

The Kingswood Legionnaires' Newsletter



Nae Room At Ye Olde Inn (*much ado about nothing*)



As many long standing members will already know, it has become traditional to include in the December edition of your newsletter, a ghostly or chilling Christmas tale. In December 2014, we had “The Strange Tale Of The Disappearing Tenner” and last year we had “The Old Fisherman And The Fog”. Both grisly tales indeed. This year we have “Nae Room At Ye Olde Inn”. A tale quite relevant to the story of Christmas and one I’m sure you’re all familiar with...

’Twas around the twilight portion in the month of October, in the year 2016, that ye olde secretary of the Kingswood Royal British Legion Fishing Society did ponder the forthcoming annual event. The event to which I refer is of course the seasonal ‘fur ‘n’ feather’ contest and in this particular year, the much-anticipated annual competition was scheduled, albeit somewhat nonchalantly, to take place upon the river Frome, a mere stone throw from the hamlet of Farliegh Hungerford, within the county of Somerset.

As per years previous, the society has embarked upon the river Frome for their angling enjoyment and even to the lake in the woods nigh Farleigh, should the river be in a state of unkindliness. However, no matter the venue because it was happen again traditional, that after such an event all participants of the contest would subsequently congregate thereafter at the local Mill Inn for liquid refreshment, hearty sustenance and other jovialities pertaining to the merriment of the festive season. So, without an otherwise meandering thought, ye olde secretary did call upon the Innkeeper, of said establishment, to seek confirmation of what could surely be deemed as little more than a fleeting reservation.

To his bemusement, ye olde secretary was greeted by a different Innkeeper to that of the year previous, and was not particularly well received. He enquired of the Innkeeper, “my dear fellow, our fishing society has for indeed a decade now, been gracing this establishment with its presence for the purpose of acquiring ale and nourishment afterward of our annual event, and to this end I seek reassurance of our provisional reservation”. The Innkeeper replied, “My good fellow, this establishment has in recent time become a place of culture and refinement, where wealthy upstanding members of our local community have chosen to indulge in the consumption of fine grubbery and somewhat diluted ales. ’Tis not a place befitting for the likes of ‘ee. Now go forth and take thy piscatorial blitherings with ‘ee.”

So, the new Innkeeper proved to be an absolute scoundrel begging beyond belief, and ye olde secretary did make haste to his place of habitation to ponder his considerations. After some days past, he did, and with some reluctance, announce the tragic news to all and sundry that a quandary had arisen within the society. With fluster, he spake to the chairman of the society and it was with heavy heart that he conceded the situation. The chairman, a man of great standing and much admiration amongst his peers, did take the task to hand by collating the names of alternative Inns within the local vicinity. To this end, a replacement and more amenable Inn was to be found, and at all costs herewith.

The chairman sought the assistance of a fellow fisher by the name of John Thompson Esquire, who knew of the location in question very well, and indeed had partaken of ale consumption in many of the nearby taverns. A listing document was hence drawn up and presented to ye olde secretary for his perusal. Ye olde secretary agreed to visit each tavern in turn and make urgent enquiries forthwith. Time

was surely of the essence. However, on his visit to the first listed and likely alehouse, he was again rebuffed and received by ear, in no uncertain terms, that his request would be denied as there was to be no room at the Inn... unless each individual concerned was agreeable to extend his vocal chords and pay heftily for the privilege of indulgement. Alas! Yet another rightful barsteward had been duly revealed.

Ye olde secretary became overwhelmed with despondency and yearned in earnest that his next port of call would be that of a much more welcome nature. As he trundled toward the Hungerford Arms, a tavern which had for some time been desolate and without the practice of ale consumption, he anticipated the worst but was in any other case developing a thirst like that of a man who had walked the desert floor for 7 days and beyond. As he approached the Inn he was somewhat heartened to view a lighted candle in the window and surmised that ale was indeed being duly offered for sale within. He entered through the large creaking oak door, slipping momentarily on some unsighted vomitus or partially congealed phlegm, which had been deposited upon the fusty floor. It was with some trepidation that he approached the bar, at which he was to be met by a broad smiling face upon the Innkeeper.

"I will have a small measure of your finest ale", he said to the Innkeeper. As the froth began to slowly fill the small dented tankard, he enquired of the Innkeeper, "tell me my good man. Are you able to accommodate a dozen or more fine gentlemen of the fishing fraternity on the 11th day of December hence? It is to be our annual festive gathering and we will be in need of your fine ale, and with some optimism one hopes a small banquet of inexpensive nutriment to accompany our jolly merriment." Without hesitation the Innkeeper replied, "If it be twelve or more basket cases then yes my good fellow. All are welcome here, even men with unwieldy habits and of ill repute can be at ease within these walls. You just cross my palm with ample coin and I will cater for your every desire sir." He said, wholeheartedly.

Ye olde secretary was elated with his accomplishment and did set off in some haste to make good the news he had encountered with the Innkeeper of the Hungerford Arms. With all in hand, the fishing society's Christmas event could now duly go ahead unhindered further, and all that was required was fine weather and many bountiful catches, of which to speak... but that is indeed a story for another day.

Welcome weight is worth the walk

An exceptionally good turn-out was expected for the Bill Milton Cup match and inter-club event held on the Crane on October 9th, and so I pegged out 21 swims. I couldn't believe how far the last swim would end up and although the last few pegs did look very inviting, I certainly didn't fancy the long walk with trolley and kit in tow as it was a tiring enough trek without them. With so many unfishable pegs, the big ash-tip field had only 4 or 5 to choose from but my guess was the winner would come from one of them. At the draw 20 anglers put in an appearance, which swelled the pool coffers and raised some very welcome cash for club funds. The river looked okay but it was a little low and was very clear. Pike would surely be a problem for some as usual, especially among the lower numbered pegs.

Johnny Mack selected the short walk option and drew peg 1. I drew peg 5 but Alcove Ace, Steve Dawson, was the man to beat on peg 3. The longest walk went to Alan Maggs. I told Alan it was going to be one hell of a hike but well worth it when he finally got there. Polly Pitt and Fishy McFishface were drawn in the little ash-tip field and had a good chance of framing from there. My section was going to be hard and that prediction was to be proved

true come the weigh in. As expected Steve Dawson took the section with 3-15-0 of dace. However Johnny the Mack came a very close second in the section with 3-14-0, which included a last minute chub of nearly 2lb. My 3-4-8 was well short of the mark on this occasion. Polly Pitt returned a very creditable 6-14-0 from the middle section with Roddy Lloyd on 5-2-0 and the big man with 4-14-8. However, the longest walk proved to be the killer peg on the day. Alan Maggs lost about 7lb in body weight but made up for it with 7-10-0 of prime redfins to steal the spoils. Eddie Davis went AWOL.



Legionnaires get mugged at Barton Farm

This inter-club match with Golden B*ollocks AC should have been fished at Riverside Drive, Chippenham, but according to our man on the ground, every swim was overgrown and it would take an army of sappers a week to clear them. So the event was hastily rearranged for Barton Farm. There was some initial confusion over the change of venue for the GV boys, which resulted in two of them turning up after the draw. They then proceeded to p*ss Brian off by parking their car on

the road, which should be used for emergency vehicles only. However, after a few choice words Brian managed to persuade the pair to move their car. The river was low and clear and there was a bitter east wind blowing. Everyone laughed when I recited the verse, "when the wind blows from the east, the fish bite least." Come the final whistle nobody was laughing as many a dry net was to be seen loitering with no real intent on the bank. The last laugh went to the GV boys who whipped us good 'n' proper. Staking a claim to first place with 5-14-0 of quality roach from unfancied peg 2 was Shay Gilman, followed by Nick Shin with 4-4-0, which included a decent bream. Third and fourth positions went to another 2 GV rods with 1-6-0 apiece. The 2 latecomers did me a favour however. As they ended up fishing in the first section, I was pushed into section two where my amazing catch of 0-13-0 was enough to take the section and some welcome beer tokens. The total weight tally was a disgrace by our standards as we racked up just 2-9-0 between us, to the GV's total of 12-4-0. Ouch!

Opposition Croombles at Alcove Poppy Match

Preceding the main RBL Poppy Appeal match is the Alcove Poppy match and numbers were notably down on the previous year. However, the Legion were well represented with almost half of the entrants being Kingswood Legionnaires. I fancied Margaret's Lake on the day, simply because I'd drawn George's in the 4 previous matches and hadn't fared well. I was relieved then to draw Margaret's peg 17, where I had Bobby Hole, Billy Croom and Tommy Ruffe for company. Bob and Tommy were to my right and Bill was on the opposite bank facing me. There was a cold breeze sweeping the surface, which kept fish down and also put them off for the most part. I was unable to catch much on the pole in front of me but had already eyed up a spot tight to the island, where I expected to bag a few chub.



I could see that Bobby was quietly getting a few but it was Billy the kid who was evidently beginning to run the show. Billy was casting out towards the island and chub were queuing up in turn. Once he got them feeding, fish came virtually one after the other and it was obvious Billy was going to be the outright winner. I had only managed 2 chub, a F1 and a few roach so was hoping for a section by default. As news from George's lake filtered around us, it was

clear that Billy Boy was going to be the runaway winner. Bobby Hole had a decent weight over 9lb and was third. I took the top silvers by default, Polly Pitt won his section with a giant goldfish and Billy Croom's 14lb plus bag stole the show.

I dreamed a dream of times gone by...

Remembrance Sunday is without doubt a very special day. It's also the day of the Poppy Appeal Open. I met up with Brian at Stothert & Pitt's social club, where he was munching on a bacon butty. We shared some banter amongst the same old faces we'd seen for the past three and half decades and Brian read out the citation. Now, here's the thing. The night before, I had a dream that I was setting up my seat box on the steps at Jackie Whites.

I didn't however, remember seeing myself catching any fish but all the same that would be a nice draw, as I fancied the Jack Whites section or Swineford. What I definitely didn't want to draw was Newbridge with the all rowing boats going up and down all day long. So, as the queue drew shorter and I got nearer the draw bucket I found myself reminiscing about the day I won this event so many years ago. Then I put my hand in the bucket and cleanly drew out my peg. As I removed the staple from the small folded card it revealed peg number 92. I had to check the location sheet, which was pinned on the wall, as I wasn't sure where this peg was. To my surprise and total delight I had drawn the steps at Jackie Whites.

When I got to my peg it was like déjà vu but after an hour into the match I hadn't had a bite. My dream was beginning to evolve into a nightmare but then a change of tactic brought the first chub of about a 1-8-0. Then 2 more in quick succession followed by a quiet spell before a two and half pounder latched on. A few more, but smaller chub followed and even a 2lb barbel joined in. However, the last hour was fruitless except for a small brown trout. News was spreading along the bank that a couple of double figure barbel had been caught well below me so it was a bit tense come the weigh in. I ended up with the scales and weighed in 3 others in my section, the rest had packed up early. The best weight so far was 3 barbel for 18-9-0.

When it came to my catch it went 18-0-0 exactly. Back at the Stothert & Pitt club the almighty raffle soon got under way. Brian might not have had a good day in terms of fishing but he made up for it with a host of raffle prizes. When the results were finally announced, it emerged that I had finished 4th overall. Dreaming on...

Treasured moments at Kelston killer match

This invitation match, held at Kelston on 20th November proved to be a real passion killer. Last year this event was cancelled due to the river being in flood and all who fished this time around probably wished it had been cancelled again this year. Several Legion members, myself included, gave this one a miss for a number of reasons, and what a good decision that turned out to be. Heavy rain over the two previous days was making its way into the river causing a steady rise in levels. A steadily rising river is probably the worst conditions any angler has to deal with and this certainly proved to be the case on the day. Of the 9 anglers who stepped up to the challenge, 4 didn't weigh in, including in-form Fishy McFishface, and everyone else struggled over the whole 5 hours. John Treasure needed just 6oz to win convincingly and Brian Lloyd steamed into second place with a mega catch of 2oz. Steve Jeffries romped away with a section win for his 1oz and Clive Purshouse pulled out all the stops to take his section with 0-0-8. A dire, dismal day was had by all. ☹

Next match...

The Christmas match will be at Stowford Meadows or Farleigh Wood lake depending on conditions. Remember this match counts for points, the knock-out, and the Pairs Challenge and with a hamper (possibly), and many other prizes on offer there's much to go for. Good luck to all!

Forthcoming match...

By the time you've recovered from your hangovers and excessive eating over the festive period I'm sure you'll be looking forward to a bit of river fishing. So all being well, I look forward to seeing you all on the bank at the Crane, Keynsham on the 15th January.

The calendar boys are here again...



Yes, another New Year upon us and another calendar for you. As you might have suspected, Bill Croom, who has been quietly sneaking up on all of us during the course of the year and snapping a few choice pics, has captured some memorable moments for you to enjoy. However, with so many new faces in the club now,

I wasn't able to dedicate carefully chosen pics for each month, so I've simply placed 3 or 4 random pics on each month's pages. The cost to you is just £2 per calendar (heavily subsidised by the club), and there will be a few additional calendars available at the same price (first come, first served) should anyone want more than one. Perhaps you could give one to someone you don't particularly like. Anyway, if you're interested then see ye olde secretary for availability, but hurry... we do expect these delightful gems to sell out very quickly.

Who's where and what's what...

It's still early days yet but things are beginning to hot up in the aggregate stakes, and after the next 2 matches I'm sure the overall picture will become quite clear unless there is some catastrophic calamity. So, take a last look now before the next newsletter, which will probably be published in February 2017, and will confirm the positions.

L.Wakefield	41
A.Maggs	34
P.Pitt	33
B.Knight	31
I.Brice	28
B.Hole	25
I.Swanborough	25
A.Dennis	25
C.Purshouse	21
B.Croom	19
R.Lloyd	14
J.Mack	12
B.Lloyd	10
J.Treasure	9
S.Jefferies	5
E.Davis	2
R.Warlock	0

Pairs aggregate latest...

L.Wakefield & P.Pitt	25.09.5
A.Dennis & A. Maggs	23.15.0
B.Knight & I.Swanborough	16.15.5
C.Purshouse & B.Croom	13.15.5
S.Jefferies & I.Brice	11.11.0
B.Lloyd & B.Hole	11.04.5

Welcome to new member...

A big warm welcome to Nigel Vigus who joined our club before the grim Kelston match got going. Not sure if we'll be seeing him again after that grueller.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Have a good one lads, see you all next year.