

Bintry Mill  
Trout Fishery  
Annual Report & Accounts  
2020



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Terry Lawton	Chairman
Richard Nelson	Secretary
Andy Hunt	Treasurer
Mark Williams	River Manager
Kevin Freezer	Committee member
Bill Emrich	Committee member

# Chairman's Report



Terry Lawton

## An Interesting and Challenging Year

I am making my report as your first-ever elected Chairman and am sorry not to be able to do it to a group of live members. The Covid-19 restrictions which delayed the start of the season until 13 May have prevented us from holding an AGM. Please accept this report as a substitute.

I am pleased to be able to report that the Club has the hardest working, happiest and most united committee for many years. I was elected into office at the 2019 AGM when Hugh Berridge resigned as Chairman. Hugh had stepped-in to replace the late Richard Gibbs when his failing health meant that he, Richard, wasn't able to continue to fulfil the role of club Chairman.

In spite of Covid-19 restrictions your committee has met regularly and only one meeting was a virtual one, involving an exchange of emails. Kevin Freezer has very kindly hosted most of our meetings either in his garden or garage, depending on the weather. Andy Hunt hosted some pre-Lockdown.



I would be failing in my duty as Chairman if I did not mention that for the first time in the Club’s history your Committee had to expel a member. To quote my predecessor’s own words “There has been so much nastiness in the club which is the reason why I resigned as chairman.” This expulsion brought to an end some three years of disagreement and discord on the Committee. If firm and decisive action had not been taken, that discord and unpleasantness would have continued to the detriment of the Club.

Without wishing to upstage him, when you read our Treasurer Andy Hunt’s report, you will see a very much healthier set of accounts with much less money wasted compared to previous years and a vast reduction in expenses claimed and paid. Our thanks go to Andy for his astute financial management. As a Committee we agreed that it would not be right to increase the annual Rod fee without you, our members, being able to discuss and vote on any increase. Fortunately we do not need to increase the fee for next season.

Your Committee will be working hard over the winter to increase the length of fishable river bank that is not now readily accessible or perhaps only by the intrepid and fearless. The areas selected for improvement are a stretch of the Bintry Mill Beat above Blake’s Pool on the true right-hand bank and on the Yarrow Farm Beat the stretch downstream of the bend after the gas pipe crossing on the left-hand bank. We will be doing preparatory work in readiness for work on the banks when ground conditions and water levels allow safe access in the Spring and Summer.



*The true right hand bank immediately above Yarrow bridge has undergone extensive clearing work to improve access to the water and the left-hand bank downstream of the gas pipe crossing (at the top of this photo) is also due to be improved during the coming season.*



The website has been instrumental in helping us to sell a large number of day tickets and to generate the best waiting list that we have ever had. In fact the number got so high that we closed it in early September. Asking those on it to accept our GDPR policy helped reduce the overall number somewhat, as those who did not respond to our request were removed from the list. The sale of day tickets was probably boosted by the fact that many rivers were closed to visitors for much of the season.



*A still from the video on the website showing the day ticket beats*

### **Policy for recruiting new members**

As a committee we feel that it is only right that we know to whom we are offering membership. When recruiting new members we aim to strike a balance between age and where potential new members live. While not denying membership to perhaps the recently retired, we must recruit younger members who are the future of the Club. Priorities will be:

- Previous members who want to rejoin
- Younger members
- Where a potential new member lives, ie locally or out of the county
- Potential members who want to help with working parties and river maintenance

Points 2, 3 and 4 will also take into account how long someone has been on the waiting list.



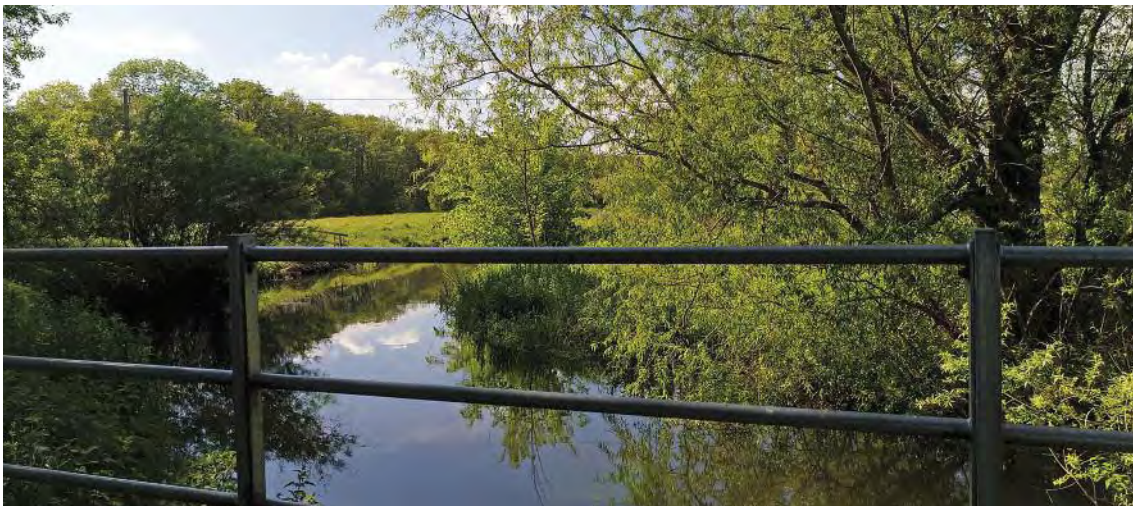
## Weed cutting

We had the best response for help with the annual weed cut that we have had for some seasons. I am pleased to report that every member of the Committee helped on at least one day and some of us on more days. We even had help from and offers of help from day ticket visitors and potential members on the waiting list.

In an endeavour to improve communication with you, our members, we have issued a monthly newsletter and also posted the minutes of committee meetings on our website.

## Canoeing and wild swimming concerns

We have been in contact with Cornelia Bidewell the owner of the Yarrow Farm and County School beats about the problems caused by canoeists and potentially by wild swimmers. We have her agreement to placing a warning sign at County School Bridge advising of the dangers of *E. coli* and *Cryptosporidium parvum* which can cause Weil's Disease. She has also agreed that we can fence the right-hand bank upstream of the bridge between the bridge and the new fence at the back of the parking area. There will be a gate, with a combination padlock, by the slipway so that we can use it to launch the punt as and when necessary.



*The slipway by the car parking area immediately above Yarrow Bridge (on the left of this photo) is to be fenced off and signs erected to deter canoeists.*



I have had a number of conversations with Paul Seaman, owner of Bintry Mill, over the latter part of the season and each time he has told me how happy he has been talking to members who have expressed their delight at being able to fish and enjoy the wildlife that flourishes on our part of the river Wensum. Some had not caught a fish but had nevertheless had a wonderful peaceful day at one with nature. What more can one ask for other, perhaps, than seeing a large wild brown trout returned to the water and swim away strongly.

Let's hope that we will be able to start the 2021 season on 1 April.



*Another superb wild brown trout goes back into the water unharmed.*



*Habitat improvement is the key to increasing the wild trout population.*



### Bintry Mill Trout Fishery - 2020 Statistics

<b>Catch Returns</b>	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	TOTALS
Total number of wild fish caught	0	81	88	67	44	26	24	330
Longest wild fish caught	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24"
Total number of fish stocked	0	100	120	0	120	0	0	340
Total number of stock fish caught	0	14	48	51	31	30	14	188
Total number of stock fish kept	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
Total number of stock fish returned	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135
Percentage of stock fish caught that were returned								71.8%
<b>Beat Returns</b>								
Wild fish caught on Bintry Mill Beat	0	64	75	52	27	20	22	260
Stock fish caught on Bintry Mill Beat	0	11	27	21	13	6	10	88
Wild fish caught on Yarrow Farm Beat	0	11	13	15	17	6	2	64
Stock fish caught on Yarrow Farm Beat	0	2	21	27	17	24	4	95
Wild fish caught on County School Beat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stock fish caught on County School Beat	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Wild fish caught on Goff's Beat (members only)	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Stock fish caught on Goff's Beat (members only)	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
<b>Statistics</b>								
Total rod days fished	0	94	117	87	85	78	43	504
Days fished at Bintry Mill	0	58	73	53	40	35	25	284
Days fished at Yarrow Farm	0	25	35	30	38	37	15	180
Days fished at County School	0	2	6	1	4	3	2	18
Days fished at Goffs (members only)	0	9	3	3	3	3	1	22
Number of available fishing days per month	0	19	30	31	31	30	29	170
Fish caught per rod visit for Bintry Mill Beat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.23
Fish caught per rod visit for Yarrow Farm Beat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.88
Fish caught per rod visit for County School Beat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.06
Fish caught per rod visit for Goff's Beat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.47
Members who did not fish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Members who fished without catching	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Day tickets sold	0	0	14	13	16	17	12	72





## Catch Returns and Stocking

### *A Record Season for Numbers and Sizes of Wild Fish*

The most notable figure in this season's catch returns is the extraordinary number of wild fish that were caught: 330. Along with that high number is the biggest fish that was caught was measured at 24 inches and probably weighed at least 5.7lbs, according to length-to-weight tables, and possibly a bit more. A stunning wild Wensum trophy brown trout that was caught on the Yarrow Farm Beat. This was an inch longer than the best fish caught on the Bintry Mill Beat. The best wild fish caught by a day ticket visitor was 20.5 inches overall.



*Large wild trout are being increasingly caught every season, indicating a thriving population. Our ongoing programme of habitat improvement is designed to ensure a long term future for our wild fish.*

In some ways more important than the tremendous size of some of the fish being caught, is the number of smaller fish of varying sizes. These young fish will grow into tomorrow's trophy fish.

One of the most interesting and exciting aspect of the catch returns is the significant number of members who fished very successfully and caught remarkably few stock fish. Some examples: 38 wild fish and three stock fish; 31 wild and two stock; 19 wild, one stock; and 18 wild and two stock. This demonstrates that by fishing in the right areas of the Fishery it is possible to fish for wild fish and avoid stock fish. Thirty-eight members caught one or more wild fish while only 27 caught one or more stock fish. Eleven members caught only a wild fish.



We have known for some years that a number of stock fish do over-winter and this season was been no exception. Fish with black tags, which were stocked in 2019, were caught in small numbers right through the season with the last ones caught in October. There is no reason to suppose that a significant number of this season’s fish will not over-winter and be available to be caught next year.

This season 340 fish were stocked of which 188 were caught. This is perhaps not a surprising figure given the number of members who fished very successfully and caught almost no stock fish. The most fish caught by one member was 67. Only 53 stock fish were killed and 135 returned to the river. Just over 71 per cent of stock fish were returned. Fifteen members did not fish and only six fished without a catch.

Your committee has agreed to continue to put stock fish in the river next season. This will be to supplement the increasing stock of wild fish and not overwhelm them. The first stocking next season will take place on 10 May and future dates will be advised nearer the times. The colour of the tags will also be advised before the first stocking. We will continue to put the fish into the river in drops of no more than six at a time to discourage them from shoaling which can be a problem with triploid stock fish.



*Abundant aquatic life, like this cinnamon sedge, is the key to a successful wild trout population.*

# Secretary's Report



Richard Nelson

## **Recruitment**

Prior to the beginning of the 2020 season we had seven vacancies. These were filled from the waiting list and we began the year with a full complement of 60 anglers.

## **Committee meetings in the year**

Since the 2019 AGM the Committee has met on eight occasions. I wish to thank Andy Hunt (Treasurer) and Kevin Freezer (Committee member) for hosting the meetings.

## **Covid**

The start of our season was delayed for six weeks by lock-down restrictions. When we were able to open the Fishery social distancing and hand sanitising were the order of the day. The compliance from everyone at the start of the season and throughout the year has been very much appreciated.

## **General Data Protection Rules (GDPR)**

Every club and society that retains members' personal information is bound by the General Data Protection Rules. The rules apply whether or not the club has its own GDPR



policy in place. The BMTF had chosen not to prepare or publish a specific document and that proved to be a disadvantage in dealing with a series of events where personal information was used without authorisation. The Club now has a GDPR policy for which all members and waiting list applicants have confirmed their opt-in.

### Day tickets

Your secretary has taken over managing and issuing day tickets for the Yarrow and County School Beats. Previously the job was carried out by the treasurer. I wish to thank Committee member Bill Emrich who has spent a lot of time developing the on-line calendar booking and ticketing facility into an easy and intuitive tool and making the task much less time consuming. The system was running properly by the end of May and raised a big chunk of revenue last season – I am sure the Treasurer has a more accurate figure detailed in the accounts. In order not to swamp the Yarrow Farm Beat in particular with day ticket anglers a “beat rest day” was devised whereby the days immediately preceding and following a ticket sale were made unavailable to online purchasers. The take-up of day tickets was more than in any other season, maybe as a result of corona virus restrictions? There are enquiries already for 2021 but a significant number of days at the beginning of the season have been reserved for members only.



*Wild brown trout like this are increasingly being caught.*