

Blagdon's FORGOTTEN MAP

During the 1930s Blagdon had a regular clientele of anglers many of whom fished the bank.

Well-known locals such as Dr. Bell and Paul Hill fished together weekly, usually on Fridays after Dr. Bell had finished his early morning surgery.

Armed with a canvas covered bucket, packamac and Craven A cigarettes, Dr. Bell would spend many hours studying the aquatic life of Blagdon and analysing the contents of the trout's stomach. Over the next 20 years these two anglers were to revolutionise the way trout would be caught by future Stillwater fishermen on imitative patterns rather than attractors.

This was to be a far cry from the standard approach of that era when most Blagdon trout were caught using tandem or treble lures.

Salmon flies were also still very much in vogue at that time and were favoured by the Ghillies and many boat anglers.

Whilst today's angler will be familiar with the now famous place names of the various bays and points around the Lakes perimeter, the Blagdon anglers of old had their own named favourite areas that have long

since been forgotten.

The accompanying map shows some popular bank spots during the period 1930 up to the 1950s. Most of these will have changed beyond recognition to fishermen from that era as over the year's bank erosion and withy growth have altered their appearance.

Many of these spots were located at the Top End which Bell favoured.

With a stocking ratio of 2 to 1 in favour of Browns and with little angling pressure, Brown trout were the angler's main quarry and areas such as Bell's Bush and Rugmoor provided ideal depths for experimentation with close imitative copies of the insects and nymphs that Blagdon trout fed on.

Bell also favoured fishing along sunken hedgerows and ditches, as trout would patrol these in search of food. Over the years he developed an intimate knowledge of the whereabouts of these fish holding spots and their accessibility at various water levels.

He would use houses and trees on the opposite banks as markers to give him the correct angle at which to cast.

One such ditch which Bell called the "North West Passage"

can still be found today when Wookey Point becomes wade

able although this long narrow ledge is usually only accessible at the end of Summer when weed growth dies back.

Starting from the stretch of bank just to the right of the Island as you look across from the Dam we detail the old place names and where known, how their names originated.

Never, Never Land

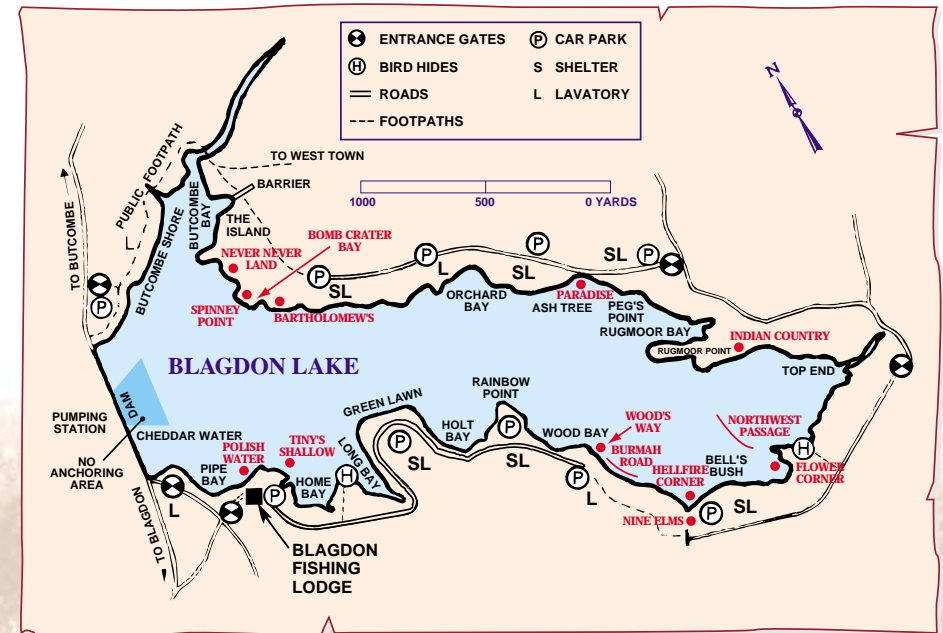
Aptly named, as this is a place where very few fish seem to have ever been caught.

Spinney Point

Site of an old Spinney pre-Second World War. A seat used to exist on the point. (Seats were placed in the best fishing spots in days of old) Old photos reveal that this point was far more prominent pre-War and jutted out at least another 50 yards further than today. The constant stream of westerly winds have eroded much of the bank.

Polish Water

Named after a polish airman by the name of Janis who fished this stretch of bank during World War 2.



Bomb Crater Bay

Two Bombs were dropped in Blagdon during the Second World War. The second landed near the corner of the North Shore and this became a "hot spot" after the War was over although now silted up. The first bomb landed some 40 yards off the corner of the Dam at Cheddar Water. In times of drought the hole at the Dam is still visible and even today remains a deep hole as very little silting has occurred due to the wind predominantly coming off of the dam.

Bartholomew's

No records or recollections of why this piece of bank carries this name have come to light but we assume it was a favourite haunt of an angler with this name.

Paradise

According to the Ghillies and bank fishermen of that time this was one of the best spots on the Lake in bygone years.

Indian Country

Looking across from Bell's Bush the wood along Rugmoor was denser in those days and by all accounts looked similar to the woods of the American Indian.

Flower Corner

Hardly recognisable today, this small point in the Bay between Wookey and Bell's Bush was a top haunt for resident Brown's and the flowers that used to grow here were apparently a glorious sight during spring and early summer.

Nine Elms

Site of nine tall Elms that used to grow alongside a ditch running into the Lake. A spot favoured by some of the Blagdon regulars of that day.

Hellfire Corner

This was named not by fishermen but by the Ghillies and was the small bay next to Bell's Bush where the coots would be driven

when coot shoots used to take place during the winter months

Burmah Road

According to Veterans from The Second World War who fished Blagdon this stretch of bank between Bell's Bush and Wood Bay greatly resembled the Burmah Road in the Far East and was aptly named.

Wood's Way

Named after a local Blagdon angler Dennis Wood who favoured this spot.

Tiny's Shallows

Lawrie Williamson's nickname was "Tiny". Head Superintendent and Ghillie at Blagdon for many year's, this shallow area in front of the Lodge was one of his favoured drifts at the end of the day and which coincidentally was just a short row from the Jetty!

Steve Pope