



Sussex Branch Newsletter



AUGUST 2005

Editor's Apologia

Welcome at last to another Newsletter! It had been intended to have a June/July issue, but thanks to a catastrophic hard disc failure, all my hard work was lost and I have had to wait till my new computer was built before undertaking the painstaking task of setting up all templates etc and recovering what little I had backed up – none of the intended Newsletter, of course! Add on absence on holiday, and you now get a rather hurried edition rushed to remind you all that a new tying season is almost on us, with subscriptions due on the 1st September, and the first session starting on 29th September. Make a note in your diary now!

Enclosed (or attached if you receive by e-mail) are renewal forms and programmes for the new season, which will be updated by notice in the Newsletter should there be any changes. The web-site will also be updated regularly, now that I have the means to do so!

For potential new members and those ex-members who did not renew last season, I have also sent forms for you to fill in and return in the hope that you will find our full programme attractive and that you will join or re-join to enjoy the “club atmosphere” as well as mastering the art of fly-tying – or just watching others do it!

For new members, a reminder that we meet on Thursday evenings at the Patcham Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton (sharing an entrance with Patcham High School). It is close to the A23 and the A27 junction on the outskirts, so access is easy. Any difficulty in finding us, give me a ring on 01273 506184 and I will send a map.

I look forward to meeting up with all of you soon, and any news left out of this edition will be found in the September issue!

Big Fish Competitions

As a result of the loss of my computer records, we are now missing the complete entries already made for this year's competitions. Therefore would you please **re-submit your entries** if you have already made them, and get your new ones in as soon as possible.

To remind you, the categories are:

- Best fish from Sussex water
- Best fish from Sussex reservoir (including Bewl)
- Best brown from Sussex water
- Best brown from Sussex reservoir or river

Michelham Priory



Brian Hendry mans the stand

The annual Country Pursuits and Game fair saw us manning our stand, with Alan Middleton and Brian Hendry putting sterling work on both days. Alan was hi-jacked by the Salmon & Trout Association into providing the fly-casting demonstration as well and by all accounts did a splendid “off the cuff” demo, having had no prior warning! Alan reports: “This year the weather was glorious - wall to wall sunshine, with plenty of spectators and lots of interest in the stand. Brian Hendry and myself were kept busy both days showing different flies and techniques to the public.

We saw a number of current and lapsed members at the show. It was good to see some of the “old” faces again. There is certainly plenty of interest in East Sussex.

The whole show was a great success and more than made up for the previous year. With luck we should see some of the interested parties at our classes in a few weeks.”

Charity Pairs Match - Bewl

Alan Middleton is short of entries for this great event – get your entries in **URGENTLY**.

John Watt Competition

We are only entering one team, as unavailability of some of our “regulars”, coupled with my absence on holiday at the crucial time, meant that, despite frantic phone calls, insufficient numbers were found to enter our usual two teams. Let us hope we find a new organiser for 2006 – any volunteers?

Chris Nunn is our captain this year, with **Alex Rainbow**, **Andy Gibb** and **Neil Batchelor** making up the team.

A WELSH RAREBIT OF FISHING.

By Ian May

As some of you know Peter Buss and I take an annual fishing holiday. This year we decided to give Wales a try, (probably attracted by their advertising slogan, "100 different ways with sheep"). The rivers of Wales were our real target so we consulted the Welsh Tourist Board's excellent booklet "Fly Fishing Wales" and having decided on the Teifi in South West Wales, I contacted the Tregaron Angling Association who sent me a computer disc showing full details of the fishing, beats etc, complete with pictures. Having viewed the disc we both felt it was the best place to go, so I booked a week's accommodation at the Talbot Hotel in Tregaron.

We duly arrived on Sunday 22nd May with a view to booking in, grab lunch and a quick pint (or two), then go wet a line or at least take a look at the river. It didn't quite work out that way as we were ambushed by a few of the locals (a gamekeeper etc) and never saw the light of day until it was too dark to see anything. We both had difficulty focussing anyway!

Resolving never again, we set off next morning to meet Toby Jackson, Secretary of the Tregaron AA to get the latest info on the river and how it was fishing. He really was a great help with the best beats etc and while we were there he received a call from the Environment Agency to say they would be stocking on some of the beats that day. Good timing or what! The TAA has some 20 miles of the River Teifi and four mountain lakes, which are in pretty rugged and remote locations, three high in the Cambrians and one in the middle of a pine forest.

Over the course of the week we fished all the beats except the two higher ones as the water level was quite low on these. The weather could have been a bit kinder to us with wet and windy days and some showery days but our final one was very hot, just the thing for chest waders!

The river produced some fantastic upstream dry-fly days on small black gnat and sedge patterns, catching beautifully spotted wild brown trout up to 8 inches in length, just what we came for. Other times, because of the wind or high sun on parts of the river, we changed to nymphs and that tactic produced our best specimens. On the first day, after numerous small fish fell to both of us to dries and wets, I cast a small nymph under the bridge at Pont Llanio to be rewarded with a resident brownie of about 2lb - what a fish and what a way to end the first day!

Because of the weather on day two, heavy rain and strong winds, we decided to try the mountain lakes hoping to find some sheltered spots to fish. After an interesting climb up very narrow roads across barren countryside we arrived at these rather large lakes (most larger than Arlington) to see low cloud, driving rain and whitecaps on the water; so much for sheltered fishing! The cloud was travelling across the lake about six feet above the surface, but the weather did help blow away Peter's self

inflicted cobwebs from the night before, so at least there was one benefit.

We did persevere until mid afternoon but all we had to show were a couple swirls and tugs to my black beetle fished in the surface film, so we gave in and returned to the river for the last few hours. It actually turned out to be quite a bit calmer on the river, but never mind!

Later in the week we fished the lake in the forest, Llyn Berwyn, on a somewhat better day and by casting to rising trout in the margins we both took a number of brownies of about 1½ lb to wet and dry flies. These were dark, almost black fish, compared to the butter-bellied trout of the river. Impregnated by peat I should think. Wonder if I can get some pills to stop him doing that!!

We finished the week on the Pont Llanio beat and had excellent sport, this nearly all large fish (the result of the recent stocking I think). Between us some eleven brownies in the 1½ lb size were taken and returned, having put up spirited fights. Peter had a very large fish throw his hook at one pool, judging by the amount of water it moved it could have been a salmon or sea trout. I can't even suggest it was a "one that got away" story as I was watching him fish that pool at the time! That was a great day on which to end our week and first experience of fly fishing in Wales.

They say fishing is not just about catching fish. Whilst on the river we were privileged to see numerous Red Kites, (a first in the wild for both Peter and myself) buzzards, kingfishers, swifts, mink and, oh yeah, lots of sheep!

One animal we didn't expect to see in deepest Wales was American bison, but we did. Apparently the heart surgeon to the former American President, Jimmy Carter (he of the peanuts), lives by the river and regularly invited JC to fish the Teifi, and the bison were brought in to make him feel at home, or maybe the sheep were too small. However, you don't want one of those on your back cast

Also, we breakfasted one day with Jonathan Dimpleby and his film crew making part of a series on interesting towns.

As you see we had a great time so here's some info in case the urge takes you:

Tregaron Angling Association, Toby Jackson, 01974 298162

The cost of a weeks ticket for the river and lakes was £43.

The Talbot Hotel is fine but some improvements could be made, but it was reasonably priced at £27.50 per person per night B&B

Finally, if anyone feels the need to sample the Teifi, I have a booklet and computer CD giving all necessary details and lots of photographs of the Tregaron AA waters, a general computer CD of the Teifi Valley waters and the Fly Fishing Wales booklet, all of which anyone is more than welcome to borrow.

Unfortunately for Wales, we'll probably be back!

IAN MAY.

Competitions/Outings

I am afraid most of the details were lost in the crash but here is brief run-down on what I can remember!

Match v. Eastbourne Fly Fishers

Held on Sunday 15th May, with Sussex retaining the trophy by about 5lb. Fishing was not easy, although only one fisherman blanked and Bill Smith thanks all our team members for their support, as well as Mary Carden of Eastbourne FF for her organisation. She has photos, which I hope to get for the next issue!

Ian Dunk and Ray Love tied for the best fish (2lb 4oz), but Ian had the biggest bag of 7lb 8oz.

Arlington and Barcombe evenings.

The Arlington evening was wet and windy, and only nine hardy souls braved the elements – however sandwiches for 30 were only just enough for these intrepid anglers! Despite everything, a good social evening.

Barcombe was sadly little better, being very windy and fish all at the farthest point on the dam end. Nevertheless the opportunity to reduce the stock of ale left over from Arlington was well taken!

Ashbourne

Once again we were royally catered for by Doug Saunders and Roy, who produced an excellent barbecue and copious amounts of liquor to refresh us at lunch-time. Fishing was excellent too, in lovely surroundings – can't wait for the next time!

Freshwater Challenge

Organised again by Chris Croucher, despite a wet and windy start, twenty members enjoyed a great barbecue (the weather fortunately relented at lunch-time) and good fishing in the clear waters of Chalk Springs. Paul Daltry had the best bag of 13½lb as well as best fish, a 7½lb brown. Chris Croucher had a 6½lb blue rainbow and Ian Dunk a 5½lb brown also.

Match v. Surrey Branch

Another fine day's fishing at Avon Springs in June which resulted in Sussex retaining the trophy (or rather winning the new one!) by the narrow margin of 7lb out of a total weight for the day by both teams of over 200lb. Ian Dunk had the best fish of the day weighing in at 8lb, with Neil Batchelor running him close.

The next Branch outing is the BBQ at Duncton on Sunday 25th September – get your booking in to Peter Winder for this great day.

AUCTION 2005

Our annual auction has been set for:

24th November 2005

so put the date in your diary now! This is the time to sell all those unwanted, unused, old or just superfluous items of tackle and fly-tying gear – on the other hand a great time to acquire at bargain prices those bits and pieces you may be missing. For newcomers to fly-tying, there will masses of tying materials, tools etc so you don't have to break the bank to get started!

Forms for entry of items will be sent with the next newsletter.

Chairman's Chat Lines

We are rapidly approaching the tying season again. I can tell this by the number of empty spaces in my fly box. What I have not given away, have been lost in trees, fences and other obstacles. Not many in fish as it happens. The recent rain has done little to improve some of our waters with one of my local fisheries still suffering from a green algal bloom. It looks more like pea soup than a fresh water fishery.

As you will see from other sections of the newsletter the programme for the coming season has been finalised with a good variety of events. As we did not have a dinner social event at the end of last season we hope to hold such an event in the Autumn. Watch this space for details.

We have a few outings still to take place. If you have not booked up for them yet send off your slip to the coordinator so that arrangements can be made in good time.

Members of the branch have attended various shows and exhibitions during the summer in attempts to recruit new members for the branch. If you have a colleague or friend who is interested in joining bring them along to the first meeting. They will be made very welcome. The Guild has advertised a special offer to new members. Details can be seen on the web page or in *Fly Fishing and Fly Tying*.

I look forward to welcoming you all back at the community centre at the end of September.

A.M.

E-mail addresses

A considerable number of members now receive the Newsletter and various bits of bumph by e-mail which saves the branch a lot of money in postage. If any of you have not yet signed up for this means of delivery, please let me have your e-mail address (which can be put on your renewal/application form). Everything is sent in .pdf format, so you will need Acrobat Reader 5 or above.

Salt water fly fishing

A number of members have joined Ron Nicholson in the delights of fly fishing from the beach at Shoreham power station and other spots, with considerable numbers of bass being taken, many of takeable size of over 14". The fight of even the small bass leaves the poor old trout in the shade, so why not have a go yourself?

The next article may inspire you to go – but don't tell too many people the secret – let's keep it to ourselves!

The following article by Tony Godden appeared in the "Dibbler", the newsletter of the Ouse Valley Fly Fishers, and is reproduced by kind permission of Tony Godden and the editor of the "Dibbler":

Sea fishing

In the light of the club's trips to fish at Shoreham Beach this summer, Tony has written a detailed

piece about fly fishing on the sea. Many of you will have seen or even tied appropriate flies guided by Tony at various fly tying evenings) and here's your chance to get them wet!

Equipment

Rod - a 10ft reservoir rod, weight 7--9.

Reel - a basic reel. Remember that sea water rots reels.

Fly line -- a floater or an intermediate can be used anywhere. Sink tips are useful in deep or coloured water.

Shoreham -Beach (floater or sink tip)

River Adur (floater or sink tip or a sinker)

River Ouse (floater or sink tip)

River Cuckmere (floater or sink tip)

Black Rock (floater).

Line tray -- useful when surf fishing.

Chest waders -- in the surf, but if wearing shorts, keep shoes on.

Sunglasses -- for eye protection.

Leader -- 10lb, 9ft long, no need for droppers.

Flies

Bass -- any 3 inch long baitfish types or shrimp-looking, snakes, blue and white, green and white, white, all with some type of tinfoil.

Mullet -- small shrimps, grubs, greenish, light to dark.

Bass and mullet fly fishing can be at times very hard work. As so much depends on the weather, more so than when fishing for trout; a strong on- or off-shore wind tends to whip up the shoreline and colour the water too much. But don't despair, for when it's blowing off the shore, just head to any of the tidal parts of the rivers - Adur, Ouse or Cuckmere - all these three I have fished with success and here you should find protection from the elements.

At this point there is a very important note that I feel that you should be made aware of. Remember your own safety and that of others around you at all times because the sea and the tidal rivers have many hidden dangers, e.g. undertow, mudflats, slippery rocks, fast rising tides and at times some very strong currents. So be careful.

The following info on how, when and where (with a little luck) has been my own learning curve over a number of years and as each year has passed, a bit more has been gained, all of which may be a shortcut for some and useful to those who have not tried before. I am not an expert by a long way but the tricks I use are basic, they do work well and have given me great success and fun.

Bass fishing

Most of the bass that you will catch are what are called "schoolies" - small fish up to the 3lb mark, but there is every chance to catch much bigger fish. Just a small note - there is a size limit of 16", so any fish under this size must be returned. When bass take the fly, there is no need to strike as they take it with vigour. So just lift and keep in touch with the line. They also fight very hard, so don't let off any pressure and show them who's the boss. You will not have to be as stealthy when after bass

unlike most other fish because I have found out that if you don't splash around too much, you can get very close to them. Signs of bass fishing on the shoreline are seagulls diving or just floating near the shore. In the tidal river parts, bass tend to be about a third of the width out from the bank edge and near the bottom. When river fishing, you must employ across and down or up casting depending on which way the tide is running. Also, keep moving.

Mullet fishing

These fish at best can be described as the most stubborn, off-putting, soul-destroying fish I have ever tried for. On many occasions I had put a fly on their nose, only to have them look at it, mouth it, then spit it out and swim away, and what makes them even harder to catch is that they spook easily. But you can and will catch them. The best chance is in the tidal parts as the fish keep very close to the edge, so when after these fish, a stealthy approach is required; try and keep the fly hanging just under the surface and when they do take, you must strike as mullet have tough mouths. Again, use the across and down or up cast. As for shore fishing for mullet, it will be more luck than judgement if you catch one because they tend to be out in deeper water. If you do want to try, I would go for rocky ground, piers or jetties or otherwise you could try the beaches at Shoreham to Worthing. A good tip is after a strong SW blow has washed up the seaweed, wait for 2-3 days so that it starts to decay. This attracts sand flies; they lay eggs which go on to maggots, and on calm days with rising tides, they feed prolifically as well as being close in. So these small grub-like flies should serve you well.

There are three main species of mullet - thin and thick lip and the gold spot (a good chance of these from the shore). The gold spot's spot is on its gill cover and is only found on the Sussex and Pembrokeshire coasts.

Method

The ideal is to travel as light as possible: 1 rod, 2 reels, box of flies, spool of tippet, chest waders if needed -- basic stuff, that's all.

On the beach, fish the surf and shoreline; wade as far as possible or as you dare for your own safety. The idea is to cast back a little and across towards the shore and into the surf. This is best from the third true breaker and by doing this, the surf is cutting through the fly line, whereas if you cast into and front on, the surf can and does wash it all back into your feet. Once out, strip the line back fast with the odd pause, but if fishing the hot pipe from the shore or estuary mouth, there is a good flow and that makes the fly work for you.

In the estuaries, cast across at a 45° angle. As soon as the fly line hits the water, mend the line back against the flow. This gives the fly time to sink. Keep in touch (no slack line) and let it come round right into the bank side. Mullet will be in the upper part with bass just under and a little bit further and deeper out.

The River Ouse at Beddingham

Facing south and on the eastern side of the river, there is a good mark where the cut joins the main river; come up towards Lewes and past the cut between 30-50 yards. This is a good tide up and down part to fish, but not at dead low. This spot is good at early season (May - early June) as bass come up to spawn. What makes this a good place is a rocky bar and when the tide is running, bass tend to hang around here and pick up food coming over it. Further up towards Lewes, the river fans out and becomes almost canal-like in shape and flow. Here you should try for mullet with slow figure-of-eight retrieve. Use a small fly for mullet, baitfish or shrimp-type for bass. A good tip - keep the fly close in on a rising tide. Average fish: 1lb - 3lb, best 3lb 10oz.

Black Rock to Rottingdean

Fish just before dead low, look for good large gullies with big bits of sand between the rocks. Find the groyne on which you can stand - this gives the advantages of being high up and able to cast over the rocks when the tide is rising. Cast over towards the shore and strip and pause. Bass are not in large numbers, but they are bigger. I have had lots of blanks, but the fish that I have caught are around 5- 7lb -- really big and good fish. Groynes can be very slippery, so be careful.

Cuckmere Haven -- western side

High water and outward tide from the river mouth when the tide has dropped back enough and as soon as you can get on to the shingle on the other side (still on the western side of the river mouth) of the main groyne, follow the course of the river to the beach. Apply down and across tactics, make the fly work. Once the main flow is lost into the sea, wade out and search for the fish all around the river mouth and the sandy bars. At dead low, keep fishing and wait for the turn of tide and fish the first part of the flood. Even try over the rocks below the cliffs. This is a good bass beach and fishes best when the water is fairly clear.

River Adur, Shoreham Airport side

Around and down from the railway bridge to the Norfolk Road bridge there is a large run of mussel beds and at low tide this is exposed and shows where the main river runs. When this low, the water is very coloured and runs very fast. This is a good time to fish it down and on the turn. Again, employ the across and down or up and let the fly swing around into the bank. Mullet will be close in, out of the main flow, and as already mentioned, the bass a little deeper and further out. There are some very deep holes along the edge, so be careful. Get on to the mussel beds and fish down until the turn, and then fish it up until it becomes too strong. Then wait for the flood, and as it widens, this then slows down the flow, and fish from the bank covering the edge between the mussel beds and the mud flats. This is a very good spot here at low tide (there is a very good weir just before the road bridge -- this tends to hold fish back until the flood comes). I have had mullet to up to 4lbs plus and

bass in the 3lb range. When fishing here on a rising tide on the mussel banks, keep a lookout for the water coming behind you. You could get cut off from the bank side, so be aware.

Shoreham Beach, power station and hot pipe

This beach is one of the best around when summer is fully here. What attracts the fish is the hot water that flows out of the pipe. You can fish this as soon as the sand is exposed. Fish it down to dead low, the turn and back up. The hot pipe itself becomes exposed a lot sooner and access is possible, but be careful because of the wash. At weekends, this is a very popular spot with all sorts of anglers, and it is only able to hold at most 3 to 4 people, so I suggest that you go very early weekdays or evenings as late as possible. The beach itself has plenty of space. The hot water turns the sea a tinge of brown when it is flowing, but don't worry - follow this flow along the shoreline as much as possible and you will find fish in and around this flow. From the beach and the pipe I have caught big bass, mullet, mackerel and sea trout and I have already explained the way to fish this in the section about beach method.

The best time of year for fly sea fishing is late May until mid-September. Also, the Sussex coastline holds some of the best shore fly fishing. If this still looks daunting, it's not. All you have to do is to look at where you are going and if it looks and feels right, it most probably is. I hope that this bit of information has stirred your passion for sea fly fishing and has helped those who have not been before and also those who have. Best of all, it's all free. Tight lines.

Tony Godden

PROGRAMME 2005/6

The initial programme for this year is on the back of this newsletter- **P.T.O. !!!**

The tying programme is enclosed as a separate sheet, together with your renewal or application for membership form. Please let Roy Gurney have your subscription as soon as possible - it is due on 1st September. Of course, new and potential members may defer payment till they have been along to a meeting or two.

Published by the Sussex Branch of the Flydressers' Guild

Chairman: Alan Middleton 01273 493473
Secretary: Paul Bond 01273 420410
Treasurer: Roy Gurney 01273 506184

Editor: Roy Gurney, 7 Eldred Avenue, Brighton
BN1 5EB

Phone: 01273 506184

Fax: 01273 881209

E-mail: roygurney@ntlworld.com

Visit our web site
Sussexflydressers.org.uk

Sussex Branch Programme 2005/6

<u>August</u>	20/21 st (Sat/Sun)	Borde Hill Show – Fishing village. We will give demonstration	Roy Gurney
	27 th (Sat)	John Watt Competition at Grafham Water	Roy Gurney
<u>September</u>	4 th (Sun)	Albury Lakes – match v. Rother Branch	Bill Smith
	25 th (Sun)	Duncton Day – Branch outing and BBQ	Peter Winder
	29 th (Thu)	Fly Tying Recommences at 8 pm at Patcham Community Centre	
<u>October</u>	1 st (Sat)	Duncton – match v. Dorking F F	Jim White
	9 th (Sun)	Bowl – Charity Pairs competition and matches v. Swale Branch, Crawley FF and other branches and clubs	Alan Middleton
	16 th (Sun)	Tackle Fair at Charmandean Centre, Worthing - demonstrating	Roy Gurney
<u>November</u>	17 th (Thu)	Skuli Kristinnson (with Steve Cooper of Cookshill Tackle) – Skuli is from Iceland and will discuss Icelandic fishing and tie some rather unusual patterns, following the British Fly Fair. Steve Cooper is acting as taxi driver and will bring his shop to the branch once again.	
	24 th (Thu)	AUCTION - Re-stock your kit, or sell your old tackle!! Bargains for all	Roy Gurney
<u>December</u>	15 th (Thu)	A.G.M. and Quiz - Last night before Christmas – mince pies for all!!	Alan Middleton
	22 nd & 29 th	NO MEETINGS	
<u>January</u> <u>2006</u>	5 th (Thu)	Tying recommences	
	19 th	Phil Waller and helpers will give talk and demonstration on vintage tackle – members are requested to bring along their own items for comment, identification and valuation.	
<u>February</u>	16 th	Alan Bithell – a one man fly-tying experience!!	
<u>March</u>	16 th	TBA	
<u>April</u>	13 th	<u>End of season Social and Prizegiving</u>	

Please note that fly-tying and speakers' evenings are held on Thursday evenings, unless otherwise stated.
All meetings are held at the Patcham Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Brighton, BN1 8TA
starting at 8 p.m. (unless otherwise indicated).
