

# Spring Newsletter 2026

As we head into a new season, we're all hoping for favourable weather and plenty of good catches. If you haven't yet renewed your 2026/27 BAA membership, please remember that fishing on BAA waters is not permitted without a valid membership.

Membership prices have risen in line with inflation. All of our core costs—leases, insurance, and fish—have increased significantly. To maintain the quality, size, and frequency of our stocking programme, we've had to adjust fees accordingly. Reducing stocking is not something we want to do, and your continued support helps us avoid that.

## **A New Water for Members: Knotallow**

We're pleased to confirm that Knotallow is in the process of being legally transferred to BAA. Although the legal work may take some time, the water is now open to BAA anglers. We will be stocking it with brown trout twice a year.

- **Fishing method:** Fly only
- **Parking:** On the verge near the bottom gate—please park responsibly to avoid blocking the lane for farm vehicles and other traffic
- **Location:** Easily found on Google Maps

Barrow Model Aircraft club has used Knotallow water for many years and we will continue to allow them to use the water when no one is fishing.

With Knotallow added, members now have **six trout waters** to enjoy, plus **Cavendish Dock** for carp fishing.

## **New Exchange ticket with Vale of Clwyd**

We have set up a new exchange ticket with the Vale of Clwyd in North Wales. Their waters offer river fishing with good sea trout runs and their own still water. Day tickets are free and available through Clubmate.

## **Pennington Car Park & Birdwatching Passes**

We have held discussions with United Utilities about extending the Pennington car park and exploring the possibility of installing bird hides. As many of you know, we issue a limited number of birdwatching passes each year. These provide controlled access for birdwatchers and generate welcome additional income for the club.

## **Open Evening Competitions**

Following the success of last year's Open Evenings, we planned two events for 2026. Unfortunately, the **9 April** event has been cancelled due to limited parking at

Poaka. United Utilities' temporary offices for spill-related works have overrun and are still occupying the car park.

The **20 May** Open Evening is still scheduled, as we expect the offices to be removed before that date.

## Light Lure Trial at Harlock

At the AGM, members voted to approve a six-month trial of **light lure fishing** on Harlock. This water has traditionally been fly-only, but the trial will allow us to assess whether light lure fishing can be safely incorporated.

The full specifications are included in the 2026 rules. In short:

- Lures must be significantly smaller (5g) than traditional spinning lures (12g)
- **Single barbless hooks only**, as with all BAA waters

You may therefore see light lure anglers on Harlock this season.

## Water Quality & Late-Season Concerns

Fishing tailed off toward the end of last season. After discussions with United Utilities, we have agreed to report any signs of algae or potential pollution immediately for investigation.

We experienced a suspected blue-green algae issue at Poaka late in 2025, and insect activity across several waters appeared reduced. This may be due to climatic conditions, but nutrient run-off or algae could also be contributing factors.

If you notice anything unusual, please contact us via **Clubmate**. Clubmate remains our primary system for membership, communication, and bailiff checks. If you have a smartphone, we strongly recommend downloading the app.

## Working Parties – We Need Your Help

We provide six well-stocked trout waters and a coarse water for **well under £200 per year**, but maintaining them requires hands-on support. Without volunteers, we would need to hire contractors—an expensive option that would inevitably increase membership fees.

If you can spare some time this year, please consider joining a working party. Your help genuinely makes a difference.

## Reservoirs Act – Knotallow & Upper Ireleth

Knotallow falls under the Reservoirs Act, and expected changes to the legislation will bring **Upper Ireleth** under the Act as well. This means we must fund dam inspections, emergency planning, and flood-risk calculations.

To prepare for Upper Ireleth inclusion, we will be excavating a gulley between Upper and Lower Ireleth to provide an overflow route in the event of a catastrophic flood. A contractor will be appointed for this work, and we will notify members once a date is confirmed.

## Stocking & Fishing Restrictions

Stocking for 2026 has already begun. We are returning to the rule of **no fishing on stocking days**.

Typically, Pennington, Poaka, and Ireleth are stocked on the same day, leaving Knotallow and Harlock available to fish—and vice versa when those waters are stocked.

This change is necessary because we have received reports of anglers fishing within hours of stocking, when trout are still shoaled tightly. This leads to excessive catches and is not good for fish welfare. The return to no-fishing days will help protect the fish and ensure fairer sport for everyone.

## Chairman's Notes – Dave Nixon

Welcome to a new season—and to a new water, **Knotallow Tarn**. This is a beautiful brown-trout, fly-only venue that adds real character to our portfolio. As the season progresses it can become a very technical water, often rewarding anglers who scale down and fish small, imitative patterns.

You'll find good hatches of buzzers now and throughout the year, along with olives and dung flies thanks to the cattle around the tarn. Damsel nymphs work well, and sedges come into their own later in the season. Traditional spiders—mainly black, with or without a hotspot thorax—can be very effective. As dusk approaches, **Shipman's Buzzers** in sizes 14, 16 or 18 can be deadly.

When there's a wave on, patterns such as **Zulus**, **Clan Chief**, **Kate McLaren**, **Connemara Black** and **Bibio** are all reliable choices.

## General Conditions & Fly Suggestions

The weather since our first stocking has been challenging, and catches on the big reservoirs have been limited. Once temperatures rise, things will improve quickly.

- **Buzzers and nymphs** on floating or midge-tip lines are a solid starting point.
- **Intermediates** can work well if you don't mind the weed.
- Productive buzzer patterns include:
  - No-frills buzzers
  - Black UV buzzers
  - Thread buzzers

If fish are moving near the surface, try **small black spiders, JNNs, Shipman's Buzzers**, or **shuttlecocks**.

When imitative flies aren't getting a response, switch to lures such as:

- Dawson's Olive
- Cat's Whisker
- Viva
- Small minkies
- Green & black Fritz
- Goldhead patterns
- Mick Reid (black or white tail, but keep them small)
- Montana nymphs also remain consistently effective.

On warm days, we may see olives. Good choices include **CDC Olives (size 14)**, **Klinkhammers (size 16)** and **Black Sooty Olives**. Davie McPhail's YouTube channel has excellent patterns and tutorials if you're looking for inspiration.

## **In Memoriam – Ray McGuire**

On a more sombre note, we recently lost a long-standing member, **Ray McGuire**. Ray was a stalwart of the Association and served on the Committee for many years. He organised countless working parties across our waters and was a good friend to many—always willing to help, always dependable.

He will be greatly missed.

## **Finally**

I hope to see you out on the waters—please do come and say hello. And a warm **Barrow Anglers welcome** to our new members from Ulverston.