsletter for links for information and booking.

Our next Competition is on 15th September at Rutland Water. This is the Chairman's Cup and details will be issued in advance for anyone wishing to take part.

There is a 3 day trip to Llyn Clywedog Reservoir taking place from 30th September with 14 members looking forward to fishing what is one of the top Reservoirs in the UK. Good Luck guys.

Last but not least we are planning to hold an Open Day for new and novice members most likely in late September/ early October but that isn't definite as yet. The details and content are currently being considered but the objective is to help instruct new members and those who aren't overly experienced on how to manage a boat, fishing with a drogue, how to fish teams of flies and different

set ups, casting, fly tying and information about the fisheries we fish. The plan is to hold this day at Pitsford with morning and afternoon sessions so members (this is just for members) can get involved, meet other members and improve their knowledge without it taking up too much of their day. As soon as we have more information, this will be shared with you.

Bank Clearance Work

During this last Winter period club members volunteered to help the Anglian Water (AW) Wardens carry out bank clearance work at Pitsford. Several bank areas were cleared but it was limited due to only a few members being available on the dates agreed with AW. The Anglian water Management were very grateful for the Club's efforts and as a result they have allowed our members to benefit by having a lower cost Season ticket. However, the club needs to both keep up and in fact expand on this partnership work and for this winter period the aim is to try and replicate the model used by the Grafham members. They have teams who have specific tasks and in doing so achieve far more in their sessions. AW will provide free training for several tasks but our biggest challenge is to have more members volunteer their time to this scheme.

So we need your help to improve the bank areas at Pitsford which is the club's primary water. Quite simply the bank is too big to expect AW to do all the work, if they were to do it the cost of fishing Pitsford would go up and most importantly it is in our own interests to keep the bank areas of our local water in a good safe state to fish from.

Our thanks goes to Dave Anderson who will again coordinate this years work and will lead the creation of a schedule for the target areas and what work to carry out. The work will take place mostly on a Saturday morning but this can change, starting in September through to December/January. One or two sessions a month depending on the numbers who attend.

We realise that weekends for some members are precious. All we are asking for is a few hours of your time to help keep the banks clear for fishing. We are currently in discussion with AW management to provide some form of personal benefit for those who come and help. This might be in the form of boat vouchers or shop discounts for those who give their time to work on the bank and of course AW always provide free Bacon Rolls etc lunch for your efforts. More information will be posted once known and of course a vegetarian lunch option could be catered for if known in advance.

Club Competitions / Matches

Throughout the main part of the season the Club has a competition each month. These are long standing matches with trophies for the winners. Boats are prebooked by the club to ensure availability but we must stress that we need members to pay for their boat seat at least "**1 Week**" before the match, as the club has to pay for the boats prior to the match.

The committee has recognised that there has been a call for less catch and kill and more catch and release "C&R" and in some competitions this has been adopted with a view that all competitions could become C&R.

There have been multiple reports of fish being caught with damaged mouths so in view of this and to help the welfare of the fish, all members fishing club competitions going forward must use either barbless or debarbed hooks and we ask that barbless hooks are used for general fishing as well.

Unfortunately there is also a trend that many of the matches are fished by the same few Anglers and the committee want to get more members involved in matches. The questions therefore are

- what do members want for competitions?
- is C&R the way forward?
- is the rationale of measuring the first 4 fish, the best way of deciding who wins?
- should some matches be decided on catching the most fish?
- Or should there be a mix of some measured and any other caught fish being counting as a nominal amount each?
- and should we have a mix so some matches are 4 fish measured and some are based on numbers?
- should there be a prize for the biggest fish in every competition? And if so is that weight or measurement?

We need you input on club matches and we want as many of our members to fish matches. It's a great way to become involved in the club, meet other members and of course win much coveted trophies.

Tuesday Evening Boat League at Pitsford

Whilst this title states "League" the Tuesday Night sessions are purely social and not a competition. It's a great opportunity to fish for a few hours and meet some other members in a relaxed environment. The sessions are run by Anglian Waters and all you need to do is turn up at the lodge at about 4pm, pay your fee (£8 share of a boat if you are a season ticket holder) and then get out on the water. These sessions only run during the summer and I advise you check with the Pitsford lodge on the day to check the session is happening and there are enough boats, but to date they happen every Tuesday Evening. Come along

MNTFA Website

The Committee's view is to use the website for basic club and reference information and as a record of events such as match results. The Website does have some very useful information and for example on the home page there is a tab relating to Weather. Hank Needham who tirelessly administers our Webpage, has now included links for Ventusky and Windy Apps. These Apps provide real time wind direction, strength and rain information, which I for one find most helpful.

Windy App Link on Our Website

I have been in discussion with the Windy App team and they provided us with a free link to use what is called a Widget. This allows a user to type in a location such as "Ravensthorpe" and the link will highlight their known locations which for Ravensthorpe includes "Ravensthorpe Reservoir" and for

Pitsford it includes “Pitsford Water” once entered the link will show an aerial view, daily data and a timeline showing the wind etc.

However, Windy have also put forward a discount offer for MNTFA members to sign up to their Windy Pro App for 25\$ (circa £20) for one year (quite a discount as it was £90). I believe a couple of our members already use this app and from what I can see, the Pro version is very comprehensive, uses satellite imagery and covers anywhere you want to fish or do any other activity. I have further information if any member is interested and I can pass on the offer details. All I ask is for this to be kept to only club members.

MNTFA Facebook Group

To compliment the use of the Club’s Webpage the Committee also ask for all members to actively use our facebook page and to share feedback on their fishing exploits as our facebook page is a good forum for members to post, view and comment without the need for too much club administration. However, we urge members to always be respectful when posting or commenting and any abusive, derogatory or inflammatory content will not be tolerated and removed. In recent months we have had some cracking posts on fishing sessions, what has been caught, tactics and flies used as well as details and considerations on fly tying.

We ask all members to post feedback after their fishing trips with photos if possible. Thankyou

Coaching and Fly Tying

MNTFA are very fortunate to have a group of qualified coaches who once a month on a Saturday, give their time on a voluntary basis to help members and non-members to improve their fly casting, knowledge and skills. These sessions at Pitsford are incredibly, given free to members and I have enjoyed being on one of them. For those who haven’t attended, I can advise that the sessions are extremely useful, are one to one and everyone will come away with a better cast. This is such a great asset for the club. Email coaching@mntfa.co.uk or see <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/mntfa>

Fly tying lessons (11am-1pm) are also provided by the Northampton Fly Dressers, the club run by Seumas, Graham and others. So if you want to learn how to tie flies, please join this fly tying club, which meets twice a month.

Improver sessions (half or full day) are available for members, fishing with a coach or other experienced member (see <https://mntfa.co.uk/improver-session>)

This is as an opportunity for new or less experienced members to improve their knowledge, confidence and skills. Boat handling can be included. To request a session please email improver@mntfa.co.uk

Flies to Try and Summer Tactics

At this time of year the weed is growing fast and lots of hatches are occurring. We've had large Mayfly hatches at Pitsford and in the last few weeks the water's edge is teeming with the Common Blue Damselfly. Therefore clearly Dry Flies are working well, with Claret and Black Hoppers taking fish at both Ravensthorpe and Pitsford.

Also from a recent evenings fishing I noticed lots of Shrimp coming on board with the drogue and boy some of them were big! So it must be time for putting on Shrimp patterns and fishing them across and by the weed beds. Pitsford shrimps are notoriously big and the Trout love them.

However, Nymphs still seem to be the productive favoured fly when drifting but whatever fly you try its worth thinking about size.

Hot summer days can be very tricky and the fish can turn off or drop much lower in the water. We are experiencing high water temperatures which is not ideal.

I learnt something just last week when fishing from a boat at Pitsford. There were 3 boats including mine all drifting near the dam in not too deep water. I wasn't getting a touch regardless of my approach. Then I noticed one of the other boats hook into a fish and then 10 minutes later another fish, what was he doing differently to me? A special fly a different line what was the difference? By chance we passed each other close by and I asked the question. The answer was that as the water is crystal clear I'm using a very long leader with buzzers near the point so the fish won't see the floating line. Also I am keeping up with the drift so the buzzers sink straight down. If they don't take on the drop I cast again so I am not on top of any fish.

So looking at my set up I didn't have such a long leader but I extended it and put a couple of buzzers on and cast a longer line out. Third cast Fish On!

Last but not least now is a good time to think about going small and light. Try fishing light lines and small flies as there are many small fly hatches occurring near the margins.

Whatever you try, give club members your feedback after a session on our Facebook Group Page, so we can all benefit from your experience, good or bad. Lately there have been some very useful posts and I know it has helped me be better prepared when heading to the bank.

Newsletter Content and Frequency

By definition a "Newsletter" is for News, but what news is the question the committee are asking for members to give us feedback.

Other clubs such as the Grafham Fly Fishers use their newsletter to feedback on Fishing and who has caught what. That's fine but I for one would rather see a note on our facebook page after someone's outing rather than find out about it in a newsletter a month or three later.

We could include a regular article about individual members, a sort of interview style article. Obviously this relies on members wishing to be interviewed but it would be focused on fishing and not their Political views!

We could have an article on specific fishing topics or techniques from our more experienced Anglers. We could ask Anglian Water to give some input about how they run their fisheries

Clearly another option would be to have a regular club meetings but that often results with arranged dates being restrictive for some members but something with guest speakers might be of interest.

I am sure there are many aspects that members would find interesting but it needs our members to feedback as to what they would enjoy receiving or being part of, if anything at all.

Below are 10 questions and I'm sure there are many more questions that could be asked. All we are trying to achieve is to have a club that members feel involved in and enjoy being part of. That may well be the case already for many of you which would be great to hear, but the committee feel there must be ways the club could improve especially to get more of our members involved, even if that is to simply come and sample the excellent cuisine of our BBQs!

We ask for your feedback on these questions and any other points you feel appropriate on the subject of improving the Mid Northants Trout Fishers Association. Please send your replies to cliff.hoare@btinternet.com this should be the address if you reply to the email you received.

Questions

- 1) **What was your main reason/s for Joining the MNTFA?**
- 2) **How would you like us to communicate with you and how would you like to communicate with other members? Existing Social Media, Email, Meetings, Zoom?**
- 3) **Is there something the club could do differently that would enable you to be more involved?**
- 4) **Is there something the club could do differently so you could attend matches?**
- 5) **Based on the competition section above, on what basis should our matches be decided?**
- 6) **Will you be able to attend any of the Bank Clearance Sessions? And is a Saturday or Sunday the better morning?**
- 7) **Would a newsletter like this 3 or 4 times a year be helpful, and if so what content would you suggest to be included?**
- 8) **Would it be useful for the club create videos of fly tying and casting techniques, or is there sufficient content on Youtube already?**
- 9) **Are you interested in attending a club social event like an open day or a BBQ?**
- 10) **Do you have any other constructive ideas that will help the club and to get more members involved in events and matches?**