



Grafham Water Fly Fishers Association

Welcome to our August Newsletter

Like many of you, I'm sure, I haven't been doing much fishing over the last few weeks given the heat we've had, but I have had a couple of fantastic days at Draycote, catching 13 and 9 fish in the top of the water, pulling daddies and hoppers. I hear some people are catching well at Grafham as well! I'm sure with the water levels dropping and the dam being accessible that there will soon be some great bank fishing to be had at Grafham. Thanks to Mark Brinkman's working parties and work from the AW staff, the route to Sludge from the Plummer car park, known as Wyndhams Way, is now fully open - thanks to all involved for their hard work.

Tight Lines, *Lianne*

As Lianne has said there is not too much to report on the Grafham fishing front, given the current temperatures the boat take up is low and few bank anglers venturing out, the water temperature is still high. We have had a right mix for our club days this year from high winds to an almost tropical downpour at the members day to postponed dry fly day due to 38 deg flat calm conditions! The irony is that for many of our 'destination fishing' anglers they have travelled thousands of miles to hopefully have clear blue skies and wall-to-wall sunshine to stalk Bonefish etc only to be greeted by tropical storms, wind and rain, there is no certainty in fishing, but conditions do seem less predictable today.

For the early bird GWFFA bank anglers there are still quality fish to be caught even in the mid-summer high temperatures. I am not one of the early risers, but I did a couple of weeks ago get myself down to Pylon Point for a 7.30am start (note most serious early birds are contemplating going home by then!) It was overcast and a 12 mph SE wind, I immediately saw pods of 2 and 3 fish travelling just a few feet from the edge in shallow water picking off shrimp. I quickly had a pull, then landed 2 fish and dropped another couple. The wind then strengthened and went round to SW and the cloud cleared and the sun came out. By 8.30am the fish just faded away to deeper water. Great sport while it lasted, you just have to get up a bit earlier or fish late in the evening until the water temperature drops to trout acceptable levels. The boat fishing is more consistent as you can get out to the deeper water. With the shorter days and longer nights, we should see conditions improve and should not need too early a start to find the fish on the bank. We also now have unrestricted access to the Dam from Monday 11th August as the water levels are below the yellow line. It will be interesting to see how it fishes as reports from the boats have not had much success close into the dam.

Editor

GWFFA Awards Honorary Life Membership to Brian Calvert



GWFFA Club President Peter Hartley presenting Honorary Life membership certificate to Brian Calvert. This together with an engraved Wheatly fly box recognising Brian's contributions to the club and fly fishing.

The committee took the opportunity of the recent members day to present an honorary life membership award to Brian Calvert. Brian is a founder member of the club and has been actively involved with the club since its inauguration. A highly successful angler, and in particular bank fishing with a great preference for surface tactics. He could often be seen fishing the banks or the Dam and if not fishing walking the Dam and banks with his wife Shiela chatting to anglers fishing. Brian is the author of the Grafham Water Bank Anglers Guide, an essential read for anyone new to Grafham. He has also been heavily involved in the other books now in this series such as the Rutland Bank Anglers Guide. There is now also a boat version for both waters. Brian has also served on the GWFFA committee as Hon Secretary for many years. Many of you will also remember the 'Grail'. This was a forerunner of our Newsletter but a much more comprehensive printed booklet with up-to-date information and articles on tactics and how to fish Grafham. Brian has been a regular presenter at club evenings, happy to share tips and tactics with fellow members. GWFFA greatly appreciate Brians contribution and commitment to the club, its members and to the sport of fly fishing.



New member Kelly shares her experience of joining GWFFA



Hi Everyone,

I'm a new member of the Grafham Fly Fishing Club and wanted to share a little about how I got here and my first day on the water!

After having my daughter, I found peace and quiet (and precious snippets of me time) by the water. The stillness, combined with the thrill of a take and the joy of netting my first trout, sealed the deal for me. That's when I realised I had discovered something really special in fly fishing.

Originally from the West Country, I naively never expected to find such brilliant fishing in the Midlands. But after a chat with Mark at Pitsford Lodge, I was pointed towards Grafham and introduced to some amazing contacts, and I haven't looked back since.

From my first casting lesson with Peter to being warmly welcomed by members like Alex Green, Chris, and Lianne (and of course, the amazing England Ladies captain Samantha Edmunds), I've been blown away by the knowledge, support, and kindness here. I even caught the biggest fish at my first social day, not bad for a club newbie!

Joining Grafham Water Fly Fishers Association has helped to fuel my passion for fly fishing which has opened up some exciting opportunities. One of them is launching @littlewadersuk, a venture all about encouraging parents and children to get outside and fish together. Including my daughter in this journey has been amazing, and I hope to pass on not just skills, but also the spirit of the fishing community.

Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me. I'm excited to keep learning, growing, and maybe even cast for the England Ladies Team one day! I'm really looking forward to more fun and memorable club days ahead.

Tight lines,

Kelly

Members Day 2025

The 2025 Members Day was held Saturday 19th July at Grafham with a good turnout, 32 members signed up for the day. Due to a few last-minute dropouts, 28 actually fished and it was a challenging day. The weather was a story of two parts - fishing part – windy and wet with some very heavy rain, BBQ part – the rain stopped, the wind dropped, and the sun even appeared for a while.

The fishing was tough it rained heavily almost from the start and continued well into the afternoon, many blanked but two rods shone through - Simon King with 8 fish pulling lures off Sludge Point and our new Junior Member Alexander Langford who had 5 fish in the boils area accompanied by our Club Champion Mark Brinkman who only managed a couple.

For the BBQ we had erected a marquee and in the dry and warmth we shared some delicious food and drink – a very welcome break from the tough water conditions.



Captains Log

2025 continues to be a very well supported year for our events and I would like to thank all those who have attended. We have been lucky to get fantastic support from suppliers too and many of you have been fortunate to benefit from their participation gift.

I would like to remind members that for all our social events guests are welcome and all you need to do is to let me know, and you can invite a guest to fish with you or another member.

I would also like to remind all new members in 2024 and 2025 that you can attend one social day for just £5.00 (a saving of £10). This is to encourage you to try a social boat day, and all you need to do is to let me know and I will book you in and you give me the £5 cash on the day.

Finally, I'd like to encourage more of you to take part in the matches too - they are fun days, not too serious and the only real difference is that the boat pairs are drawn and not arranged by me - you might get two experienced anglers together or two new members. We have 3 matches left this year - the 3rd Boat match on Sunday 7th September, then two bank matches on Sun 21st September and Saturday 25th October.

The final competition of the year is our winter plate on Sunday 9th November, when there will be a large selection of food and drink related items to be drawn for at the weigh in.

Future Events

The next **Social Day is Wednesday 20th August** so I hope as many as possible will join us and it's supported by Celtic Blob.

We then have the **Maitland Trophy at Grafham on Sunday 31st August** - there will be a Rutland Team and a GWFFA Team and I am also pulling together an all comers team from Draycote Fly Fishers and other clubs - if anyone wants to fish there are still places, so please email me – tophergfaulkner@gmail.com £18.00 for the boat and £19.00 for the evening meal if you wish to stay. The match is sponsored by Douglas Rods and Wading Waters and there will be a great selection of prizes.

Saturday 6th September - GWFFA Dry Fly Day at Draycote - there are a few places left so please book via Clubmate - supported by Scottie Products

Sunday 7th September - GWFFA 3rd Boat Match - supported by Fario Flies and Upavon Fly Fishing

Thursday 18th September – GWFFA Social Day - supported by Veniard

Sunday 21st September – GWFFA 2nd Bank Match – supported by Fastmail Tackle.

Saturday 11th October - GWFFA Social Day - supported by Fulling Mill & Barbless Flies

Saturday 25th October - GWFFA 3rd bank Match supported by Craig Barr and Flash Attack Flies and Kindale Fly Fishing

On Sunday 5th October GWFFA are also hosting a group from GAIA (The Game Angling Instructors Association) as per 2024 we will have bacon rolls and coffee in the meeting room at 0800 and then be out fishing for 0915. Lunch at 1300 to 1345 finish fishing 1730. The aim is to accompany a GAIA member and help with local knowledge and even learn a thing or two about casting!!! If you are interested, please let me know – christopher.faulkner@gmail.com

Winter Program Your committee is now working on the program for 2025/6 we will do the usual fly-tying evenings, we have Semperfli coming to present in November and we have a few other ideas we are working on – BUT these are your evenings so if anyone has any ideas or specific requests please let us know.

Social Event / Annual Dinner Before we embark on arranging another social event, we want to understand what our members would like to do as with over 200 members spread across the country only getting 20 odd wanting to attend says we have not got it right - is there a demand for a new refreshed one-off event

We plan to send out a survey in the near future, but please do let me know if you have any ideas or thoughts - liannefrost@googlemail.com

Fish of the Month

A reminder that we have a monthly fish of the month competition, and this now involves fish caught at Grafham, Rutland, Pitsford and Draycote. Members are encouraged to enter any good fish over 4lb - a photo, weight and who witnessed it (ranger or GWFFA member) – where caught and on what would be good too.

April 25 – Lianne Frost – 10lb 8 oz Brown Rutland

May 25 – Lianne Frost – 6lb 9oz Rainbow Draycote

June 25 – Mark Brinkman - 6lb 12oz Rainbow Draycote

July 25 – Christopher Faulkner - 4lb 8oz Rainbow – Grafham



Lianne Frost 10lb 08oz Brown, Rutland April



Lianne Frost 6lb 09oz Rainbow, Draycote May



Mark Brinkman 6lb 12oz Rainbow, Draycote June



Christopher Faulkner 4lb 8oz Rainbow, Grafham July

Dog Flea treatments and their impact on water quality

There has been concern raised in the media about the impact of dog flea treatments on water quality and the impact on invertebrates, if you are a subscriber to the Fly Fishing and Fly-Tying Magazine it has an article highlighting concerns and impact on our rivers. Below is an extract from a Broads news website which highlights some of the concerns. This may also be affecting Grafham given the number of dogs being encouraged to swim in the water.

Research has shown that spot-on flea treatments which contain insecticides are posing significant risks to aquatic wildlife in waterways such as the Broads.



A dog swimming in a body of water

Many popular dog (and cat) flea and tick treatments contain fipronil, imidacloprid or similar chemicals. Fipronil and imidacloprid are powerful insecticides that are banned from agricultural use due to their harmful environmental effects but is still commonly used in pet products.

Other insecticides used as flea treatment may also be similarly harmful, but, as they have not been used as pesticides, they are not monitored in water and have had little research undertaken into their freshwater impacts.

The issue arises as the flea treatment doesn't just stay on pets. When dogs swim, get wet, or are washed (or we stroke them and wash our hands) this chemical can easily enter the waterways or drainage systems, causing impacts to aquatic ecosystems.

Why this matters for the Broads



Backswimmers are just one important aquatic insect species found in the Broads

Healthy wetlands such as the Broads rely on insects. Species like dragonflies, damselflies, and freshwater beetles spend much of their life underwater and are essential to the food chain. They are prey for fish, birds, and other wildlife - and help keep our rivers clean by filtering water.

However, these aquatic insects are extremely sensitive to pollution. Fipronil and similar chemicals persist on a pet's coat for weeks and can remain active for up to 90 days, even though they kill fleas within just 24–36 hours. As we stroke our treated pets, we can also contaminate our hands with these chemicals and the health risks associated with long-term exposure are unknown.

Once in the water, these insecticides can wipe out aquatic invertebrates and disrupt the delicate balance of our wetland ecosystems. The degradation rates of these chemicals in the environment are uncertain but may be months or longer.

UK studies and testing have shown that fipronil and similar chemicals are being found in rivers across the UK at concentrations known to harm wildlife.

Sources of contamination

After applying a spot-on flea treatment containing fipronil, there are a number of ways that it can enter the water system, for example:

By allowing a treated dog to swim in the rivers or broads.

Washing a treated dog, either at home or at professional groomers, where the wastewater ends up at a sewage treatment plant (which are unable to remove insecticides before they discharge water into the environment).

Washing pet bedding in household laundry.

Washing your hands after petting treated animals.

What can pet owners do?

Consider non-toxic flea and tick treatments, such as those containing dimethicone, which work by physically immobilising parasites rather than poisoning them.

Choose oral chewable tablets that offer protection against fleas and ticks but don't contain insecticides.

Do not allow your dog to enter lakes, ponds, rivers or ditches if you have treated them with a spot-on flea treatment in recent months.

Use flea and tick treatments only when necessary - not all pets require year-round use.

Government's new plan to tackle pet treatment chemicals in waterways

A new initiative has been launched (22 July 2025) by the Cross-Government Pharmaceuticals in the Environment Group to address water pollution from pet treatments. The roadmap proposes research to better understand the issue and inform updates to international environmental risk assessment guidelines.

The plan includes three main stages aimed at lowering pollution levels while maintaining animal welfare standards:

Communication & education: Raise awareness among pet owners and vets about proper use and disposal of flea and tick treatments to reduce environmental contamination.

Evidence gathering: Conduct research to understand how fipronil and imidacloprid enter waterways and assess their impact on ecosystems.

Regulatory actions: Use scientific findings to inform international guidelines and explore new regulations that protect the environment while maintaining animal welfare.

Links and further information on how you can help

Insect loss affects the whole food chain. A water beetle could be eaten by a fish such as a roach, which in turn is then eaten by a kingfisher. If populations of creatures at the bottom of the food chain are harmed, it can have significant impacts on animals further up the chain.

By making more informed choices, we can protect these intricate ecosystems and the incredible species that depend on them.

This is clearly a concern for Grafham and other Anglian water reservoirs as dogs are regularly encouraged by their owners to swim in the water, doubtless some will have been treated for fleas. We as a club will consider bringing this to the attention of the angling trust to seek their opinion.

There is a lot more information available on the internet just by searching on the chemicals mentioned above.



GWFFA Activities 2025 for members

Social Boat Day 5	Grafham	Wednesday	20-Aug-25
6X4	Clywedog	Sunday	24-Aug-25
Maitland Trophy	Grafham	Sunday	31-Aug-25
3rd Boat Match	Grafham	Sunday	07-Sep-25
Social Boat Day 6	Grafham	Thursday	18-Sep-25
Group 1 round 5	Grafham	Saturday	20-Sep-25
2nd Bank Match	Grafham	Sunday	21-Sep-25
Group 3 round 5	Rutland	Saturday	27-Sep-25
AMFC Association Day	Draycote (TBC)	Saturday	04-Oct-25
GWFFA/GAIA	Grafham	Sunday	05-Oct-25
Social Boat Day 7	Grafham	Saturday	11-Oct-25
6X4	Grafham	Sunday	12-Oct-25
3rd Bank Match	Grafham	Saturday	25-Oct-25
6X4	Grafham	Saturday	01-Nov-25
Winter Plate	Grafham	Sunday	09-Nov-25
Fur & Feather (Boat)	Pitsford	Sunday	09-Nov-25
Fur & Feather (Bank)	Grafham	Sunday	23-Nov-25
Fur & Feather (Bank)	Rutland	Sunday	30-Nov-25

GWFFA Bank Clearance

This year's bank clearance programme has got off to a good start, we have focussed to date on re clearing the path known as Wyndham's Way. This runs from the west end of Plummer car park right to the point of the Sludge bank. It was one of the last places cleared last year but the weed growth this year has been exceptional, we had to fight our way through brambles and stingers, impassable with a rod set up. Now you can walk in comfort the whole way. We have also repaired the second bridge which has been for years just a single plank (if you could see it through the undergrowth) now a three-plank bridge with no concerns of ending up in the stream! You may recall the last time the water levels were really low in 2022 Sludge Point and Sludge Bank was one of the top bank fishing locations. We might see the same this year!



New GWFFA member Roy McCrudden all kitted out with AW safety clothing. Roy has helped out volunteering with other clubs and already has Brush cutter certification which has been accepted by Anglian Water. We warmly welcomed Roy to our volunteer team

Some pictures from our recent days



The second bridge over Wyndham's Way, which for years has been a single plank.

The main bridge below was replaced by AW last year.





The team. A little light refreshment after our mornings work.

If you have some spare time on a Monday morning, please do consider coming and joining us. It's not too much hard work, but we do make a real difference to the bank access and our fishing. If you are new to the water it's a great way to meet members and really get to know the water and get to see fishing spots that you may have never visited or considered.

GWFFA Bank Clearance dates 2025/26

Mon 11th Aug	Mon 8th Sept	Mon 22nd Sept	Mon 6th Oct	Mon 20th Oct	Mon 3rd Nov	Mon 17th Nov	Mon 1st Dec	Mon 15th Dec	Mon 5th Jan	Mon 19th Jan	Mon 2nd Feb	Mon 16th Feb	Mon 23rd Feb
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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.

The GWFFA Committee

Below contact details and committee roles.

Committee Members

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