

THE RIVER GLAVEN FISHERY ASSOCIATION

Advisory Visit Report

Undertaken on behalf of the Wild Trout Trust

By Ron Holloway MIFM

11th March 2002-03-17



Fig.1. River Glaven at Wiveton Bridge

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This advisory visit was undertaken by Ron Holloway (R H Associates) on behalf of the Wild Trout Trust (WTT) in the company of Peter Bostridge (Secretary of the River Glaven Fishery Association and five Club Members), Simon Johnson (Team Leader EA Fisheries, Norwich and Assistant) and Fred Scourse (WTT Observer).

The objectives of this Advisory Visit:

Were to look at the River Glaven within the boundaries of the River Glaven Fishery Association Waters and pinpoint and identify problems within the brown trout habitat that are controlling the natural trout breeding and holding potential of the fishery and to recommend such measures that could be undertaken to mitigate or solve any problems found during the site visit.

Site One – Wiveton Bridge downstream.

Anecdotal information indicates that the last electro-fishing survey revealed that there is a healthy and reasonably large population of quality roach in the river below Wiveton Bridge – i.e. Upper Ramm down to Lower Kendall and below. Few, if any, resident trout were found in this stretch though migratory seatrout have been taken in the past. The slow flows here are not conducive to encouraging resident trout. The flow is controlled by a downstream weir/sluices.

The river channel from Wiveton Bridge downstream has been heavily dredged in the past so the natural channel profile has been grossly overwidened and overdeepened. The river here is trying hard to naturally narrow itself and this should be allowed to continue by allowing the vegetation that is colonising the deposited silt along the edges of the overwidened channel. The slow flow and overwide silted channel makes for ideal coarse fish habitat and, as seen, does not allow for any quality trout holding habitat.

In my opinion, it would be a waste of good trout and money to stock this area – at least until such time as the channel has narrowed and the flow speed increased, but unfortunately, flow speed on this beat is controlled by the sluices downstream so this does not appear to be a likely scenario. Consideration, therefore, could be given to raising some extra revenue for the fishery by allowing a selected group (say six rods)

of coarse fishermen who prize quality roach fishing. There are coarse fishermen who would pay very good money for such a quality fishing opportunity and such revenues accrued could then be reallocated to restoration work on the upstream areas. If this idea appeals I would suggest you discuss further with Simon Johnson who would be able to advise.

Site Two – Blount’s Marsh.

The stream flow speeds here are reasonably good though the channel has been overwidened and deepened. Aquatic weed is evident and does grow well in the summer. Silt deposits have been colonised on the point of the “S” bend and this growth must be encouraged as it locks up these silt deposits. Middle to late summer trimming may have to be undertaken here to maintain fly fishing access to the attractive pool on the “S” bend.



Fig. 2 “S” Bend Blount’s Marsh.



Fig. 3 Below “S” Bend Blount’s March.

To create some juvenile trout habitat and to encourage adult trout to hold in this stretch it is suggested that two, or more, gravel riffles are installed and at least one sited just upstream of the “S” bend and one just downstream of it. Once installed, these will increase flow speeds, keep suspended sediments on the move and offer juvenile habitat and spawning facilities for overwintering trout. For the exact siting of these riffles and quantities of gravel required consult Simon Johnson and his staff who have excellent experience in the installation of gravel riffles in Norfolk streams. At this site, the arable field bordering the far bank is cultivated almost to the river edge. Suggest the Club open discussions with farmer (landowner) to either fence off or retreat operations away from bank edge to allow nature to grow a natural buffer zone between the river bank and the cultivated land. This would help reduce sediment input to the river during heavy winter rainfall.

Sites Three and Four – Upper Buxton and Lower Buxton.

Here the river channel is overwidened, amply illustrated by long banks of deposited silt along river margins and bays. These silt banks could well be beneficial to the river in the long term, once they have been stabilised and vegetated with natural growth of indigenous plants. This eventual narrowing of the channel will help to increase flow speeds and reduce further silt deposits and encourage a more stable and hardened river bed that will be more attractive to trout.



Fig. 4 Upper Buxton Silt Beds.

Suggest replace existing groynes/deflectors with more substantial triangular groynes. Suggest several pairs placed opposite each other at intervals to create a scour pool downstream of the structure that will become attractive to trout. Furthermore, place a series of alternating triangular groynes/deflectors to direct the current to meander from bank to bank. Suggest consult with Simon Johnson on siting and numbers of structures to be built and which materials to be used.

The Norfolk Reed bed at Lower Buxton is already stabilising trapped silt and should be retained. However, to aid fly fishing access, suggest mini “walk-ins” made of logs from the fallen trees, be placed over the silt from the present river bank through the reeds to edge of the river. The willow and alder trees on the footpath bank should be pollarded to improve fishing access and also to prolong the life of the trees and to increase sunlight onto the river.



Fig. 5. Reed Bed at Lower Buxton.

Site Five – Sheridan’s Marsh

The fallen willow tree on the bend between Lower Buxton and Sheridan’s Marsh should be reduced by half. This will reduce bank erosion but still maintain a good device for increasing flow speed. The bank of silt above the fallen tree (see Fig.6) is an ideal site for stabilising with faggots and being back filled with some woody debris from the fallen trees plus planting with natural riverside vegetation.



Fig. 6. - Fallen Willow

Site Six – Sheridan’s Marsh down to Wiveton Bridge.

This stretch is in reasonably good order, though overwide in many places. Natural vegetation is encroaching and has already begun to stabilise silt. This should be encouraged as the river is naturally narrowing its own channel. Consideration could also be given to the installation of gravel riffles along this stretch.

GENERAL COMMENTS.

The entire stretch visited has the potential to hold stock trout. The main limiting factors controlling natural regeneration of self sustaining stocks of brown trout are mainly threefold.

1. Too much mobile silt.
2. Very scarce spawning gravel and
3. Poor juvenile and adult trout habitat.

Where large banks of deposited silt occur, these need to be stabilised and allowed to naturally re-vegetate with plant life, or, to speed up this process, be planted up with

indigenous plants from around the area. To assist in the stabilisation of these silt beds it is strongly recommended that a programme of “faggoting” is instigated. This entails lining the edges of each silt bed with a sunken line of “faggots” which are firmly fixed to the bed of the river with suitable stakes and wired down to prevent any movement during high water flows. Once in place, these faggots will fill with silt and protect the silt beds and encourage plant life to root in the trapped silt thus further stabilising the structure. Once protected, nature will do the rest and the vegetation will help to firm the silt and create a new river bank after a year or so. This process of faggoting will be an essential programme covering several seasons until all the major silt banks have been treated and stabilised. It is suggested that the EA be consulted initially to advise on the implementation of this faggoting programme.

There appears to be a problem with the impoundment above Glandford Mill. Above the footbridge by the ford the river appears to support good gravel substrates (no dredging!) Therefore there are minimal silt deposits and still supports wild trout. The area below the footbridge down to the mill is exceptionally wide and has become a silt trap. The manipulation of the mill hatches will, and does, disturb this trapped silt which is then transported downstream and deposited throughout the river below. The problem would be to negotiate with the mill owner to sensitively manipulate the hatch gates to avoid too much disturbance of the silt impounded above the mill. Experience tells me that this is easier said than done!

There appears to be minimal habitat for the traditional dry fly fisherman's insects i.e. the Baetis and Ephemeroptera mainly due to the volumes of mobile silt. Until such time as the banks of silt have been stabilised it is essential therefore to maintain and enhance the marginal vegetation for habitat of the terrestrial insects that at present comprise the main food source for the stocked trout. The installation of some gravel riffles will provide some of the required habitat for the aquatic living insects that need gravel to survive and hatch and which bring trout up to feed from the surface.

Whatever strategy is planned by the Club it is advised to consult with Simon Johnson and his staff at the EA for guidance and further advice on siting of structures, types of materials to be used etc.