



Sussex Branch Newsletter



APRIL 2003

ANNUAL DINNER Saturday 12th April 2003

Still not too late to book, although numbers are limited, so you must hurry to get your applications in to John Burt. Application forms were sent with last Newsletter, but if you have mislaid yours, ask John or Roy Gurney for another – quick!!

Raffle Prizes for Annual Dinner

Apart from the star prizes arranged by Jim White, we like to extend the goodies to as many winners as possible. Therefore be generous and donate a prize to augment the prize-list – bring it along on the night, or if you cannot be there, give it to Jim beforehand.

BEWL PAIRS –13th April

There are two boats still available. If you are interested send John Cooper form with cheque for £33 (or give him them on Thursday evenings). If you don't have a boat partner give him a ring on 01903 813376 and he can fix you up with one. Details are:

Arrive 0800 at lodge, boats away at 0900.

Break for lunch and beer 1200-1245,

Weigh-in at 1600 – prize giving.

Fly-tying for Juniors

One recurring comment to be heard is the worrying aspect of lack of young people taking up fishing. Looking around any gathering there are more “greybeards” than ever, and most of the others are 30+. The future of the sport lies in attracting youngsters and the SATA youth and beginners courses go some way to rectify this on the fishing side.

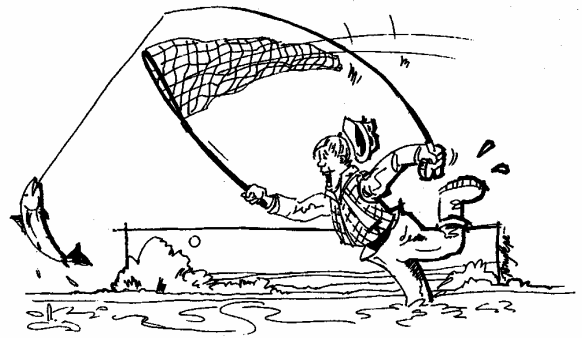
What about fly-tying? One problem is that our tying courses which are so successful in introducing mature adults to the art, and maintaining that interest, take place in the evenings and may be too late for youngsters who probably have homework and school the next day.

One of our members has suggested the possibility of having a junior course from 7 pm to 8 pm on Thursdays (provided we can get the hire of the club-house) with instructors from the retired community, who are not restricted by work commitments precluding earlier starts. However, our Chairman points out that any tutor of children under 16 must have registration with local authorities and be licenced, so maybe we are on a non-starter?

Let Roy Gurney have your comments and/or ideas, and he will put it before the Committee.

PROGRAMME 2003 – Errata

Predictably, your Editor has got it wrong again! Eagle eyes spotted that the 16th and 23rd March are SUNDAYS and not Saturdays as shown on the programme



Wrong again!

Events and Outings

The TFEO Team Heat at Bewl Water will be on Sunday 11th May. Contact Peter Winder either at his shop on 01273 415879 or home on 01273 416766 if you wish to fish this event.

We now have the date for Tighlines 2003 – 20/21 September, so volunteers to man the stand will be

Team Leaders Wanted

Apropos the above, so far there has been a lack of interest shown in entering for the Anglian Water and the TFEO events. In the past there has been some criticism that some folk were not asked if they wanted to fish, but if you don't tell us, how can we know???

If you want to fish a particular event where the organiser is not yet appointed or you just do not know who it is, let Peter Winder know and he will point you in the right direction – even if it is to suggest you might like to be the organiser/team captain!!

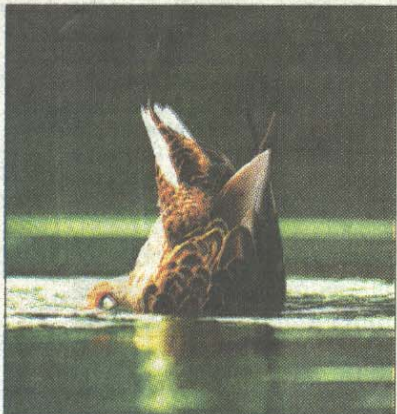
The Anglian Water and the TFEO gives members the opportunity to fish with some of the best anglers in the UK, so getting the chance to learn a helluva lot.

Because it is an opportunity to fly the Sussex FDG flag, the branch may well pay the entry fee for national competitions, with the individual members paying for their fishing in the event. What a chance for fame – the branch has reached National Finals in the past – even coming third, with a consequent invitation to a “masters” day at Hanningfield, where they were rubbing shoulders with numerous anglers wearing Team England shirts!

By courtesy of *The Daily Telegraph*, we reproduce the following article by Jon Beer, published in the "Weekend" supplement on 7th December 2002:

The angler's feathered friend

Ducks' bottoms provide the best feathers for flies, says **Jon Beer**



Fish catcher: a CDC fly (top) is made from a duck's preening gland feathers

These are perilous days. Anyone who lives in the country has reason to fear the darkening days of winter, to tremble at the faint scrape of boots on garden path, the dread knock at the door. This time it may be just a harmless visitor, but sooner or later it will be your turn. When it is, you will find two small corpses hanging from the door knocker, a figure retreating into the shadows and a faint whiff of waxed cotton, wet dog and spent cartridge lingering on the night air.

Someone in the village has been duck-shooting again. The generous neighbour who has just left you a brace of mallard may not have shot them himself. Chances are he was given them the night before and didn't know what to do with them either. These birds may have been circulating the village for days. That's how it is in the duck-shooting season: we all like duck but we don't like it enough to want to pluck and dress one. Duck plucking involves a prodigious amount of time and fluff and results in a tiny carcass and a pile of feathers 14 times the size of the duck. Far better to make a present of these ducks to a friend or neighbour. Like all true acts of charity, this is best done anonymously.

But before you sneak out, spare a thought for any fly fishermen you know. That small corpse is the source of some of the fisherman's most valuable materials.

The past decade has seen a revolution in the dressing of fishing flies, based on a tiny pinch of feathers from a duck's bottom. The revolution began in Switzerland. In the 1920s, two men from the Swiss Jura region, Charles Bickel and Maximilien Joset, began tying flies from the strange feathers surrounding the preen gland of a duck. These were small floating flies, exploiting the peculiar buoyancy of the feathers.

These flies became much sought after on the local rivers and both men became professional fly-dressers. By the late 1950s, Henri Bresson, a renowned fly-dresser from Vesoul in France, coined the name *cul de canard* for a fly hackled with these feathers from a duck's bottom. The

name stuck, but over the next decade or so it became stuck to the feather Bresson had used rather than the fly.

Articles on the wonders of *cul de canard* (CDC) feathers began to appear in French and German magazines, but the feathers were very expensive. Dressing flies with CDC needed new techniques: the flies could be fiddly to make and rather fragile. In 1980, a Slovenian fly-fisherman, Marjan Fratnik, changed all this with a remarkable creation. The F-Fly is simple to tie, being little more than a bunch of CDC feathers bound on to a hook with a wound silk body. The F-Fly was also effective: the bunch of buoyant CDC fibres keeps the fly afloat while the slim body sinks through the surface to look like an aquatic fly struggling to get through the surface film. Trout like that sort of thing. Anyone could make an F-Fly if only they could get hold of some CDC feathers.

In the late 1980s, the focus swung back to Switzerland, home of CDC, where a young Frenchman was realising the full potential of this miraculous stuff. Marc Petitjean was developing a complete series of flies, exploiting the softness and mobility of *cul de canard* feathers to give movement and life to nymphs and wet flies as well as dry and emergent patterns. He also developed a way to dye the feathers without damaging their delicate fibres or destroying their natural oils. He went into business. Fishermen now had a source of CDC feathers in all colours and the tools needed to dress flies with this wonderful new material. The revolution had arrived.

Packaged CDC feathers are still expensive but they come free with every dead duck. Feel for the small nipple of the preen gland beneath the feathers just above the tail. Part the back feathers to expose the oily down: pinch the nipple and pull. A small tuft of *cul de canard* feathers will come away. Smooth the back feathers together again and no one will know: now give the duck away to a friend and wish them a merry Christmas – and, of course, bon appétit.

The step-by-step guide to ducking and diving

You will want to know what to do with this sudden wealth of *cul de canard* feathers. *Tying Flies with CDC: The Fisherman's Miracle Feather* by Leon Links (Merlin Unwin Books, £20) is a superb exposition of the history of the feather and fly dressers from around the globe who have developed its use. Their step-by-step techniques and fly patterns are beautifully illustrated in colour photographs.

CDC feathers grow around the preen gland, a small nipple on the top of the duck's tail. The preen gland secretes an oil into this tuft of feathers, which the duck then transfers to the

rest of its plumage by preening. It is this oil that keeps the duck waterproof and afloat. The peculiar structure of CDC feathers acts like a wick: they are extremely soft, the fibres are light and delicate. This makes them ideal for flies. The softness of the fibres makes them easy to cast, they land softly on the surface and underwater the fibres give the impression of a struggling insect. Most soft, fluffy feathers absorb water instantly and the fly sinks like a stone, but CDC feathers are steeped in waterproof oil and trap air within the structure of the feathers. Clever stuff.

JB

CANADA

Roy Gurney recently attended a talk given to the East Sussex SATA by Ian Davis who organises accompanied trips to Vancouver Island fishing for Pink, Coho and King Salmon. It seems to be a very competitive deal, with superb fishing in one of the loveliest parts of British Columbia, mosquito free, and should appeal to many of our members.

The favoured outfit is apparently a 9' #8-9 single-handed rod (preferably with fighting butt) but fuller details can be found in their little booklet, of which Roy has a copy, but see the advertisement in this newsletter for contacts and further details.

Departure dates are August 24th and 31st, September 7th, 14th and 21st, each returning to UK 8 days later. Booking are being taken now, but hurry for the 21st Sept departure as this is filling up rapidly!

Any booking from our members will result in a significant donation to Branch funds.



2003 Salmon Fishing At its Best

Accompanied trips to Vancouver Island in Canada during September for 1 to 5 weeks.

Outstanding fishing for Pink, Coho, and King Salmon, stunning scenery, fascinating wildlife and some of the cleanest and most unspoilt rivers in the world.

Come and Join Us!

Can you afford not to? With a price of £1500 which includes: Premier Class Flights, Accommodation, Transfers and all transport whilst fishing and the Fishing organised with all the information and assistance you may need. Loads of fish for the catching but don't be fooled, it is extremely challenging, exciting and highly rewarding!



Contacts:
Ian Davis (imcdavis@aol.com)
01937 832247 or 07798 757485
Phil Curzons
(philcurzons@aic.co.uk)
01270 883932

BC Fishing Ltd.

Iain Thompson

In February we had an informative talk in the true Iain Thompson style. His slides of the wastes of Alaska, the wildlife and the fishing were of the highest quality. Iain's quiet matter of fact approach to what was a memorable trip was very welcoming. His tips and hints on what to expect and what not to expect were most enlightening. Even his assessment of the standard of casting of his companions was worth the evening on its own!

Iain has been and remains one of the branches staunchest friends and we look forward to more of his illuminating dissertations in the future.

Chairman's Chat Lines

With the conclusion of the fly tying programme in sight our attention turns as to how to lose all of the flies we have been so busy tying this winter. The branch has prepared an extensive programme of events throughout the summer with visits to all types of venue, from small stalking waters such as Chalk Springs up to inland seas such as Grafham and Bewl. We hope to have catered for all tastes in fly fishing.

If you wish to take part in any of these events please contact the organiser immediately and send you deposit so that final numbers can be relayed to the fishery concerned and the boats etc. reserved where appropriate. These matters do not just happen, they have to be arranged.

John Burt is putting the finishing touches to the social event of the year, our Annual Dinner. This is the one occasion when we can meet our fellow branch members in a setting and under circumstances where we may be present but not recognised. Most of us will be properly dressed and even clean shaven. Our best behaviour is guaranteed as we will be under strict instructions from a higher authority. Please let John have your booking for your self and your wife/partner. If you wish to bring both wife and partner arrangements can be made.

The branch will be represented at a number of shows and exhibitions throughout the summer and your support at these would be most welcome. The South of England Show in June is a good time to recruit new members for next season's fly tying classes. Roy Gurney would be delighted to hear from you on this matter.

Chris Elliot

A welcome return visit by this master taxidermist provided a very entertaining evening as he talked us through his introduction to the art as an art student and then apprentice at the leading London firm. This involved embarrassing trips by Underground with a freshly skinned leopard pelt which leaked some blood from its bag, causing some consternation to passengers and staff, as well as a journey in rush-hour in a small car with a dead baby (but still six-foot) giraffe and an equally dead lioness in the back!

The display of his mounted fish, in which he now specialises, and birds was breathtaking, showing the height to which he has taken this art-form. He described the general process of mounting a trophy, and the many hours of painstaking work necessary to achieve near perfect reproduction of the original. Now go catch that fish of a

Video Library

Jack Jupp reminds everyone to return any videos out on loan to them by the last tying night (or he won't have anything to watch over the summer nights!!). Please get them back, as things tend to go astray if not tended for some months! If you want to retain a particular video, I have no doubt Jack will make special arrangements.

In the meantime, we are grateful to have been given some new titles by Mrs Henderson, from the collection of her late husband Tom, a long-standing member of the Branch. These are:

Trout & Flyfishing – Embry (USA)
Go Fishing, Carp & Trout – Wilson
Modern Flyfishing Tactics, Vols. 5 & 6 – Wothers
Advanced Fly Casting Techniques – M Evans
Go Fishing, Reservoir Trout Fishing – Jack Charlton & Bob Church
Float Fishing – Ivan Marks
Go Fishing, Pike & Trout – Wilson
Modern Flyfishing Tactics Vol. 2 – Burgess
Modern Flyfishing Tactics Vol. 3 – Burgess

TROPHY WINNERS 2002

Peter West Trophy for biggest rainbow from Sussex water:
Andy Gibbs 15lb Blackwool farm

John Leitch Brown Trout Cup for biggest brown from any Sussex water:

Joseph Holmes 6lb 4oz Chalk Springs

Members' Reservoir Plate for biggest fish from Sussex reservoir (including Bewl Water):

Gavin Hunter 7lb 12oz Arlington

John Leitch Brown Trout Cup for biggest brown from Sussex reservoir or river:

Roy Gurney 1lb6oz Ouse (Balcombe F F)

Jimmy James Memorial Trophies for best bag at Branch Outing – Winner:

Chris Croucher 11lb

Runner up:

Jan Suppel 8lb14oz

Plowman Trophy for biggest fish at Branch Outing:

Chris Croucher 3lb11oz

Trophy for best brown, brook or tiger at Branch Outing:

Lee Redman (Tiger) 4lb4oz

Frank Darrah Trophy heaviest bag (Branch pairs competition at Bewl):

Chris Croucher & Lee Redman 5 fish 12lb2oz

Charity Pairs Bowl heaviest bag (Bewl):

Chris Nunn & Andy Gibb 8 fish Weight not recorded

In both the Frank Darrah and Charity Bowl it is worthy of note that Ray Love and Dave Painter were runners up; in the Frank Darrah they actually had 7 fish for 11lb7oz.

It is worthy of note that the John Leitch Cup for reservoir/river was awarded to the only entry – we know there were better fish caught, but you have to enter them!

All the above trophies will be presented at the Annual Dinner, so get your tickets now!

Gazebo for hire

The Branch has acquired a gazebo, 10' x 10' (or 3m x 3m if you have gone metric!) with four walls, two with windows. If any member wishes to use this for a week-end for a garden party, barbeque etc, it can be hired for a £10 a time donation to Branch funds. It goes without saying that it is subject to return in the same condition as it started. Contact any committee member – it is in the care of Roy Gurney at the present time.

Spring & Summer

Irish Salmon and Sea Trout Adventures

If you have ever wanted to fish the West Coast of Ireland for Salmon or Sea Trout now is your chance.

Gone Fishing Guided fishing Adventures

Invites you to join them on one of two fishing Adventures scheduled for this year.

The First is a one week **Spring Salmon and Early Sea Trout Quest**. For a day on each on the following world renowned Salmon and Sea Trout waters – Waterville (Lough Currane), The Curagh Fishery, Killarney Lakes (Lough Leane), and the rivers Laune, Curagh and Inny. Six fishing days that could change your life – 22nd - 29th March.

The second is a two week **Early Summer Adventure** scheduled for the 14th – 21st and 21st - 29th June for Salmon and Sea Trout similar to above but will include some night fishing for Sea Trout if conditions suitable. You can come for just one week or both if you wish.

Each Adventure will be limited to five people and, at only £250.00 per person per week, represent tremendous value. This price includes full board at our lovely Kerry home, all boat hire, licences and permits where required. All you have to do is get there. Spinning and trolling tackle available for hire if required and I can supply local fly pattern details if needed.

Alternatively the cottage is available for letting for your own trip.

For further details contact

Bob Burbidge (Blackwater Bob) 01903 873878 evenings

E-mail: blackwaterbob@gonefishing.ie

www.gonefishing.ie

Please note this web site is still under development & a few pages are incomplete.

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