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May 2012

### Headlines

Exotic from the Staffs/Worcs Canal, see page 5

Nordley improvements, see Fisheries report pages 13-14

Where are the Severn roach? See Readers letters page 15

BAA on TV, see page 18

# Membership Renewal!

If you have not yet renewed your BAA membership and intend to do so, please could you do so as soon as possible? Every year the office is inundated with renewal requests just as the river season begins and it puts huge pressure on the staff to process the requests as quickly as some members demand. If you intend to fish on 16<sup>th</sup> June you must be in possession of your new membership card by then. Last year a number of members phoned on the 16<sup>th</sup>, renewed their membership and then had to be reminded that until they received their card, they were not entitled to fish.

Could we also remind members that they must be in possession of their card when they are fishing our waters. If you cannot produce your card when requested to do so by a bailiff, you will be asked to leave the water.

No permit – No fishing



# Fishing news



#### Fish of the Month - Dad's barbel



Hi, this was a barbel of 10lb 14oz that my dad (Brian Newstead) caught from Holt Fleet last September on a single 14mm halibut pellet.

Just thought we would let you know, thanks for all the great fishing.

Alan Newstead

### **Slow day at Coppice**





Here are some pictures of what I had on the 21/04/2012 from Coppice, had a very slow day.

1st picture is a mirror carp @ 17lb 2nd picture is a mirror carp @ 7.5lb

Thanks,

Kev of Birmingham

#### **Great day at Coppice**



Kev of Birmingham here,

Just to let you know how my 24 hours at Coppice was. Got there at 5pm on 03/05/2012 it was pouring down again but you must push on so got everything set up and then made a cup of tea.

The first 10 hours had 4-5 bites but NO fish and then at 3:30am at last a lovely 10lb common on tutti fruity then; just over an hour later another 10lb common, at 7:45am 11lb common, 20 mins later another 11lb common, at 10:15am 8.5lb common, at 2pm 16lb common, at 3:15am a 20lb common and then a 7lb common.

Also had 3 bream at 4lb, 4.5lb and a 5lb.

Thanks,

Kev of Birmingham

### Koi what a surprise!



Hello,

A koi/goldfish thing which came from the Staffs/Worcs Canal while perch fishing. A real surprise!

Stewart Bloor

# Fishing news record

#### for last 12 months

tor last 12 months								
fish/catcher	lb	oz	location	method	edition			
Barbel								
River Severn								
Stephen Mayo	14	7	Mid Severn	10m DD ellipse pellet, hair rig 12 hook, hemp & pellet groundbait.	July 2011			
Steve Swain	13	5	Mid Severn	Pellet and feeder	April 2012			
Steve Swain	12		Mid Severn	Halibut pellet hook bait on size 7 hook, pellet & hemp feeder	April 2012			
Steve Swain	11		Mid Severn	Halibut pellet hook bait on size 7 hook, pellet & hemp feeder	April 2012			
Brian Newstead	10	14	Holt Fleet	Single 14mm halibut pellet	May 2012			
Lee Wilkes	10	10	Arley	SBS Baits Frankfurter hooker.	July 2011			
Reece Wilkes	9	7	Arley		Oct 2011			
Dave Mantle	9	4	Highley		Nov 2011			
Phil Milnethorpe	9		Stanley Waters		Nov 2011			
			River Avo	n				
Chris Blunt	15	4	Fladbury	Double 11mm pellet	April 2012			
Chris Blunt	14	1	Fladbury	Double 11mm pellet	April 2012			
Big John	14		Fladbury	2 x 8mm hair rigged halibut pellets on 12 hook with boilies & pellets in PVA bag on hook.	Nov 2011			
Steve Hewitt	12	4	Wasperton		July 2011			
Richard Edwards	10	4	Fladbury		Nov 2011			
Richard Edwards	10	3	Fladbury		Nov 2011			
Steve Welland	10		Wasperton	Meat	April 2012			
Peter Niblett	9		Nafford	Hair rigged pellet.	Oct 2011			
Chris Blunt	8	12	Fladbury	Pellet	April 2012			
Tim Gilson	6	8	Nafford		Jan 2012			
Dave Holland	6		Fladbury	40 11 1	Jan 2012			
David Johnson	5	1	Fladbury	12m bloodworm boilie, barbel bomb & hemp groundbait	Mar 2012			

			River Tem	_				
Dawn Hana	4.0			е	0-+ 2011			
Barry Hope	13	_	Broadwas		Oct 2011			
John Morgan	10	5	9		April 2012			
Kevin Wilson	8	8	Stanford Bridge		Nov 2011			
Bream								
	River Severn							
Graham Cole	8	13	Birds Meadow		Nov 2011			
Colin Townsend	8	8	Severn Stoke	8m halibut pellet hair rig on 10 hook. 2m halibut pellet & brown crumb feeder.	Aug 2011			
Pete Jones	7	8	Birds Meadow	Magic Black ground bait feeder, small worm and red maggot on hook.	Dec 2011			
	River Avon							
David Johnson	7	5	Fladbury	Double 6mm elipse pellet.	Dec 2011			
Oli Johnson	6		Fladbury	Double 6mm elipse pellet.	Dec 2011			
			Pools					
Shawn Townsend	5	8	Stubbs Pool	Mainline Cell boilies.	Dec 2011			
Kevin Smith	5		Coppice		May 2012			
Kevin Smith	4	8	Coppice		May 2012			
Kevin Smith	4		Coppice		May 2012			
Common Carp								
			Pools					
Stan Kovachev	34	2	Coppice		July 2011			
Phil Wood	26	4	Coppice	Mid water boilie.	June 2011			
Carl Gerroni	24	7	Nordley 4		June 2011			
Kevin Smith	21		Coppice		Oct 2011			
Jack Parkes	20	2	Coppice		April 2012			
Daniel Ambrose	20		Coppice		June 2011			
Kevin Smith	20		Coppice		May 2012			
Kevin Smith	17		Coppice		July 2011			
Canals								
Will Peace	18		Worcester Canal, Alvechurch		Sep 2011			
Leather Carp								
			Canals					
Steve Ridd	13	5	Trent & Mersey Canal, Fradley	Foul hooked when plugging for predators	Feb 2012			

Mirror C	) PP	•					
Mirror Carp							
Steve Middleton	31	+	Coppice		June 2011		
Brendon Almquest	31		Coppice		Nov 2011		
Michael cross	31		Coppice	Single boilie	April 2012		
Greeny	24		Coppice	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Oct 2011		
Kevin Smith	20		Coppice	Boilie	April 2012		
Kevin Smith	17		Coppice		May 2012		
					·		
Chub							
			River Avo	n			
Chris Blunt	4	12	Fladbury	bread	April 2012		
Tim Gilson	3	10	Nafford	Luncheon meat.	Jan 2012		
Grayling							
			River Tem	e			
Tim Gilson	1	0	Lindridge	Ledgered maggot	April 2012		
			-				
Perch							
			Pools				
Tim Gilson	2	9	Coppice	Float fished maggot.	Jan 2012		
Pike							
River Avon							
Jonathan Harcourt	18	7	Fladbury	Wobbled smelt.	Oct 2011		
Neil Walker	16	7	Fladbury	Paternostered	Feb 2012		
N. 11 N. 11	4.5	_	E	sardine.	5 2011		
Neil Walker	13	9	Fladbury	Paternostered sardine.	Dec 2011		
Tom George	13	8	Fladbury	Lamprey dead bait.	Dec 2011		
Tench							
			Pools				
Cliff Townsend	6	4	Mythe Pool	Red maggot block end	Nov 2011		
				feeder.			
Tim Gilson	4	3	Apperley		Oct 2011		
Zander							
			River Avo	n			
Rob Hawkswood	8	8	Pensham	Ledgered mackerel.	Jan 2012		



## **Nature views**



#### **Swan Lake**

As reported in Fisheries report, the Fisheries team have recently twice visited Uckinghall Pool.

On the first visit the pair of resident swans had built a nest on the far bank nearest the Severn and the pen was sitting on eggs.

On the second visit the eggs had hatched into about 8 cygnets which spent most of the time trying to hitch a ride on mum's back.







### **Archive extracts**



#### **Midland Angler**

Copied below are two extracts from the May 1960 edition of the Midland Angler, the forerunner to the BAA News.

#### FISH FOR EEL OR TROUT, YES, BUT . . .



This 2 lb. trout was caught at the mouth of a Severn tributary

CUT OUT
THIS
CLOSE
SEASON
CAMOUFLAGE

says

J. S. DOWNES

"WITH the close season here you'll be after trout," I cautiously suggested to the secretary of a works club. He was a dedicated angler, a man who took his duties seriously, who prided himself on being a custodian of angling ethics and the guide and mentor of his members.

His reply was short, completely confident, and not unexpected, for I had heard it so often before—"ledgering for eels." Such simple words, and so disarmingly naive. It would be churlish to read into them any sinister meaning. And yet I remained unconvinced. Perhaps it was his tone of voice; it was so automatic and there was a sort of triumphant finality about it, an odour maybe of guileful self satisfaction that the season for him had not really ended. Perhaps I was already conditioned by my sus-

picions of this close season masquerade, and his parrot cry "ledgering for eels" had merely served to confirm them. There was also an implicit disaffection for trout fishing which saddened me, one which the ensuing conversation did nothing to dispel.

Certainly the more one observes Severnside happenings during successive close seasons the more one's credulity is stretched. Are all these anglers really fishing for eels? The number of devotees on the river bank during the "shut-down" is scarcely diminished. Where are all the eels to satisfy them to come from, when during the season itself an eel is an uncommon capture to say the least? And why this sudden change of heart?

My experience tells me that the majority of anglers hold the eel in scant esteem. And the waters they are fishing are the same waters which were yielding roach and chub to the same ledgering tactics a month earlier. Do these anglers possess a magic philtre to stupefy the chub yet stimulate the eel? Are we to believe that at a date on the calendar the chub stop feeding and the eel begins? And the change from maggot to worm—has the eel such epicurean tendencies, and do so few anglers fish the worm during the open months?

No, my friends, some of us are being dishonest and unworthy of our calling. We are catching roach and chub on ledger whilst sheltering smugly safe behind the cloak of respectability—ledgering for eels.

As for the complex which many anglers still have about trout, even worming for trout, it is to my mind equally indictable. Even in these democratic days of equality the

word trout continues to put many coarse fishermen on their guard. For some it still conjures up visions of tweedy gentry galumphing from some sacrum piscatoribus on a fabulous southern chalk stream. Surely this bee in the coarse bonnet is as unnecessary as the too rigid dry fly in the purist hat! The Severn is not a trout river and worming is hardly cricket. And so it goes on, as with eels, a completely wrong-headed approach. But what I object to more is that neither attitude has the merit of angling fact behind it.

Both ledgering for eel and worming for trout are good sport and perfectly legal during the close season for coarse fish. Where many anglers seem to offend is in the type of water they choose. It's no earthly good worming for trout in a deep hole as far downstream as Stourport, and even more idiotic ledgering for eel in the rapids at Quatford. Consider the basic nature of the fish and relate it to the type of water they inhabit, and then administer the appropriate medicine.

The eel likes deep, still water, the more lack-lustre the better. A muddy bottom with muddy banks containing holes where he can "lie up," with anchorage for his tail, is the ideal habitat for the eel. To continue to fish the lively, broken water, or the same streamy glides resorted to in the open season is tantamount to fishing for chub and dace out of season. We may not all agree with the season's timing or duration; we may consider the banishment of the float an unfair imposition; we may even be convinced that in angling the law is a complete ass; but the rules are there and it behoves us to play the game according to them, and to concentrate on eels - or trout.

In the trout we have a creature ideally built for the type of water he inhabits. Torpedo shaped with a powerful caudal fin, he is equipped to withstand fast water and enabled to make those characteristic rushes at prey from his shelter under a rock. Because of this a stationary bait is useless for trout — a trout must see a moving bait to trigger off

his reaction. If the angler does not possess waders to enable him to drift a worm downstream, then a very light bullet should be used which can be rolled by the current. The trout has evolved into a fish which is quite intolerant of any oxygen deficiency. How different from the eel in this respect. Only by living in broken water which is continually oxygenated can the trout survive, and recent research has demonstrated that whereas eels can tolerate an oxygen content as low as three parts per million, the trout requires at least five.

Now although the river Severn does not enjoy the reputation of being a premier trout water, at least not below Shrewsbury, it has been stocked in a number of places in recent years until to-day, in my opinion, it contains a worthwhile head of this fish. The difficulty arises in locating them, for the trout is a fastidious fish and needs specialized conditions. Bearing in mind the pre-requisite of fast broken water, the other requirements usually follow on automatically. These are the proximity of rocks and the availability of gravel beds which are essential for spawning.

A mental tour of the Severn from Bewdley to Bridgnorth, the stretch I am most familiar with, recalls a number of places where the requirements of trout occur happily in union, and in all of which I have caught them. Starting from Blackstone Rock near Bewdley, which although containing a good trout reach is not my favourite due to its popularity, a most delectable gravelly glide is reached just below the town in the Thuraton Hotel water. I have caught trout here, on a Devon minnow, including one fish which was described to me by a water board bailiff as a sea trout, but I was too engrossed to argue. Certainly it was much more silvery than the other three. Although spinning is not allowed during the close season a worm should be equally productive.

The Harbour Inn water at Arley can be fished for one shilling and is money well spent. For here there is an astonishing rock forma-

tion which spans the river like a natural weir and the broken water rarely fails to yield trout. At Highley there are more sandstone rock strata; indeed, wherever there are outcrops of sandstone on the banks there is almost certain to be a rocky bed with broken water. A memory here is of a trout which leapt three times and, with the sun catching its lovely form in a shower of sparkling droplets, an experience not likely to be forgotten.

Further upstream, above Hampton Loade, where the Severn makes a right angle bend, a combination of conditions is found which has everything for trout. Here, at Eardington, the Hay brook sweeps into the main river and has carved out an extensive gravel bed. To walk across the half-acre of gravel beach with the stones crunching underfoot, and cast out from the promontory of rock is to capture atmosphere as well as trout.

Where a brook joins the main river is quite often an ideal place for trout, particularly on the Shropshire side of the river. Here the terrain is hilly and the small streams tumble precipitately, carrying with them gravel which is deposited at the mouth. On the opposite side the tributaries are lowland ones and carry in alluvial silt. Trout need gravel for spawning and often ascend the tributaries to do so. They do not therefore depart far from them, and such confluences as those of Dowles, Hay and Cound brooks well repay attention.

Quatford needs no advertisement as trout water. It is probably the shallowest part of the river and although the fish I have caught there have been on the small side, it is eminently suited to safe wading.

A short distance upstream, opposite the Swan Inn at Knowle Sands, there is another fast stretch of broken water which has produced trout. Indeed, the stretch of the river from Eardington to Bridgnorth has probably received more shots in the arm from the river board trout stocking programme than any other, and must surely surrender its trout during this close season to those who know how to read the signs.

#### Your Waterside Companions . . .

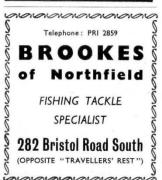
by 'TAG' BARNES

# The GRASS SNAKE

Hinge-headed Harmless Amphibian

SOME years ago, when fishing for bream early one summer morning, I was startled by an agitated voice calling for my help. It was my father. And when I rushed along the bank to him I found him gripping his landing net in a defensive attitude as he watched what looked for all the world like some miniature prehistoric monster swimming towards him with its head and neck above the surface of the water.







No! it's not an eel, it's a grass snake swimming the stream

What was the cause of all the commotion? Nothing more than a harmless grass snake that had taken to the water.

Strange as it may seem, an angler is more likely to see a grass snake in water than he is on the bank. For these creatures are never very far from a pond, river or lake. They are quite good swimmers and have a style all their own — with about six inches of their head and neck clear of the surface.

Grass snakes share with other types of snakes another pecularity: they can swallow objects larger than their own heads. They are able to do this because their lower jaw is attached to the skull by a sort of elastic muscle which acts as a hinge. This enables them to open their mouths to an extent that hardly seems possible.

They are thus able to cope comfortably with frogs, which form their staple diet, as well as newts, various kinds of insects, and fish, which are caught whilst swimming and brought ashore to be eaten.

Although they grow to four feet in length, the females being noticeably larger than the males, grass snakes are virtually harmless and have rarely been known to bite.

In fact they make excellent pets,

and I have had instructions from my young son to get him one this year when they come out of their hibernation.

They usually spend the winter lying under a pile of brushwood or an old straw stack, often in batches of three or four or even more. Once, in Derbyshire, I found a group hibernating in an old dry stone wall.

Grass snakes lay their eggs in summer in a manure or compost heap or any rotting material that will generate heat. The eggs, about an inch in length, have soft skins and are attached end to end in a string.

Two months or so later, depending upon the temperature and moisture of the nesting place, they hatch out into tiny snakes about six inches long.

Their diet during their first few weeks consists of small insects and worms. Then, as they take on their characteristic greenish-grey colouring with a yellow neck band at the back of the head and black markings fairly evenly spaced along each side of the body, their appetites increase, and that useful hinge in their heads enables them to tackle fully-grown frogs and fish of a surprisingly large size.



# **Fisheries report**



The Fisheries Work party has carried out work at the following fisheries since the last edition;

Nordley Pools - Drainage improvement work now completed, this includes;

Extending drainage pipe from alongside Pool 1 to bottom end of Pool 2 and backfilling gully that pipe was laid in.





Clearing the drainage gully alongside Pools 3 and 4.





Cutting back vegetation between gully and Pools 1-4



Digging out right hand side bank of Pool 2 (when looking down the valley) to improve fishing access.



Removal of hump along the centre of track to car park at Pool 4.

River Severn Arley RB, Harbour Inn – In the two meadows downstream of the footbridge, bank steps are being installed to improve access to the pegs. Please note that peg platforms are not being installed.

Uckinghall Pool – Burning of timber cut down during previous visit.



If you have any items, thoughts, issues you want to air in the BAA news, please email it to <a href="mailto:baajnw@btinternet.com">baajnw@btinternet.com</a> titled for attn of BAA News Editor.

When sending in a comment can you please let us know if you don't want your name included?

The Editor will act as moderator for items to be included.

Just to say how improved the newsletter has become over the last few months, some new things as well as the regulars. I always look forward to reading the comments and info which other members supply.

A big thank you to all who are involved.

David Fowler			

Love the monthly Newsletter with the fantastic photos of Carp, Barbel and Chub. However what's happened to the poor old Roach?

I've enjoyed many marvellous autumn/winter days stick float fishing anywhere between Ironbridge and Arley with fish to over the pound, although never the elusive two. It was very rare to hook a chub or barbel. Since the destructive bad floods I've only caught occasional fish with nothing bigger than a few ouces, although I hear there have been some decent bags in the Bewdley/Stourport areas. Have there been any reports of decent roach bags on BAA waters between Bridgnorth and Arley during the 2011/12 autumn/winter? Any ideas why they have disappeared or is it just down to my deteriorating skills?

#### Tony Roberts

Ed: Can any of our readers answer Tony's questions regarding roach on the Severn? If you have them send us some of your roach photos for Fishing news

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Hi,

I am not in the habit of writing a letter of complaint and indeed would not call this such. I offer some, I hope, constructive comment.

I last visited this water some 10-15 years ago when the day ticket was £3. On that occasion I had a really good day catching a variety of fish including a large number of nice sized Bream. I did consider going there last summer but after talking to my local tackle shop went elsewhere as they said the weed growth made it very difficult, if not impossible. I have little time to go pleasure fishing as I do fish matches at the weekend and want to stay married. Being unemployed at the moment I had some time and after seeing on your website that the weed was cut I spent my £6 and went fishing.

To say I was disappointed is an understatement. It is a lovely place to sit and with the weather being overcast and pressure low I expected to catch.

Whilst I know the nature of fishing is such that you cannot expect to bag up every time, I am a competent match angler, and for the 6 hours I fished, much of the time with 2 rods I would have expected something.

Groundbait feeder, maggot feeder and for the last 3 hours the pole, with a very light rig to catch something, all failed. The worrying aspect of this was I saw no indication of fish, even small fish, either biting or visibly. Your website still indicates Carp, Tench, Bream, Roach and Perch, if the pool contains only Carp then my result is eminently possible, but I would be interested if you have had any match reports or other feedback from anglers that have been positive. It could be the Cormorants have cleared the lake out over winter.

Needless to say I will not be rushing back for another go unless I get any positive feedback from anglers I know, whom I will ask if they have fished the water.

The weed is still a slight problem and I am sure will be later in the year. The water is gin clear which would also indicate to me a lack of fish moving around.

I do hope you take this in the vain it is intended and not just me having a whinge. I do have a concern that the fish you indicate are in the water are not in fact there any more!!!

Regards, Mark Norledge

Ed: Thanks for your letter; we thought it highlights what you see as a problem in a constructive way, not a whinge.

When Fisheries carried out the weed clearance last autumn, we found a number of small roach, perch, bream and carp in the weed we removed. All these fish were returned to the pool. We also saw a number of large carp cruising around.

Fisheries have visited Stubbs in the last few weeks to put up signs and saw about 10 sizeable carp around the edge of the pool. The Avon nearby was in flood and bank high and the pool up about a foot on last summers level.

One of our Fisheries colleagues, who also bailiffs Stubbs has fished it regularly. Like you he finds it a difficult water, he has only caught a single sizeable carp recently and his son a single large bream (photo in December 2011 Fishing news). He has also had reports from a regular dog walker at Stubbs of a significant number of cormorants.

After carrying out the weed clearance the question of stocking the pool was discussed and your letter has raised the question again. If re stocking is agreed, the question is; do we put more carp in, or a mix of larger bream (10 inch plus to help make them less susceptible to cormorant predation), roach and rudd? We are advised not to mix carp and bream as the carp tend to dominate the food supply preventing the bream from thriving. The current consensus in Fisheries would be for the bream, roach and rudd option. We will keep you informed.

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Hi

In reply to Peter Manders letter regarding litter at Coppice.

Whilst I admit there is a litter problem at Coppice I think it is very short sighted and bigoted to lay this problem at the hand of Carp Anglers or as you choose to call them "Bivvie Boys". I am a Carp Angler who travels all over the country fishing and have never knowingly dropped any litter, in fact I leave a swim tidier than it was when I got there as not only do I take my own litter home I take any other litter with me. Proper Anglers don't leave litter full stop whether they be Carp Anglers or Coarse Anglers. The morons who leave litter are the same people who throw their rubbish out of car windows all over the countryside.

As for Peter Manders idea of removing all Carp over 10lbs and putting them in other fisheries this is absolutely ridiculous. Not only will it put unnecessary stress on the Coppice fish it will also put the other fisheries stock in jeopardy. Moving fish from one fishery to another has caused thousands of fish deaths over the years so I think Peter needs to come up with other ideas because no matter how bad the litter situation is the possibility of fish deaths is not the answer.

Regards a Ve	ry Proud	"BIVVIE	BOY"
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Sean Smith

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Ummmm... not a very well thought out piece.

Big carp in the water... therefore it must be carp anglers. Why? Pure prejudice by someone who doesn't do the 'carp thing'.

And then for the suggestions... Remove the big carp and place somewhere else... Well, if the supposition that it is purely carp anglers doing the littering does in fact hold true, then all that will happen is that the problem would move with the fish. Great solution! And then there's the logistics of moving the fish... Mr Mander seems to think that moving of fish is '\*just\*' a matter of netting and moving... in itself not an easy thing... but in fact it requires also EA approval and licensing, medical checks made on the fish being transported, etc, etc i.e. EXTREMELY COSTLY! The days of purely taking fish from one pond and placing in another water, even only 50 yards away, are long long gone!

And then why wreck the chances of a red letter day for someone who latches into a 20lb'er while just spending a pleasant day out?

Sorry, but the content of the letter is just 100% stupid... which is not to say that Mr. Mander is stupid, just that he wrote a stupid letter.

BTW. I'm not a great carp lover myself... much rather tench, perch, bream, pike, zander, barbel, and chub

Steve Ridd

### **BAA on TV**

#### **BAA Programme FREE TO VIEW**



The latest issue of video magazine Coarse And Match Fishing includes the first of a new series spotlighting the Birmingham Anglers Association.

In it Rae Borras finds out about the biggest angling club in the country and delves into the history of an organisation that once boasted over 70,000 members, as he meets and fishes with some of the club's stalwarts and famous angling personalities and fishes with present day BAA members.

The full programme has been split into segments and will run over the next few issues. In the first instalment he takes match organiser Lee Woodhouse on one of the association's stretches of the Staffs-Worcs Canal noted for its chub.

It's free to view online at (Ctrl + click on link below);

http://www.onlinefishing.tv/channel/coarse/preview/the-baa-pt-1