



Sussex Branch Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2002

ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner will be held at the Dyke Golf Club on **Saturday 13th April 2002**. Application form for tickets and menu choice is enclosed and should be returned to John Burt with cheque as soon as possible. It is a great evening – good food, good company, the draw for the Rod Raffle as well as a raffle on the night for goodies of quality organised by Jim White. The speaker is Tom English, an old friend of the Chairman with a sense of humour!

What your committee does when you are not looking!!!

By Brian Hendry

The annual committee day outing took a different format this year – usually it consists of a visit to a stillwater but for a change a day chasing grayling on the Test at Wherwell turned out to be a very acceptable alternative.

During the season it is a syndicate water and costs an arm and a leg, but from the middle of October a day's grayling fishing costs no more than a three fish ticket at Yew Tree. Any trout caught are handled with care and returned promptly; it is great fishing on a premier Southern chalk stream

On a frosty early December morning they made their way to the Wherwell Estate for a 9 am meet and it was a joy to see the revered Test being paid respect with tackle and clothing – looked like a page out of the Barbour catalogue! My own homage to the occasion was by declaring it a full Hardy day – rods, reels, lines etc, but with one of Graham Dadswell's Elite 9' #4 just in case!

The fishery has a very pleasant lodge and an adjacent lake stocked with rainbows; for an additional fee for a 4 fish limit (followed by catch and release) some of us took advantage of this before going on the river – Alan Chamberlain's four were all in the 4-5 lb range!

Robbie the bailiff gave a brief outline of the beats and allowed methods and mentioned that most days there was a hatch of fly about mid-day. Then we all took off in all directions and I was soon alone just soaking up the atmosphere and enjoying the thought that I was about to wet a line on the legendary Test.

People began taking grayling using weighted nymphs and the almost obligatory Killer Bug, especially the variation Albert Horne kindly tied up for us, despite not being able to come himself. I spent the first two hours just exploring upstream making only the occasional cast, seeing plenty of fish

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Steve Thornton

Steve treated us to a superb demonstration of the fly-tyers' art, producing with seemingly no effort life-like imitations which no self-respecting trout or grayling could possibly refuse. His techniques have been described in recent issues of *Grayling* (the journal of the Grayling society) and *Fly Fishing and Fly Tying*. The quality of his presentation and skill was appreciated by an enthralled good turn-out of members who gave him a warm ovation.

And what about that vice? Quite a few of the "must haves" were drooling over this. If you've £360 to spare it is in the range of excellent fly-tying materials and tools he markets under the name *Virtual Nymph*. Pay a visit to his website www.virtual-nymph.com and download the catalogue – the site also holds demonstrations, etc.

The evening was enhanced by the enlarged projection of his tying through the high-tech skills and equipment provided by Tony Herbert. As a result of this, we have a video of some of the work which will be available soon on loan one editing has been completed. Many thanks to Tony!

Footnote:-Julian Jakubowski has obtained a range of the coloured marker pens required for the patterns demonstrated by Steve Thornton and will bring some along on tying nights. These are priced at £1 each (as against £3 rrp!) so get your orders in!!

D J Hackles — 14th February

Contrary to last month's appeal, TVs, cameras, etc are NOT required for this – trust the editor to cock it up!

However, what we are going to get is an educational evening on natural feather production from the man himself – and hopefully a chance to acquire some first class capes and hackles to tie those competition flies, as well as irresistible dries for those trout and grayling!

TROPHIES

Anyone holding trophies (other than the Jonathan Glover) should return them immediately to Roy Gurney or Paul Bond, in order that they can be engraved in time for presentation at the Annual Dinner.

NEW RECRUIT?

CONGRATULATIONS TO LEE "HOMER" REDMAN
AND GEORGIE ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR SON
BUDDY

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but not connecting with any of them. The sun shone and the temperature rose, and I finished up at the bridge dividing beats 10 and 11, where a seat in the sun looked inviting, making a start on my picnic. Revelling in the ambience of my surroundings, watching Ian May and Peter Buss diligently working the left bank upstream, I thought "Fishing doesn't get better than this." At this point Ian fell in, so maybe it does!!! I contemplated going to his assistance but realised that by the time I got there he would have climbed out or washed downstream to me at the bridge! So I carried on with my picnic. I could also see that Peter was not too concerned as he had carried on fishing but he did seem to have acquired some sort of muscular affliction which moved his shoulders up and down rhythmically for some time after the incident!

Checking my watch, I made my way back downstream to the beat above the weir which Robbie had specially mentioned as having a good hatch. I was delighted to find fish rising all over the river. I moved in below Mike, a friend of Roy's, who was catching on a size 16 dry with a little red in its make-up, and watched the rises which were delicate and gave the impression of small fish. The response I got to a size 14 Iron Blue with a red butt dispelled this illusion! The fish powered off downstream to the weir, turned and shot back up with its back out of the water; as it passed both Mike and I, we both estimated it to be a brown trout of 4 lb. I was connected for five or ten minutes (*it seems like a lifetime -ed.*) and was just preparing to net it when the hook-hold gave. I believe I said "Oh dear, I've lost it" and Roy, arriving some hour later, told me I was still looking wide-eyed and haunted! (*and I swear still trembling! - Ed*)

As the light began to fade grinning fishermen returned to the car park, all with tales to tell. Alan's grin had slipped a little when, earlier, he had to sit down to save himself from sinking into a particularly boggy section of bank, but I would like to remind him that not many anglers get the opportunity to filter the River Test through their underpants – be grateful!!

I think it fair to say the trip was a great success, the fishing was superb and the companionship even better. It is days like this that makes you realise why we do it. Thanks, Roy, for organising the trip – I didn't catch any grayling this time but I'll be back!
B.H.

AUCTION 2002 – STOP PRESS!!

About 70 people attended the auction last Monday and preliminary calculations show that we made about £250 profit for the Branch on a turnover of £2200+. This is the result of a lot of hard work on the part of all helpers. Many thanks to the auctioneer, Mike Humphreys, Chairman of the Guild, who gave his time voluntarily and kept the bids coming!

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Programme for 2002 and entry forms

The programme for 2002 is attached. Some dates for matches are in the hands of our rivals who are organising this year. As soon as we know them we will let you know.

Also enclosed are entry forms for the various competitions, events and matches. Please complete these and return as soon as possible, with deposits/post-dated cheques if required, to the organiser of those events.

We would like to stress that ALL members, ESPECIALLY new members, are welcome to join any event – it is a fine way to keep the club atmosphere going over the summer and the emphasis is on enjoyment rather than competition!

If you are not familiar with boat fishing on Bewl, and would like to partner an experienced angler, please indicate on your form and we will endeavour to pair you accordingly. This is a good opportunity to learn!!

With regard to the Hardy's, *Trout Fisherman* European Open and the John Watt team events, please note captains have been appointed (Chris Nunn and Peter Winder for the Hardy's and TFE0, and Peter Buss for the John Watt). If you wish to fish any of these contact either the respective captains, or Roy Gurney, who will pass on your availability. **REMEMBER – ONLY PAID-UP MEMBERS ELIGIBLE!!**

For beginners, Peter Winder will be holding teach-ins on the branch evenings at Arlington (Buzzers) and Barcombe (Dry flies) - if you are interested, signify on the forms.

Incidentally, by the time you get this these will have been open for a few days – opening date was 2nd February – the prospects are good for early season as there should be a large contingent of overwintered fish, especially at Arlington.

Ardingly – South of England Show

No doubt you will have seen that the Queen will visit the Show on 7th June. Maybe this will bring a rush of volunteers to man the stand!

FLY-TYING COMPETITION

Don't forget to get your entries in to Paul Bond or Roy Gurney by the last meeting in March – Thursday 28th March. Just to remind you, the Novice class is open to those with no more than one year's tying experience, the Intermediate for those with no more than three years' experience and the Open for any member. There is no restriction on entering for more than one category for which you are qualified. Illustrations and tyings were in the January Newsletter.

Piscatoriana – 7th March

An early warning for this evening – Ray Waller, aided and abetted by our own Brian Hendry, will present an insight into the history and development of fishing tackle. This is a fascinating subject, with some mouth-watering items of early tackle presented by a very knowledgeable collector. If you have some old, vintage or otherwise unique items of tackle, bring them along for identification and/or valuation. Ray (and Brian) will be delighted to assist and advise.

Lagoon Bait and Tackle

Peter Winder's shop, **Lagoon Bait and Tackle**, is now on the web. They can be found at: www.lagoonbait.com