



# Sussex Branch Newsletter



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005

## ANNUAL DINNER and END OF SEASON SOCIAL

Following the discussions at the AGM, your committee have been considering the best way to attract greater attendance by members to these events. Accordingly, it is now proposed to hold an “**End of Season Social**” on the last tying night, **Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April**. Refreshments and a light buffet will be provided, and the presentation of trophies for the tying competitions will be made.

The **Annual Dinner**, which by general consensus (particularly of those regularly attending) should be continued, will now be arranged for end of October or early November, subject to the availability of the venue, which we hope will remain the Dyke Golf Club. Further details will be published in due course, but the format will by and large be unchanged (except there will be less time spent on presentation of trophies already made at the “Social”). This will mean choosing a speaker, or not having one, and any suggestions as to whom or what type of speaker you would like, let Alan Middleton or Paul Bond know.

Meantime, make a date in your diaries now for the 14<sup>th</sup> April – we hope to see lots of you who may not always come to the tying nights but are nevertheless still active members.

## OUTINGS AND EVENTS

With this newsletter you will receive entry forms for the various events, competitions and outings arranged for this coming season. These are not yet complete, and there will be some more to come, but get your responses in to the various organisers as soon as possible, so that you will not be disappointed and so that the organiser can get his bookings sorted out in good time.

## SPEAKER – 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY

Our guest speaker this month is **Richard Horsfield** of the Environment Agency who will present “**The Trials and Tribulations of a Fisheries Scientist**” – a highly entertaining insight into his work with the Agency as a fisheries officer in Hampshire and elsewhere.

This will also be an opportunity for you to discuss and ask him questions about the Environment Agency and the way they are addressing the problems arising from greater pressures on the rivers, especially in the South.

## NEW CONSTITUTION

The Annual General Meeting duly approved the new Constitution and Rules of the Branch – you have all had a copy (with the AGM agenda) but further copies are available if required from Roy Gurney.

This edition of the Newsletter has been sponsored by:

# LAGOON BAIT AND TACKLE

WHO ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THEIR NEW APPOINTMENT AS

SOLE DISTRIBUTOR IN SUSSEX FOR *Grey's*

To view and test their range of superb tackle why not visit our  
showroom at

**327 Kingsway, HOVE, BN3 4LD – Phone 01273 415879**  
and see for yourself our extensive range of fly tying and fly fishing tackle  
Or log on to our website – [www.lagoonbait.co.uk](http://www.lagoonbait.co.uk)

## SALMON FISHING – A SALUTARY TALE

Peter and Nobby are friends of a friend of mine. Peter is very well connected in salmon fishing circles, and regularly manages to book rods on some of the top Scottish beats. Last year Peter managed to secure four rods for a week on the Spey at prime grilse time, and offered a rod to Nobby. Nobby jumped at the chance and suitable arrangements were made.

The party meet up at Peter's home early Sunday morning. They find that they'll be travelling up in Peter's new pride and joy, a spanking new Toyota Landcruiser, which Peter has taken delivery of the previous day. Settled back in the leather seats they begin the haul up north. Each bloke takes two hours at the wheel to share the driving around. Eventually Nobby's turn comes around.

Now Nobby is a plumber, and drives like one, screaming up the motorway like his hair's on fire. Like most van drivers, he also considers it an affront to his virility to leave the fast lane until the last possible minute. Still, the miles are passing rapidly. Disaster strikes when Nobby approaches some roadworks at warp speed and leaves it too late to dive back into the middle lane. He wipes the whole passenger side of the landcruiser along the side bars of a passing lorry.

Eventually, after much grief, they arrive in Speyside, and immediately hit the local curry house. Come the morning they jump into the mangled car and drive to their beat. The atmosphere is still a little frosty between Peter and Nobby, but becomes positively Arctic when Nobby slams a door on Peter's 15 foot, custom built Loomis. The rest of the party pull Peter away from Nobby and fishing commences.

Mid afternoon, and as Nobby watches his line lead his bunch of feathers across the river for the umpteenth time the line tightens etc. etc. A 6lb grilse – lovely! Immediately after landing the fish the effects of last night's curry and lager kick in, and Nobby gets a warning twinge from his guts. Realising he'll be very short of friends if immediate relief is not forthcoming Nobby drops his rod and heads for the bushes.

Meeting up back at the car, the grilse proves the only success of the day (and as it turns out the week). Rods are shipped and everyone jumps in. Halfway to the hotel Peter wrinkles his nose and asks who's dropped one. Denial all round. The smell worsens. On investigation it turns out that Nobby has managed to drop his dump on the back panel of his chesties, failed to notice for the rest of the day, and has now smeared it all over the new leather.....

Nobby doesn't get too many invites any more. Peter will be eligible for parole soon.



## BRANCH FLY-TYING COMPETITION.

As you know, the flies for this year's competition are:

**Beginners:** one each of **Black Pennel** and **Killer Nymph**

**Intermediate:** matched pair of **Murrags**

**Open:** matched pair of **Stimulators**

Many of you have already entered your efforts tied on the evening allocated, but if you want to replace those with later tyings, and especially entries from those not present on that evening, these should be given to Paul Bond, Alan Middleton or other member of the committee by:

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March**

This date is absolutely final, as judging will be carried out in time for presentation of trophies and prizes at the "end of term" social on **14<sup>th</sup> April**.

The patterns and recipes were shown in the November newsletter – contact Roy Gurney if you need a refresher.

## FOR SALE

**A 5' X 4' CAR TRAILER, COMPLETE WITH  
TAILBOARD AND LIGHTS AND TARPAULIN  
COVER - £110 O.N.O. CONTACT ROY GURNEY  
ON 01273 506184**

## **BC FISHING REVIEW – 2004**

In 2004 the fishing was very different to previous years. This was due mainly to the reduced numbers of fish; however, this should be put into perspective so please don't be alarmed. For example, previous years, the numbers of Pink salmon in the main river usually number more than a quarter of a million at the peak of the run. In 2004 the figures were more like 40,000. Admittedly a lot less, but still plenty to go round!

Our fishermen out there in late August, or early September 2004 were still catching plenty of fish, but they had to try a bit harder. The comment from fishermen who had been out with us before was that they enjoyed the fishing this year more than any other, because they did have to work harder to get their fish.

The runs of Sockeye, Coho and Kings were all better than previously. We had good sport with all the species in a number of different rivers. It was interesting to see the fishing changing as September progressed. The flows in the main river increased quite a lot; the effect of this was that when you hooked a powerful Coho or one of the big King salmon, then you really needed a double handed salmon fly rod to have any chance of playing a fish and getting it in. A number of our fishermen had brought their big rods after experiencing some difficulties last season in 2003, so this time they were well prepared and caught some very big and memorable fish. We have a photo gallery on the website, which shows a selection of shots taken this year.

Every year we learn more and more and manage to find new rivers and places to take you. With the rising popularity of destination fishing in BC this has become one of our key issues. We don't like 'Combat fishing', so we try and ensure that we can offer fishing which has some seclusion, even if the fish are a bit more challenging! This has worked well, some fishermen like to stay in the popular places, others go further afield with one of us to explore new possibilities.

Some of our fishermen had their own adventures aside from the fishing; these included going with the Islander Postman in his seaplane. This is a trip of about two hours delivering mail to the remote settlements and logging camps among the archipelago of islands, this was very popular for a morning doing something different. Another group went on the snorkel tour down the main river, which must have been very enlightening as one of our group suddenly started fishing somewhere completely different and was rewarded with a large king salmon and a grin from ear to ear!

We made several trips to the lakes again and they were also popular. Our local assistant, Dave Lihou was able to bring a boat which increased mobility and proved very useful, so much so that we now have our own boat, a fourteen foot all aluminium craft with two sportfishing seats, a bit more comfortable than the standard bench! In 2005 we hope to make good use of the boat, both in the lakes and the ocean, fishing just off the shore around the kelp beds near the Oyster estuary.

Then there was the weather! 2004 was the coldest and wettest September we have ever had, although the final week did warm up a bit, but at times it felt very

autumnal. Fortunately clothing is not expensive out there, so a warm fleece was quite effective to keep warm worn under a lightweight waterproof jacket.

Prospects for 2005? Odd numbered years reputedly result in the biggest runs of salmon, so it should be a bumper year. After the reduced numbers of 2004 this will help restore confidence with the locals. This was an interesting spin-off for us in 2004. Because the fish were harder to catch there were very few local fishermen out on the rivers during the week, so fishing pressure was eased. Out on the ocean the usual American sport fishermen didn't come either. They had followed the fishing reports so they knew the fish numbers would be down, so again, it was quite easy and not too expensive to pick up a days fishing charter and still get some good fishing. The hard fighting Chum salmon were providing most of the sport in late September.

We are confident that we will be able to give everyone good fishing and a holiday to remember, for all the right reasons!

Tight lines and we look forward to fishing with you in 2005.

IAN DAVIS

*For brochure or more information contact Ian Davis on 01835 850788 or e-mail [imclDavis@aol.com](mailto:imclDavis@aol.com)*

*Alternatively visit their website [www.bcfishing.co.uk](http://www.bcfishing.co.uk)*

*Editor's note:*

*If you make a booking please make sure you mention the Sussex Branch Newsletter – the Branch receives a generous donation for each booking!*

## **“THE FLY TYING BIBLE”**

Many of you will have seen copies of Peter Gathercole's new book, which is one of the best manuals your editor has seen. After studying this and comparing it with our own course booklets, it has been decided to use “the Fly Tying Bible” for the Beginners' and Intermediate courses starting next September. Despite the great work put in by the instructors and others in compiling them, our own booklets suffered from the somewhat crude printing and presentation, and this new publication should be of great benefit.

As a result, the tying programme will be adjusted slightly to fit in with the patterns in the book, and this will be published in good time for next September.

We have been able to negotiate a favourable deal with the publisher which enables us to offer copies at the very special price of **£10.00 per copy.**

Of course, this price applies to **all** members, not just those on the courses, so if you want a copy, let Roy Gurney have your order as soon as possible.

## **OLIVER EDWARDS**

Our January speaker was the renowned fly-tyer Ollie Edwards and we were treated with a wonderful display of tying skills, producing some of the most life-like and at the same time practical flies one could imagine. The opportunity was taken to try out our new camera and projection equipment, and eventually the technophobia was overcome and some useful images projected, enabling everyone to see the maestro's skills as he worked. Practice will make perfect, we hope!

## Chairman's Chat Lines

With only a few weeks to go in our fly tying season our thoughts turn to ways in which we can lose all those flies we tied during the winter evenings. The committee has assembled a number of outings for the summer period with something for everyone we hope. Days out at small waters are interspersed with days on the larger reservoirs in the area. Some events are local whilst some are a considerable distance. Although a few of the outings have a competitive title, the "competition" is light-hearted with plenty of banter and good natured rivalry. We have full day events and evening outings. Fly fishing to suit all tastes, in fact.

You will find enclosed with this newsletter a combination form for you to complete and return to the relevant organisers of the outings. Please let them know in good time so that fisheries and boats can be reserved. In some instances we are able to book the whole fishery, but we must be sure of the numbers otherwise we will be penalised. In past years organisers have spent many hours on the telephone during the run up to their event just chasing deposits and confirmations.

This year we are deviating from our usual diary of events by having "a bit of a do" for our final evening. We intend to present the trophies to the winners of the branch fly tying competitions on this evening, the 14<sup>th</sup> April. Refreshments will be on hand for a more social gathering to round off the winter sessions.

The Annual Dinner has been moved to a Saturday in November in an attempt to broaden its appeal to members and their partners. This leads me on to the next year's diary. Paul Bond is busy chasing speakers for the coming year. If anyone has any suggestions as to whom they would prefer to see please let the committee know. We all keep repeating the message, but it is your branch and the committee will strive to achieve what you want. Without your support the efforts of the committee and the organisers of the events would be in vain.

## NEW RANGE OF TRAVEL RODS

Last year, many of you acquired some very reasonably priced travel rods, which despite their competitiveness, earned some considerable income by way of commission, courtesy of Peter Henton. Peter has now developed a new range of high quality travel rods under the his own label "Stavitte" which are exceptional value for money. Whether it is wise to admit it, the prototypes were tested and assessed by Brian Hendry and yours truly, amongst others, and the resulting *Grey Duster* range can be highly recommended.

Briefly there are three models:

9' four-piece #6/7 weight @ £60

8' four-piece #4/5 weight @ £60

7' three piece #3 weight @ £50

and all come with a zip-top cordura carrying tube; for a limited time the 7' comes also with a free fly-line!

Once again, Peter has made a generous offer of commission to the Branch funds for any rod sold.

Roy Gurney has some leaflets describing the rods, as well as one of each for you to examine.

Still available are the range of *Vantage* rods (which are without hard tubes) and Roy has details of these as well.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

I know it is boring, but some members have still not yet renewed their subscriptions for this year. Apart from being struck off the distribution list for the *Flydresser*, they will also cease to receive any communication from the Branch after this Newsletter, nor will they be able to participate in Branch activities.

A side effect of this is the loss of revenue to the Branch, which has necessitated a drastic re-think on the number of speakers we can have each season. The cost of speakers continues to rise and funds raised on speakers' nights only partially cover their expenses. With fewer members' subscriptions, there is less in the kitty to pay them – do you want to lose your speakers?

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