



## Secretary's report on the 2016 season

At the AGM in January, we elected Jeff Hickson as treasurer, a role he had played for many years before work took him away to the West Indies for a couple of years. We also welcomed Peter Hartley and John Mees on to the Committee.

The season was notable for several rather bizarre happenings.

Firstly, at the Group 2 match on Chew in June, local disabled angler John Wingrove had the misfortune to lose his bass bag over the side of the boat as he was playing his eighth fish. At the post-match meal the organiser Martin Cottis explained that the angler had fished on and caught another seven fish. The other anglers found this rather amusing but I was in the awkward position of having had an angler catch more than the local bag limit, in contravention of AMFC rules. Our rule regarding time bonus only says that if an angler presents eight fish at the weigh-in they qualify for a time bonus so I decided, with support from the majority of the Committee, that John should be credited with the average weight of one fish and a time bonus from when he landed his eighth fish. There was no suggestion that John had been trying to cheat in any way. However I learned subsequently that John had fished on at the instigation of the fishery and as fishery rules take precedence over ours when there is a conflict, it was obvious that the original result should stand.

Secondly, the Group 3 match on Eyebrook in September was cancelled two days before the event because of high winds. The organiser, David Moore, informed the clubs that, after consultation with the fishery, he had decided not to chance everyone turning up and then not being able to fish. In fact the whole Eyebrook estate was closed as a safety measure. Sadly it was too late in the season to arrange a replacement match, the first time a season has been curtailed since the blue-green algae scares at Grafham and Rutland in 1989.

And finally, I was called by the warden at Pitsford during the Group 1 match there in September who told me that it was close to all-out war between anglers and sailors in the main Bowl. It is inevitable that this will occur from time to time if the fish aggregate where there is racing and I'd ask all to respect our different sports and to behave politely at all times.

Over the course of the season we involved 258 anglers, a slight increase from 2015, and these anglers caught 2,470 fish. Attendance was best in Group 1 with a 99% turnout and 93% and 94% respectively in Groups 2 and 3. One interesting statistic is that the time bonus for both Groups 1 and 2 was 200 lb whereas for Group 3 it was only 41 lb.

Sadly the Queen Mother club announced before the Autumn match that they were unable to continue in the competition. We shall miss them as they've been part of AMFC for the past 18 years. The problem, I think, is one that affects most of the clubs involved in the sport – insufficient recruitment.

As usual my sincerest thanks go to all the team organisers who do their utmost to keep things running smoothly throughout the season, and to the fishery managers who work so hard to make our competition days run smoothly. A special thank you goes to Peter Firth for putting together the Newsletter that has kept us up to date with what's going on, his last season in that role I fear. I am more than happy to repeat my message from last few years that the Association continues to provide a cheerful, competitive but friendly environment, both for anglers new to competition fishing and the more experienced. It continues to provide a unique opportunity to get involved, to meet some cracking anglers, and to build firm friendships. Long may it continue!

J.R.Caldwell

Secretary, AMFC