



Sussex Branch Newsletter



JANUARY 2004

JANUARY SPEAKER BARRY GRANTHAM

We welcome this month Barry Grantham, who will demonstrate rod-building with split cane. He will also bring with him an array of his goods, including rods and nets; anyone who has seen his stands and demonstrations at shows will appreciate his craftsmanship and his knowledge of the history of fishing tackle.

ANNUAL DINNER 20th March 2004

Enclosed you will find menu and application form for tickets. Please complete and get your forms (and cheques) in to John Burt (or any committee member if he is not around) as soon as possible as numbers are limited and in demand!

“LOST MEMBERS”

Every year we “lose” a few members, some through loss of interest, some just forgetful, some through relocation and sadly some recruited by the “Great Reaper”. Nice, therefore to hear from Steve Frost, who sent the following e-mail

From: Steve Frost

Date: 17th December 2003

Sorry I have not rejoined the club. I am still in Egypt, working for my living. In addition I have also moved house. I now live in Coltishall, Norfolk. My wife and I have bought a B&B with river frontage, my own little bit of river at last, coarse fishing but better than nothing. It can be seen on bridge-house.com. We would be pleased to see any members there.

So, when I finally return from Egypt I will be living a long way from Sussex and will have to find a fly-dressing club in my new area. I have been receiving the newsletters posted on from the UK which have been very welcome – no trout fishing here but at least I can read about you guys!

I would like to thank the members of the club for being so friendly and welcoming for the short while that I attended. The beginners class was really enjoyable, thanks to Peter and Ian for their patience. I have my tying equipment with me here to keep my eye in, and I’m always looking for new materials.

Once again thanks to all the club, I’m hooked!

Finally, have a look at these Mayflies – how about tying some? [Http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0305/feature3/index.html](http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0305/feature3/index.html).

Regards and tight lines – Steve Frost

RICHARD COURT

Some of you may recall the visit of Canadian Richard Court during his stay in Eastbourne. He is a salt-water flyfisherman and spent a long time deep in discussion with our own Ron Nicholson. Just too late for the December newsletter I received the following from him:

From: Richard Court

Date: 18th December 2003

Hi Youall,

Its that time of the year again - I really do hope it was a good year for you as it was for me .

I have finally rooted myself for the winter in Toronto but am in the throes of planning a trip to B.C next June; it will last until the end of October. I know some of you have been or are already in B.C. Please contact me and let me know what is the best time in the spring to go. I may be going too early for certain fishing situations.



The trip to Cape Cod in June was very slow at first but the days warmed up nicely and towards the end of the week we were taking some nice stripers. The Bluefish, which are the backbone of the trip, also were slow because they need the sun more than the stripers. We ended up at the backend of the week boating and releasing between sixty to eighty a day in the six to eight pound class. Oh! I did the unthinkable while boating a nice Bluefish. I grabbed too far up the fish’s head and it sunk its teeth into my thumb; it wasn’t that it bit me but it was the clamping power, the pressure of the bite was like a vice. Two days later I could still feel the vice-like grip.

Well to all of you I say have a really good and safe Christmas, do write when you have time.

All the best from me and mine to you and yours and have a great New Year as well....."R"

If anyone – especially those who have been to British Columbia – wants to contact him his e-mail is:

richardcourt417@hotmail.com

JOHN O'GAUNT'S

In October the Chairman organised a day for the Committee and other regular contributors to the running of the Branch at John O'Gaunt's fishery in Hampshire. This has two spring-fed gravel-pit based lakes and is situated in a lovely setting somewhat off the beaten track near the village of Kings Sombourne. One lake has the distinct remains of a building showing below the surface!

Fishing started at 9 am, and Alan Chamberlain was into a fish within five minutes, followed by several others. Whilst the fish were taking regularly, the fine fight they gave led to some great sport. Some idea can be given by my experience; first cast with my new 4-weight 8' traveller I was into a fish which decided that the other end of the lake was preferable to meeting me! It took the full line plus 15-20 yards of backing off the reel, but eventually succumbed after a great fight to weigh in at 3¾lb.

All bar yours truly had their four by barbecue lunch at one o'clock, provided by Pat Kerly, who also had bacon butties served on the bankside by his grandson at the start of the day! What service!!

This was a lovely day out and thanks are due to the Chairman for his arrangements. It also gives us experience of a new venue for most members – well worth a visit if you don't mind a drive out of Sussex.



Jack Jupp bent into a good fish



Jim, Paul, Ian & Chris



A happy editor!



Alan Chamberlain nets his first.

“Flies for Ardingly”

In the last year we have made over £70 on sale of flies at various shows.

Our stock of flies is now low, so please raid your fly boxes and weed out those you can spare and which are saleable; also those tied on Thursday nights and not wanted for your immediate use can be donated. This is a prime source of funding for the Branch, so let your class instructor or Roy Gurney have what you can spare.

SUSSEX OUSE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

It seems like only a couple of months ago that Roy asked me if I would prepare a report on the activities of S.O.C.S. to put in the newsletter, but a whole year has flown by and here I am now doing a report for 2003.

As you are all aware, we have had remarkably little rain this year, with some very high summer temperatures: good for sun worshippers but not so good for fish and anglers. The River Ouse has suffered from low flow, which has adversely affected the fishing. Recorded catches are 50% down on last year, (around 60 from the Ouse Angling Preservation Association waters). Many of the feeder streams almost dried out during the summer, which was evident to those who fish at Cinder Hill.

At the time of writing, South East Water has applied for a Drought Permit to allow increased abstraction from the Ouse at Barcombe Mills. The “Minimum Required Flow” limit will be reduced by half. This could compromise the migration of the sea trout to their spawning grounds and coupled with the effects of borehole abstraction on the tributary headwaters, the outlook seems fairly dismal.

On a more positive note, S.O.C.S has a delegate on the Environment Agency committee for the “Adur and Ouse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy”. We hope to influence future policy particularly on borehole abstraction to safeguard the integrity of our river system. There is further good news in that DEFRA has issued a consultation document on salmonid designation for the Ouse, with proposals covering major sections of the river and some tributaries. We were somewhat surprised, as we have been lobbying about this for years. However, it transpires that the EU has threatened the UK government with substantial fines if it does not comply with the freshwater Fisheries Directive on designations; hence the sudden flurry of activity.

S.O.C.S. continues with its programme of water quality testing and has now started biological testing at various sites using the BMWP method. The task force is still regularly clearing rubbish from the watercourses; a never ending task it seems, but the improvement is noticeable. A comprehensive illustration of what we do is available on our website at www.sussex-ouse.org.uk

Once again I appeal for support. Membership of S.O.C.S. is only £10 per annum, which includes receipt of our quarterly newsletter. We are particularly short of active members prepared to give a little time towards our diverse practical activities. Most of these could be described as “messing about on the river”. We are a very friendly lot, have a great deal of fun, and it is all beneficial to the river environment. Anyone interested, please phone me on 01273 400093.

Sam St.Pierre.

A Grain of Truth

Now that nearly the whole branch have bought 7' #3 weight Fladen rods from Roy, I hope that Santa didn't bring any 3# lines to match them. Let me explain: there's nothing wrong with the rods; they are superb little wands and great value. I christened mine at the end of October with a couple of nice fish from the Balcombe Fly Fishers' little stream but the line I was using was a double taper #7! That sounds drastic, I know, but what follows in the next few paragraphs will, I hope, justify what looks like the brutal treatment of a tiny carbon fibre tube.

As a member of Balcombe FF for fifteen years, I've seen quite a number of new members turn up with their recently acquired 7', # 3 or 4 weight, small stream rods, with matching lines, and then they have had the most torrid time in the water trying to cast the nymph or dry fly with what is in fact a completely unbalanced outfit. Older members of the syndicate usually suggest increasing the line weight by one size, which doesn't help much, and people struggle on but find the casting problems detract from the real enjoyment that can be derived from this sort of fishing.

I'm sure that you all know that rod rating is based on the load induced by the first 30' of fly line, be it DT or WF. There are some modern lines that now have longer tapers and varying shapes, but 30' is the norm. To get your 7' Fladen rod to work properly with a #3 weight line you will be placing the fly 45' away from where you are standing (30' of line, plus 7' of rod and, say, 8' of leader). The stream I fish averages 15' in width and is much narrower in places; to load the rod properly I'd be casting into the field opposite and hooking the occasional passing sheep. We fish up-stream fly on this water but again the maximum length of the cast made is about 35' in total (20' of fly line, but more on this later). The thing that is wrong with the equation is that, having bought a short rod to use in confined spaces, you cannot load it properly because you are in confined spaces; so what do you do?

Table 1
Table 2

Line rating	Weight of first 30' (less taper) in grains	Weight of first 30' (less taper) in grammes
1	60	4.0
2	80	5.3
3	99	6.6
4	120	8.0
5	140	9.3
6	159	10.6
7	185	12.3
8	210	14.0
9	240	16.0
10	279	18.6
11	330	22.0
12	380	25.3

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responding modern weight in grammes. I think rod and line manufacturers chose to use grains to perpetuate the mystique of rod and line design.

Designated rod size	Line weight rating for various lengths of line outside rod tip		
	10 ft	15ft	20ft
-	10	7	5
3	11	9	7
4	12	10	8
5	-	11	9
6	-	12	10
7	-	-	-

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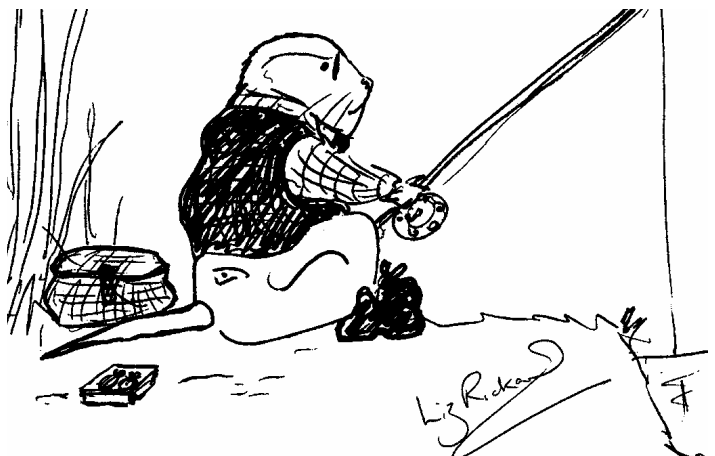
Some years ago I measured the length of casts I made on the stream and found to my surprise that for nymph fishing generally the amount of line outside the rod tip was only 10'; this increased to 15' occasionally and for some dry fly casts it was stretched to a maximum of 20'. Anything over this and you stuck your fly up the bank or in a tree.

I have produced Table 2 for rod sizes #3 to #7 and it gives the line weight rating necessary to load the rod for various lengths of line outside the rod tip, based on the weights given in Table 1. If you now apply this to our 7' Fladens, you can see that if your particular stream dictates that a cast of 10' is all that is possible, you need a #10 weight line to load the rod efficiently, at 15' a #7, and even at 20' you still need a #5. The answer is to use a weight of line that is appropriate to the water and not to the rod, particularly for small stream fishing. Think how long your casts are going to be and use a corresponding line to suit; if the occasional cast is a bit longer I'm sure the rod has enough tolerance to cope – you don't hear of many rods breaking during casting: it's the bloody fool things we do in between that usually do the damage!

Finally, about nine years ago on an outing to Yew Tree Fishery, Martin Nock of the Ouse Valley FF did hook a sheep. To be fair it was on the back cast but it ruined the fishing for the rest of us as we couldn't cast for laughing! He played it heroically for some time, then they both disappeared over the brow of a hill. The sheep returned minutes later with a surprised look on its face and Martin, or "Shagger" as he is now known, seems to have acquired an inexhaustible supply of body material for his Tupp's Indispensables!!!

Brian Hendry

(Now I know why Brian outfishes us all on the stream! - Ed.)



Big Fish Competitions 2003

Peter West Trophy

(Best Rainbow from Sussex water)

Chris Croucher	Blackwool Farm	15 lb
Lee Shergold	Bewl	8 lb 0oz
Jim White	Chalk Springs	7 lb 11oz
Malcolm Middleton	Bewl	5 lb 11oz

Brown Trout Cup

(Biggest Brown from Sussex water)

Paul Daltry	Chalk Springs	6lb 12oz
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Members' Reservoir Plate

Best Fish from Sussex Reservoir (including Bewl Water)

Lee Shergold	Bewl	8 lb 0oz
Malcolm Middleton	Bewl	5 lb 11oz

Frank Darrah Trophy

(Bewl Pairs)

Tim Albright and Alex Rainow	13lb 2oz
Lee Shergold and Gerry Newland	6lb 11oz

Charity Pairs Bowl

Michael Brayne and Colin Rann	14 fish	24lb 8oz
Peter Buss and Jim White	15 fish	17lb 5oz

Jimmy James Memorial Trophies

Branch outing – Best bag

Winner	Peter Winder	12lb 1oz
Runner-up	Phillip Ellis	10lb 3oz

Plowman Trophy

Branch Outing – Best fish

Dave Morris	3lb 2oz
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No entries received for the John Leitch Brown Trout Cup for best brown from reservoir or river nor the cup for best best brown, tiger or brook at the Branch Outing, Duncton. The above trophies will be presented to the winners (and in the case of the Jimmy James Memorial Trophies to the runner-up as well) at the Annual Dinner on Saturday, 20th March 2004 – book your tickets now!

SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOWS ARDINGLY - 2004

For the benefit of new members and to jog the memory of old ones, each year we man stands at the above shows in Spring and Autumn. The Salmon & Trout Association kindly give us space on their plot and we demonstrate the art of fly-tying and sell flies. It is a valuable source of income, but more especially recruiting new members (as no doubt some of you will recall!). We are always keen to have new faces to help man the stand and offer free entry for the day with plenty of time to look around the show. This year's dates are:

10th/11th/12th June 2004
2nd/3rd October 2004

Make a note of the dates in your diary, and nearer the time let Alan Middleton, Paul Bond or Roy Gurney know if you can help on one day (or more if you can).

“Chairman’s Chat” will resume with the next issue, due to unexpected pressure on space – thanks to Brian Hendry for his superb article.

COMPETITIONS, MATCHES & OUTINGS 2004

Our Competitions Secretary, John Cooper, has arranged the following provisional dates for the new season. As the Chairman advised in his “Chat” for December, he is trying to organise a “Winter League” with the first date at Duncton on 18th January. Sadly, Alan has had very poor response to this – do you want to enter? Contact Alan Middleton URGENTLY if you do!!! You will appreciate that bookings have been made with the fisheries, and have to be cancelled if there is no support. League dates are marked *.

* 18th January	Duncton Mill
* 15th February	Chalk Springs
* 6th March	Rover
18th April	Bewl Pairs
9th May	Match v. Surrey Branch – Avon Springs
16th May	? New league?
20th May	Arlington Branch evening
30th May	Match v. Rother Valley Branch
17th June	Barcombe Branch evening
11th July	Stillwater Challenge (Chalk Springs)
21st August	John Watt Competition – Graffham
26th September	Duncton Mill Branch day and BBQ
10th October	Charity Pairs – Bewl

Matches are being arranged with Ouse Valley FF and Dorking FF, and dates for these will be advised shortly.

With the exception of the Winter League, entries for which are required IMMEDIATELY, entry forms for the various events will sent with the next (February) issue of the Newsletter.

GAME FAIR 2004 – BLENHEIM

Paul Bond is arranging the usual coach trip to next year’s Game Fair at **Blenheim Palace on 24th July 2004**. He advises that bookings are going well, so if you want to reserve a seat you must book **NOW** with Paul on **01273 420410**, and provide him with your cheque for £30, (£10 for under-16s) post-dated to 1st June 2004, and made out to “FDG Sussex Branch”. It is a question of first come, first served, and a booking is only firm with a cheque.

This is a great day out for the family (though rather long for small children) as previous attendees will testify. Departure will be about 6.15 am from Withdean Stadium car-park, with possible pick-ups at Albourne, Sayers Common and Pease Pottage. It will leave Blenheim at about 6 pm (depending on driver’s hours), arriving back at Withdean about 8.30 pm depending on traffic.

Published by the Sussex Branch of the Flydressers’ Guild

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