

Meet the Angler.

Name: Gary Critchell

How Long a Member of YSAA? 49+ Years

What Age did you start fishing? 10 Years Old, February 1973

Favourite Peg & Memories of the Lake? Tree Stump Peg

Let's start at the beginning, I have been a member of Sherborne lake for nearly 50 years.

I was taken to the lake by my school friends dad for the very first time, I must have been about 10 years old and it was a cold February day in 1973.

I can't really remember the fishing because I was so cold but we were fishing for Pike on the sluice with the smelliest dead baits you can imagine. I was told that the lake held lots of big Pike back then and we were sure to catch one (we never did).

Over the next few years we fished it many times always on the lawns or further round on the north side of the lake into the 50s, on the way round you would pass a swim known as Andy's peg (Named after Andy Vincent).

I seem to remember we never had much luck when we fished the lake in the early days.

The process was quite different back then, When at the lake you would have to take a round disc off the back of a shed!

As I got older Mark Hawkes who is sadly no longer with us and myself fished the lake all the time catching Roach, Bream, Perch.

I think in the mid-80s gasper lake at Stourhead closed for coarse fishing and a lot of the Bream, Carp and Tench were put into the lake from here.

Fishing the lake back then we used to catch huge Roach, many of them were 2lb+, then it was big Perch.

My favourite peg on the lake was the first peg on the lawns for many reasons and not only the fishing but the scenery, wildlife and you were in the sun all day long.

By the late 80s & early 90s the Roach had all but disappeared and were replaced by large numbers of Bream, Tench and hybrids, was this down to the Bream that came from Gasper maybe pushing the Roach out?.

Fishing the lawn pegs in the 90s was unbelievable, you could catch Bream after Bream and big Tench at 6/8 meters.

The 2 swims on the lawns that myself and my friend Phil Jenkins fished were the 1st and second ,this was the tree stump peg, back then we used to fish the swing tip and corn on a size 14 , in June 1996 we fished the two pegs and Phil had 114lb and I had 164lb, my catch was made up of 33 Bream and 7 Tench , we actually had an article about it in the **Angling Times**.

The Lake continued to fish like this over the next few years. The club held 60/70 peg matches and the match weights were incredible, (that's another story).

In 2001 the lake was closed for a year due to foot and mouth and when fishing resumed it was never the same, was it because there was no bait going into the lake, had the fish turned to natural foods (I guess we will never know?).

As far as I can remember cos I am getting old now I think the dates are right . I have more stories and history but I will leave for another day



This is from Angling Times June 12 1996