

Grafham Water Fly Fishers

April 2024 Newsletter



Welcome to our April Newsletter



The new season is upon us and Grafham has been fishing well. I've had a couple of lovely days on buzzers and I've heard reports of good fishing on shrimp patterns too.

Congratulations to committee Member Mark Brinkman for being awarded a free season ticket from Anglian Water this year. I know he received a number of nominations-not just from me and the GWFFA Committee but also from other GWFFA and Invicta members. It recognises his services to local fly-fishing during his time as Chair of the club, particularly during the pandemic, and his leadership of the bank clearance work. The banks are certainly looking fantastic at the moment. Congratulations and Thank-You, Mark.

Chair Lianne Frost

2023 Season Round Up

Our AGM was held on 5th March at Grafham Water fishing lodge. This saw reports from the club officers and a round up the 2023 season.

Copy of the Chair's report:

1. CHAIR'S REPORT

Lianne Frost was unable to attend due to her mother's illness. Her report set out below was delivered by Peter Hartley.

Please accept my apologies for not attending this AGM. Unfortunately, my elderly mother has been diagnosed with advanced cancer and I need to be with my parents in Hampshire to take her to hospital appointments etc. Peter has very kindly agreed to Chair the meeting for me and read my report. He and the other committee members will be happy to address any questions or concerns arising during the meeting.

I am pleased to say that 2023 saw another full fishing calendar and the club continued to go from strength to strength with membership reaching nearly 190 members.

Bank fishing was restricted for most of the year as water levels remained high preventing access to the dam. The excellent bank clearance work led by Mark Brinkman ensured that the rest of the banks around the lake provided good access to anglers. The North Shore provided excellent sport in the Autumn although the South Shore didn't appear to hold many fish.

From the boats, buzzer fishing was excellent right from the start of the season in Valley Creek, Stumps and Sanctuary. As the season progressed, boat fishing was particularly good at G and the Willows with the bowl of the dam providing good sport on dries and popper fry as we came into Autumn.

As discussed at last year's AGM, the Committee decided to update our online presence on our Website with professional support and to move to Clubmate to help the Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Club Captain simplify the management of payments to the club and communications to members. The combination of Facebook, the website, Clubmate and the member only WhatsApp groups provide a modern electronic interface for Grafham anglers and GWFFA members and I am sure that this has contributed to our healthy membership figures.

I would like to say a big thank you to Christopher Faulkner, Mark Brinkman and Mark Brookbanks for their hard work in implementing and tweaking the new systems and to Steve Cracknell for managing our Facebook presence.

The winter programme this year has been well attended, with some meetings offering Zoom attendance as well as in person attendance when we have been able to hold the meetings downstairs where both the Wi-Fi signal and acoustics are more Zoom friendly. Many thanks to Stuart for adapting his working hours to allow us to continue to use the Lodge as our base for these meetings and to Steve for organising raffles and manning the door.

As I mentioned before, bank clearance has continued through the Autumn and Winter, making a big impact on the accessibility of the banks ahead of the new season. I am pleased to say we have continued to have support from other local clubs not just GWFFA. Mark has also led work to start developing a new Anglers' Car Park at Duberley Close which will be completed once the weather dries up enough to allow the final works to be done. He is also working with AW to re-open the bridge at Wyndham's Way.

My thanks go to the committee for all their work last year and their continuing efforts. In particular I would like to thank our club Captain Christopher who has continued the work started by Martin to

introduce a full programme of social days to the calendar. He has also obtained an impressive level of sponsorship for events, with prizes and giveaways for attendees.

Many thanks also to John Batter who is standing down as Secretary this year. He is currently enjoying an Antipodean adventure. I am delighted to report that Philip Sorensen has agreed to take on the Secretary role subject to ratification at this AGM. I'm also pleased to report that Alex Green joined the Committee during the year and that Brian Calvert has also agreed to return to the committee.

The Committee is very grateful to the work undertaken by non-committee members:

- Harley Smith who manages all our trophy maintenance and engraving and also maintains our thwart boards
- Roger Hurren for co-leading the bi-weekly Monday fly tying lessons alongside Invicta
- Chris Bobby who successfully captained the AMFC A Team to victory in Group 1 this year. Congratulations to him and everyone else who fished in that team.
- Simon Goodland for captaincy of the AMFC B Team which continues to encourage new anglers in competition fishing

The club continues to have some very good anglers among our ranks. GWFFA members Mark MacLeod, Jake Wenman, Richard Denney, Tony Fox and Pete Eville all qualified to fish for the senior England loch style teams in 2024. Tony is also fishing in the 2024 World Masters in the Czech Republic.

Gwyneth Mooney and I have qualified to fish for England Ladies again in 2024 with Mairi McFarlane being selected as a reserve.

Gwyneth and I both represented England Ladies in the second Ladies World Championship in 2023 which was held in Kamloops, Canada. The team came a creditable 5th out of 10 and I personally managed to win my group to come fourth overall, narrowly missing out on a bronze medal. As well as managing and coaching the Ladies, Chris Bobby fished the World Masters at Kamloops, competing against many former World Medallists. The Masters team came 6th out of 13 teams.

Following a very nice Club Dinner at the Harbour View Restaurant last year, we are returning there this week. This is the highlight of our social calendar and a chance to have a meal out with our partners. It is also our awards night where we acknowledge the winners of our programme of matches during the year.

We have had another positive year and I have been delighted by the energy brought into the club by so many of our new members. If you can spare some time, do consider putting yourself forward either to the committee or to support in some other way. It is always helpful to the club to get fresh ideas which shape the club for the future. I have very much enjoyed my first year as Chair of GWFFA and the support of both the committee and our members.

I now look forward to getting out fishing in the new season (subject to temperatures rising over 10 degrees!)

Annual Dinner 9th March 2024 & GWFFA Awards

We returned to the Harbour View Restaurant for the club annual dinner. This also serves as our awards night with the presentation of trophy from the club championship. A very enjoyable evening with an excellent meal. It was good to see new members joining us for the evening.

Prizes were duly presented details below:



2023 Match results

Bank Matches

Top Rod

- 1st - Frank Daley
- 2nd - John Vincent
- 3rd - Andrew Smith

Runner Up

- Christopher Faulkner
- Mark Brinkman
- John Archer

Boat Matches

Top Rod

- 1st - Steve Jones
- 2nd - Mark Brinkman
- 3rd - Frank Daley

Runner Up

- Mark Brinkman
- Lianne Frost
- Christopher Faulkner

Dry Fly Day	Tony Fox
The Winter Plate	Steve Cracknell
Best Brown Trout	Lianne Frost 8lb 8oz
Best Rainbow Trout	Alan Briggs 8lb 5oz
Heaviest Bag	Mark Brinkman 18lb 13oz

The Best Brace we have decided not to award in 2023 and we will be reviewing this trophy in light of the no kill Brown policy, combined with minimum fish handling.

Boat Champion	1st. Mark Brinkman 2nd. Steve Jones
Bank Champion	1st. Christopher Faulkner 2nd. Mark Brinkman

And finally, the **2023 GWFFA Championship supported by Fly Frames**

1st. Mark Brinkman.	2nd. Christopher Faulkner
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A big thank you to Chris Bobby for his compilation of the match results to produce the results.

Presentation of Fly Frames trophy to Mark Brinkman by Chrstopher Faulkner at the 1st GWFFA Social Boat Day



The Fishing

The season for me at Grafham has got off to a slow start on the banks. I usually arrive for about 8.30am and fish for a few hours packing up before midday. Most days at the start of the season for me were lacking in fish. Either too windy and all coloured up or little about. Then you hear information on people catching fish aplenty in the afternoons. I gave this a try the other day just after the clocks went back and mid-afternoon there were lots of fish, maybe a late buzzer hatch. This was also true of our first social boat day. The morning was difficult, but by the afternoon Pig Bay was alive with fish. Perhaps I should change the times I fish and have a lie in and pop down after lunch. Mark Brinkman

If you fancy a spot of buzzer fishing, you could do well to take note of Steve Cracknell's advice below:

Buzzer Fishing by Steve Cracknell

What are buzzers. They are the pupa of the aquatic midge, and on most reservoirs in the spring, and early summer they can be the staple food for trout. They start life on the bottom living in the mud and silt as bloodworms red in colour. When conditions are right, they start their journey to the surface rising slowly and changing colour from red to black, grey, green or olive. They swim upwards for a while rest and fall down then swim up again the rise and fall "long slow pulls" as they near the surface they pump blood into their wing cases "coloured cheeks" when they eventually break the surface the wings break free from the wing casing, and they fly.

Although they can be around all year. I am only going to talk about this time of year. With the water temperature below 8 degrees the aquatic life is pretty dormant but when it reaches the magic 10 degrees the insects become more active all kinds of things are swimming around. Buzzer time....

Although you can fish buzzers from the bank, I will explain how I fish from a boat.

The best depth is 12-18 ft of water. I normally fish four buzzers as I would in a match, but you can fish three if four is too many. In the morning when its colder the fish are usually deeper so I will start with a size 8 red or grey buzzer on the point 4ft from that will be a size 10 red - black Dennis the Menace "change of colour" 3ft 6 normal buzzer and 3ft 6 from that will be an emerger or normal buzzer. My dropper length is around 9inches so from my point fly the next buzzer will be 3ft 3" then 3ft 6" to the next then five feet to the fly line giving a total leader length of sixteen feet. Don't fish to light leader as double hook ups are common.

These leader lengths are not a must and can be changed to suit the conditions deeper or shallower water windy weather etc. If the water is deeper than this the flies will drag the tip of your line down with them. I like this as takes can be easy to see but you can swap to a Midge tip line to fish deeper.

If it's a windy day and the boat is drifting fast, I may fish two size 8s or heavy grub hooks just to get the buzzers down deep quickly. It's no good having your flies in mid water if the fish are deep. If it's a bright day you might find the fish will stay deeper but if its cloudy, they will come up in the water following the buzzers and might even take from the top, so we have to keep our flies where the fish are

feeding. If you get fish on the third fly remove the size 8 and put a 10 on this will slow the descent and is also the perfect cast four size 10s.

The method is cast your line pull everything straight and let the buzzers sink, watching the line for any movement I have markers on my line that I put on with a marker pen, this helps me see any movement of the line easier as you can get a take as the flies drop in the water. When the flies have settled start a slow figure of eight retrieve watching your line all the time this keeps you in contact with your flies. After 15-20 seconds pull the line about 2ft 6 very slowly this will raise the buzzers in the water just as they would do naturally. Sometimes the line will be ripped from your hands as you do this, or they might take as they fall again. Fish your flies right up to the boat and then lift them very slowly stopping a couple of times on the way up, fish can be found right under the boat. If you start to get fish on the top dropper or second, they will have moved up in the water. Now you have two options remove the point fly and replace with a fab or small booby, cast slow figure of eight retrieve but don't forget the long pulls. Or replace the top fly with a bung, cast, let the flies settle with a long pull every now and then. Or now it might be the time to start fishing nymphs.

Tight lines.

Steve Cracknell

Captains Post

April and May GWFFA Events

Having stated the year with an excellent social day on the 26th March supported by Anglian Water, where we had 24 members fishing we move into April and May with five GWFFA events to look forward to. We have our annual trip to the Test in May which has been split across two days, 14th and 25th May with 11 members joining me for two days of dry fly fishing.

We have our first Bank Match on Saturday 13th April and our first Boat Match on the Saturday 11th May. Please book in via Clubmate, and I am delighted to let you know that both events are supported by Fario Flies. These matches contribute to our Club Championship 3 Bank and 3 Boat Matches with the best two of each counting. They are also fun fishing days and an opportunity to experience some competition fishing. A must if you would like to fish for GWFFA in the AMFC but also just a great day fishing with club members and the associated banter and interaction. This year we are fortunate to have a new trophy for the Club Champion to keep and it's been carved by one of our very talented members - Stuart Stenning-White. We like it so much that I have ordered one for 2025 and 2026 as well – nothing like being organised!

We also have our annual trip to the Test where I am being joined by 11 members across two days for fabulous upstream dry fly fishing and we will hopefully get to catch on the mayfly.

We also have a selection of social days in April and May, and I hope as many of you as possible will join us.

Wednesday 17th April - a social day at Ravensthorpe supported by Veniard.

Thursday 25th Apr – The Snowbee Practice Day – a special day when we will be using floating lines only and a chance to gain useful information for our teams in the main event on the 27th April. The day is supported by Elinor Fisheries and Cookshill Fly Tying.

Finally, Thursday 2nd May our second Grafham Social Day – the usual opportunity to fish with other members, learn and enjoy. The day is supported by Fulling Mill.

These are all booked via Clubmate unless you wish to pay cash in which case let me know and I will book for you. A reminder to the 2023 and 24 new members that you can book any social event and take advantage of the £5.00 offer for one event. Please contact me and I will book you in and you pay me cash on the day. Also remember for social days you are welcome to invite a guest and fish with them, again let me know and pay cash (£15) on the day.



GWFFA 2024 Champions Trophy

Christopher

Christopher Faulkner

Club Captain



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GWFFA Activities 2024

The following is the list of activities planned so far this year. Please refer to the GWFFA website for up-to-date information as this always has the full information. Most events are bookable through Clubmate where you can reserve and pay for your share of the boat. For bank days there is no payment you just use Clubmate to book into the day.

GWFFA Activities 2024				
DATE	DAY	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
13-Apr-24	Saturday	1st Bank Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
17-Apr-24	Wednesday	GWFFA day at Ravensthorpe	Ravensthorpe	C Faulkner
20-Apr-24	Saturday	AMFC Association Day	Grafham	C Bobby/S Goodland
25-Apr-24	Thursday	Snowbee Practice Day	Grafham	C Faulkner
27-Apr-24	Saturday	Snowbee Floating Line	Grafham	Invicta
02-May-24	Thursday	Social Boat Day 2	Grafham	C Faulkner
05-May-24	Sunday	Group 1 round 2	Rutland	C Bobby
11-May-24	Saturday	1st Boat Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
12-May-24	Sunday	Group 3 round 2	Rutland	S Goodland
14-May-24	Tuesday	TEST DAY	TIMSBURY	C Faulkner
25-May-24	Saturday	TEST DAY	TIMSBURY	C Faulkner
02-Jun-24	Sunday	Group 1 round 3	Pitsford	C Bobby
11-Jun-24	Tuesday	GWFFA day at Pitsford	Pitsford	C Faulkner
16-Jun-24	Sunday	Dry Fly Day and BBQ	Ravensthorpe	C Faulkner
22-Jun-24	Saturday	Group 3 round 3	Grafham	S Goodland
23-Jun-24	Sunday	Social Boat Day 3	Grafham	C Faulkner
29-Jun-24	Saturday	2nd Boat Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
03-Jul-24	Wednesday	GWFFA day at Rutland	Rutland	C Faulkner
06-Jul-24	Saturday	Group 1 round 4	Grafham	C Bobby
13-Jul-24	Saturday	Group 3 round 4	Rutland	S Goodland
20-Jul-24	Saturday	Members Day	Grafham	C Faulkner
21-Aug-24	Wednesday	Social Boat Day 4	Grafham	C Faulkner
25-Aug-24	Sunday	Maitland Trophy	Rutland	RWFF
08-Sep-24	Sunday	3rd Boat Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
14-Sep-24	Saturday	Group 3 round 5	Pitsford	S Goodland
19-Sep-24	Thursday	Social Boat Day 5	Grafham	C Faulkner
27-Sep-24	Friday	Group 1 round 5	Chew Valley	C Bobby
29-Sep-24	Sunday	2nd Bank Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
05-Oct-24	Saturday	AMFC Association Day	Bewl	C Bobby/S Goodland
13-Oct-24	Sunday	Social Boat Day 6	Grafham	C Faulkner
27-Oct-24	Sunday	Hinckley Shield (provisional)	Grafham	INVICTA(CF for GWFFA)
10-Nov-24	Sunday	3rd Bank Match	Grafham	C Faulkner
01-Dec 24	Sunday	Winter Plate	Grafham	C Faulkner

Fish of the month March 2024

There have been some cracking fish caught in March clearly some full tailed overwintered fish. Top entry for the month was caught by Jim Deacon from the Grafham Dam. A 6lb 9oz Rainbow. A super full tailed fish. Well done Jim.



Have you bought your Environmental Agency Licence for 2024?

Mark Brinkman having his licence checked at Grafham by local EA Officer. It seems that that EA head office is based in Brampton just down the road from Grafham. So, we are likely to see an increased presence at the fishery. Don't get caught out!



Grafham Bank Clearance

Our winter programme of clearance has come to a close with bird nesting season now in full swing, however, this year we are going to have a different approach with sessions during the summer as well. This will not involve clearance of any major vegetation or trees but more maintenance of the work we have already completed. The logic being that we could run over a previously cleared area and knock it back with minimal effort rather than letting it re-grow and tackling more major growth. This in particular applies to bramble growth on areas such as Deep Water Point.

A new car park has been cleared for access to the Seat next to Duberly Close. Anglian Water are waiting for the ground to dry out to allow a tractor onto the site to level the ground. Once levelled a matting will be installed which is designed for the grass to grow through to provide a firm surface. The car park should hold up to approx. 10 cars.

We will though have several additional working parties to assist AW in installing two bridges over the stream in what's known as Wyndham's Way. This gives pedestrian access from the Plummer Car Park through to Sludge Point. We will be looking for volunteers to assist with this. They will be smaller than our usual group 5 or 6 people ideally with digging and bridge installation skills!

More information and dates shortly.

Angling Trust Membership

I am sure that you appreciate that as a GWFFA member you enjoy Angling Trust membership via the club while fishing club events. We take out membership as a club principally for the liability insurance and because the Angling Trust are the voice of the angler in the UK, with their Fish Legal division actively involved in the prosecution of polluters and the protection of angling and fish stocks. It should be noted that it was due to the Angling Trusts lobbying of the government that angling was one of the first sports to resume after the Covid pandemic.

It was with surprise today that I learnt that the Angling Trust only has 16,000 members out of circa 1 million plus Environment Agency Fishing licence holders. Some of the reduction is put down to club membership and that anglers consider themselves members of the AT if they are part of a club rather than taking out personal memberships. Given that the AT is the one voice for angling it would be good to see more anglers taking out personal memberships. This can only strengthen their position when lobbying on behalf of the angler and our sport.

Angling Trust membership costs **£30 per year for adults**. There are also reduced rates for senior citizens aged 65 years and over and adults aged 18-21 years, starting from £26 per year. Junior membership is free for anglers aged up to 17 years of age. Life membership is also available for a one-off payment of £500.

AT Members also enjoy a wide range of member benefits, discounts with major suppliers to our sport which would often more than cover the cost of membership. Please check out their website for full details.

The GWFFA Committee

Below contact details and committee roles.

Committee Members

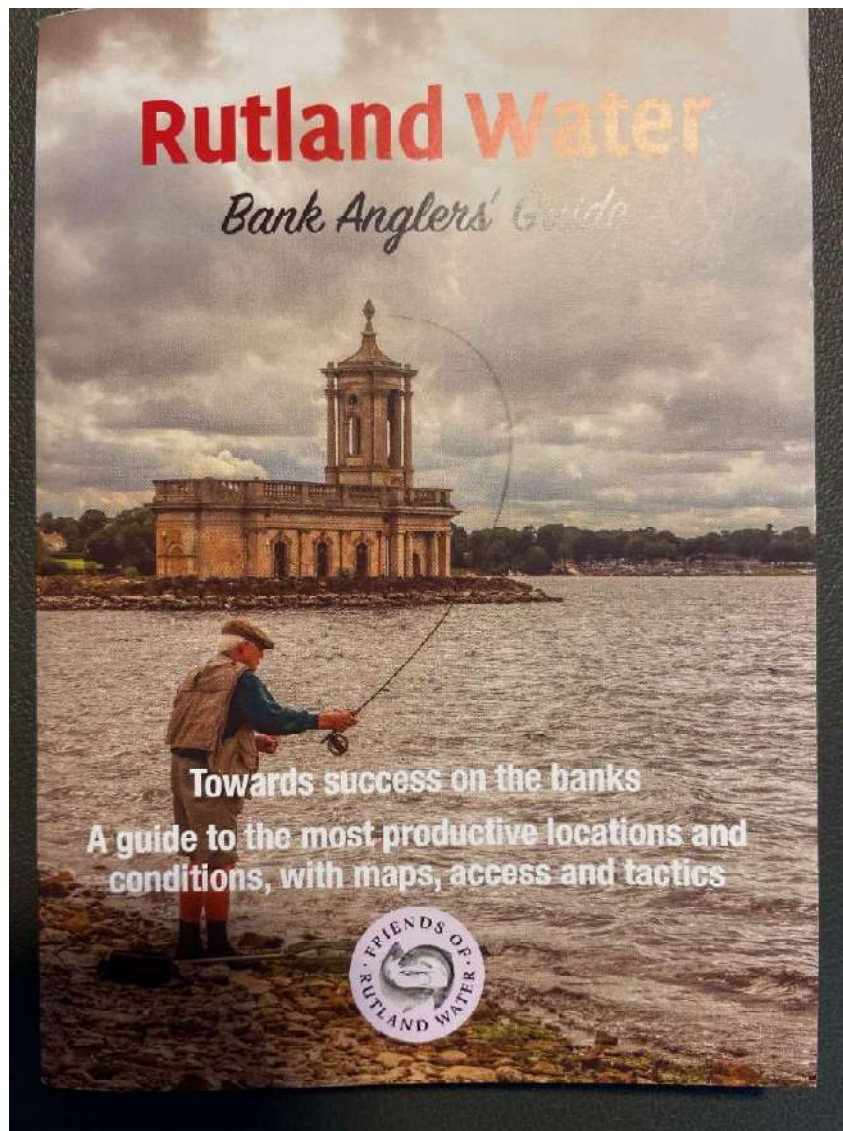
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Committee	Steve Cracknell stevecracknell56@gmail.com
Committee	Alex Green sibleygreen@yahoo.co.uk
Committee	Brian Calvert bcalvert@talktalk.net

Rutland Water Bank Anglers Guide

Another very useful bank guide has recently been completed by GWFFA members and experienced local anglers; John Wadham, Mick Connor, Jane Walker and David Moore. Art and illustrations completed by Stuart Stenning-White and contributions from Brian Calvert who wrote the guide for Grafham Water. Chris McLeod managed the design and layout of the guide. This is an excellent guide, especially for the occasional visitor giving guidance by season and wind direction where to fish.

We have been handing these out for a few weeks to members to save on postage, now for all who have not been given their copy yours will be on its way to you shortly by post.

You will be pleased to hear that the team are now working on a boat fishing guide for Grafham, which I am sure will be every bit as informative as the bank guides.



Newsletter Articles

We are always interested to have member contributions to the Newsletter. If you have tips to share or would like to see certain topics covered in the newsletter, please let me know. All contributions gratefully received.

Mark Brinkman

Editor.