



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**JAMES CARR** REFLECTS ON HIS 'HALF-TIME' AS CHAIRMAN, AND DIVULGES THE ASSOCIATION'S PLANS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD.

As I write this in mid-January, the memories of the successes and failures (mainly failures so far as I was concerned) of the 2007 season are beginning to fade and the anticipation for 2008 is growing. It is also a time for reflection, as it is 'half time' during my three-year term as your Chairman.

Elsewhere, Paul Knight has set out the various issues that we are fighting. I would like to touch briefly on the two principle objectives that I set out to achieve when I was elected – charitable status and progress towards the 'Unity of Angling.'

After extensive consultation as regards the potential benefits that charitable status might provide, an application was presented to the Charity Commission in October. Nothing was heard for some weeks. Contact was made with the Commission in December, since when there have been a number of exchanges which have attempted to answer the concerns that the Commission expressed. We believe that all these have been satisfactorily answered – however our application still remains unapproved. We believe that the delay is the result of this Association being the first truly fishery organisation to apply and that, consequently, the Commission is anxious to establish that the precedent we might provide is fully acceptable. Hopefully, by the time that this piece is being read, a favourable result will have been achieved.

As important, if not more so, is the work that has been progressing to achieve greater unity in the angling world. Publicity has been given to the fact that this Association has signed a letter of intent to unite with the National Association of Fisheries and Angling Consultatives, the National Federation of Anglers and the Anglers Conservation Association.

It has become increasingly obvious that if anglers are going to lobby government successfully on all the issues on which successful angling depends, then it is essential that we speak with one voice, and that we are representative of a much higher percentage of anglers than the individual organisations can currently claim as members. In addition to this, there are opportunities to save on a wide range of costs, to avoid duplication of effort on some important issues and to develop specialist expertise when necessary. Initially, we are anticipating a fall in income, as those who are members of more than one of these organisations reduce their membership subscription to a single organisation: this will inevitably be challenging. The solution is to expand the membership more widely and it is on this issue that the



Above: James Carr.

help of our marketing experts is key. As the proposal for unification becomes more widely known, each of the participating organisations have received unsolicited responses from individual members, a large majority of which have been positive. As this is being written, lawyers, accountants and marketing experts, some of them working pro bono, or on much reduced rates, are preparing a package of suggestions that can be put before the members of each organisation at their respective Annual General Meetings in the spring.

It will then be for the membership of each organisation to consider whether they wish to be 'in' or 'out'. Nothing can be decided until the votes are counted – there are still challenging times ahead! 2008 will be another interesting year. ♦

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