

AMATOLA FLY FISHING CLUB

Incorporating the Frontier Acclimatisation Society and the Stutterheim Trout Angling Club



NEWSLETTER – SUMMER / NOVEMBER 2020

Hello All, some of the the latest club-related news that starts sad, then becomes unpleasant but ends positive.

The very said part is that on Saturday the 14th of November, Dr Olaf Weyl, who was a dear friend to many of us in the club and area passed away from a heart attack while fishing on the Wolf River. Olaf was also the scientist who was gathering data for a comparative study between rainbows and browns feeding and life strategies in Gubu Dam. Further afield he was one of the most prolific freshwater fishery scientists that Africa has ever known, a very knowledgeable angler, and just a super-nice, fun, and very generous guy. He leaves a massive void that will not be filled.

The unpleasant news is that one of our member's membership fees were recently refunded to them and I phoned them up and told them that they were no longer welcome. In earlier days one had to be invited and vetted to be a member of the club. Believing in the good of people and in the interests of growing the club, we scrapped that system, but it does mean that from time time we might have to deal with the ugliness of asking folks who don't toe the line to leave.

None of us is perfect and life is very grey, but some actions are a disrespectful overstepping of the bounds. In this case, at Gubu, I found one of the private rooms and the beds in it reeking of cigarette smoke. Upon further investigation I tracked down the guilty party who admitted to smoking in the room. It was not the first time they had done this, they had also burned a number of holes in the mattress and altogether behaved badly. A club is about common goals and creating and sharing resources and facilities in a reasonable and responsible manner. A person who behaves in an unreasonable and inconsiderate-of-others manner is not befitting membership of a club, not to mention smoking indoors in a public place, having been warned before, and having a blatant disregard for no-smoking signs. In these situations I ask myself the following questions re the person potentially at fault: was their behaviour considerate, was their behaviour reasonable, did their behaviour conform to legal or commonly accepted norms, did their behaviour make any positive contribution. A "no" answer to any of those questions raises a red flag, so I took a decision and did not follow the constitutional protocol in asking this person to leave. That said, the membership certificate states "Right of Admission Reserved". Anyways, I have been accused by the expelled member of (and I quote): "...being an autocratic entity, and a person who views themselves as a 'hotel owner' as the rules and constitution are there to prevent any one person having too much power."

It is largely true that many club decisions are made by a very small group of us, and that I am certainly somewhat of a dictator and overbearing bull in a China shop at times, but that is because when involvement by others is requested, it is almost never forthcoming, and someone has to put on the big-girl panties some days and make decisions (in the interests of the majority), and not have things drag on forever. A case in point, when writing up the new constitution, and requesting comments on its content, only one member commented! If anyone is unhappy with this state of affairs, then they must step forward and be involved and help share the responsibilities of the decision making and the planning, and sacrifice the time, effort, and costs that it takes to be involved to keep the club afloat and going forward. The more constructive help we can get, the better we can achieve common goals. But even just writing and reading this petty nonsense because someone behaved badly is a frightening waste of our useful time, so - END!

The positive news is that there has been a steady stream of stunning browns coming out of Gubu. A particularly noteworthy fish was one caught by Pat Fletcher that measured 55 cm length x 35.6cm girth! That is one fat fish and just shows the kind of condition these fish are attaining in Gubu. The weight of that fish has been calculated at around 5 1/2 pounds. There've been some other beauties though with a good number in the upper fifty centimetres, some of which I was lucky to catch myself. Plus there's the one that I caught that was 60 cm a year ago, so how big is it now? The bottom line is we have reached the point where your next cast at Gubu might yield a monster, and this should continue for as long as we can find browns to hopefully do a stocking every two years. The next brown stocking will be with 5000, 75mm fingerlings scheduled for Gubu in January, with batches of the same Danish-origin fingerlings planned for Maden and Mnyameni as well. Brown trout and rainbow trout stocking dates still to be announced.

Other positive news is that I recently received a call from a member to say how glad he was to see that most fly anglers are still gentleman, as when he arrived at the Gubu clubhouse with his wife, someone who was in one of the private rooms vacated for him and his lady, and which was repeated soon afterwards by another fellow when someone else arrived with his wife. Now those are the stories we like to hear.

A note on Mnyameni is that some of our members recently reported to us a leaking pipe there which was causing a significant loss of water. I called this fault in to the authorities and I understand that it has been seen to. So thank you to Ricky Goldsmith, Lester Opperman and Greg Coetzer for calling it in. It's important that everyone is pro-active when they see something is amiss.

Those visiting the Gubu clubhouse regularly will notice that Scott Blair continues to blaze forth as a largely one-man maintenance and improvements superhero force. The private rooms have recently undergone some nice changes, for example, as well as there's new coats of paint appearing, brooms and dustpans everywhere, etc. etc. etc. that's all Scott's doing.

There have been some comforting rains in the Amatola of late, and this past week saw 56mm falling at Gubu with the dam level rising to 62%. Let's hope we are in for a nice wet summer as it's going to take a lot of input to recharge the groundwater that is so important for just about everything.

Happy fishing, and wishing everyone a safe, fun and meaningful Xmas and holiday time.

Ed Truter



*DEAN STOLTZ
(WHO FORGOT TO
EAT BREAKFAST
ON THE DAY)
WITH ONE OF THE
TYPICAL, FAT
BROWNS
COMING OUT OF
GUBU AT THE
MOMENT (53CM).*