



Sussex Branch Newsletter



DECEMBER 2008

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO
EVERYONE**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A reminder that the AGM will be held on 18th December, followed by a quiz and mince pies organized by our Chairman, John Plowman. The AGM is your opportunity to influence the way the Branch is managed – let us have your ideas - remember that new committee members are needed for the ongoing development of the Branch. The Jonathon Glover award will also be presented at the AGM.

The Chairman's, Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports are sent to members with this newsletter.

FLY TYING COMPETITION

This year's competition flies are:

Novice:

Flashback Pheasant Tail Nymph – p. 96

Soldier Palmer – p. 156

One of each pattern on size 10 hook

Intermediate:

Highland Dun – p. 54

Two flies on size 12 hook

Open:

Teal Blue and Silver – p. 168

Two flies on size 12

Page numbers refer to "The Fly-tying Bible" where full tying details can be found.

Entries to be handed or sent to Paul Bond or Roy Gurney by **Thursday 19th March 2009**

If anyone requires a copy of "The Fly-tying Bible", they are available from Andy Steer or Roy Gurney at the very competitive price of £10.

Peter Gathercole's "Fly Tying for Beginners" is also available at the same price.

Well Done Paul!

Congratulations to **Paul Davis** who has just won the Grayling Society's Righyni-Roose Trophy for 2008. The Grayling Society runs this national competition on a topic which changes each year. This year it was fly tying and 3 dressings were required (a Light Tan Klinkhamer, an Edwards Peeping Caddis and a Partridge and Orange Spider). The competition was judged by all of the attendees at the Annual Symposium & AGM voting on which set of three flies they thought were the best. Paul's flies got around 60% of the entire vote! The flies were then auctioned raising vital funds for the society's research into grayling.



Paul received the trophy, a bronze sculpture of Grayling, created by David Hughes, which he keeps for the year.

The Grayling Society is a must for anyone interested in these magnificent game fish and any members interested in joining the Grayling Society should visit www.graylingsociety.net or drop into an Orvis store and pick up a membership leaflet.

JANUARY SPEAKER

15th January 2009

Cyril Bennett of the Riverfly Partnership will talk about the aims and achievements of the organisation

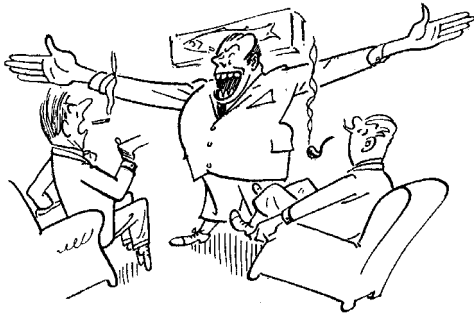
All are welcome – bring your friends!

Jack Jupp's big 'un



What a beauty – Jack took this lovely 10 lb rainbow from Bewl Water, netting him the Members' Plate for 2008 (unless there is a last minute entry!)

Big Fish Competitions



Your very last chance to enter!!

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.

The closing date of catching is 31st October 2008 for browns and 31st December for other categories.

Trophies will be presented at the Dinner.

Steve Cooper

Our guest on 25th November was our old friend from Cookshill Tackle, who greatly entertained us with an illustrated talk on fishing in Iceland – not this time for salmon, but for the lesser publicised brown trout and arctic char. The spectacular scenery, and the lack of other anglers, engendered a wonderful ambience – plus the fact that the cost is a fraction of that for salmon fishing. The season is limited, as the guides are fully occupied during the shorter salmon season, but certainly a “must try” for many of the audience. And as for the fish.....! In the second half of his presentation, Steve demonstrated the art of skinning a partridge – he made it look so easy, and may well have some members risking their marriages to try it at home. Steve also brought along a range of his top class Cookshill Tackle materials (including some of those partridge skins) enabling us to replenish our stocks and perhaps be a bit adventurous with our future tying..

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Once again as we approach the end of another year it is time for our AGM. This is an essential part of our functioning so please do make the effort to attend.

It is at the AGM that you can hear formally the status of the Sussex branch of the Guild and can have your opportunity to comment on and suggest changes for the following year's programme.

Your presence at the AGM will show your support for the work done by the committee on your behalf.

Your committee will need to be elected and I hope that some new faces will consider standing for election.

On a more formal note can I please remind you that any major changes you may be proposing need to be placed on the agenda in advance since I will not allow these under AOB.

When the business is done then it is time to enjoy some seasonal refreshment and then exercise your brains with our annual quiz where teams of about three or four try to win prizes by answering questions on various topics and perhaps even about fishing.

Tight Lines

John Plowman.

AUCTION 2008

Whew! It's over at last – this year's auction was so overloaded with entries that we had to hold two separate events to cover them. Fortunately, our good friend Mike Humphreys, chairman of the Guild, volunteers his services as auctioneer, and as a professional auctioneer keeps up a fast pace with great humour, extracting the last penny from what he describes as the tight wads of Sussex!

As reported last month, the first part covering fly-tying materials etc, attracted bids totalling £1843 and netting a profit to the Branch of some £396.50. The second, covering miscellaneous tackle, rods and reels etc, turned over £2040 with profit to the Branch of £272.55 – a fine reward for the efforts of the auction team – porters, clerks, those who prepared many of the lots, and not least the auctioneer, to whom we offer our gratitude.

This remains our biggest source of income after subscriptions, and enables us to maintain our programme of top class speakers as well as keeping subscriptions down year on year. It is quite a social event too, with many friends from outside of the Branch coming along. Who knows, it may be that next year we will have to have a two-part auction again – get your entries in early! If you want them, Roy Gurney can let you have entry forms well in advance, as well as the usual call for lots which will be made about six weeks prior to the auction. The final dates are not yet known, but will be in October and if two auctions are necessary, early November.

Jonathon Glover Trophy

This trophy, awarded annually to the member who has given greatest service to the Branch over the past year (or perhaps over a longer period) will be presented at the AGM. There have been some nominations received and over the next few days you will be asked for your nomination. Anyone wanting to put forward a name please contact John Plowman, Paul Bond or Roy Gurney urgently!

John Burt

We are sorry to advise that John, who does sterling work organizing the Annual Dinner, has been seriously ill. We are happy to report that he now well on the way to recovery and wish him a speedy return to the bankside (if the weather is kind!)

Testing Timsbury

A Thelwell pony or Thoroughbred stallion?

By Paul Davis



When river fishing it is always advisable to use all the available cover as a member of the Branch shows!

Our branch generally fishes stillwaters, as do the majority of flyfishers throughout the country. This is in part due to our geography and also in part due to the financial aspect that stillwaters put fishing into the reach of everyone's pocket. Whilst there are rivers in our region, most of these are in club or syndicate ownership and casual visits and day tickets are hard if not impossible to find.

It is even harder should we want fish in clear waters as we do not have any true chalkstreams in Sussex and we must travel to Hampshire or Kent to find our nearest chalk stream.

The Test is probably the river that evokes most response from fishermen around the world. Its place as one of the premier fishing venues is without question. Grown men have been known to sell wives and children into slavery to gain the opportunity to fish it; in fact to sell family members was often the only way to afford it.

However fishing in general has changed in the last ten years and this change has pervaded both the exclusive realms of chalk-streams and salmon fishing. Not so long ago trying to get a day or week of fishing would usually find blank looks or negative answers, and then when a beat was found it was held onto with grim determination. The internet has changed the whole process of finding and booking fishing – a good example is Timsbury Fishing www.timsburyfishing.com (not to be

confused with Timsbury Fishery – the beat upstream that is an exclusive syndicate!). Here one can book a day's trout fishing on the Test for £75 pppd or a day's grayling fishing (in the trout close season) for £18. To give you some idea of how good value this is, the other bank of the river is fished by Orvis and they charge about £225 pppd! It doesn't take a genius to work out that both fish the same water but one costs a third of the price of the other. With a deal like that how could the club refuse!

In the trout close season the river can be fished using coarse fishing techniques and therefore to ensure that we could fly fish the river without large amounts of bait being thrown into the river and putting the fish down, we needed to book exclusive use of the fishery. The downside of this was that we needed 20 people – something that we struggle to get normally – however what I hadn't planned on was the response from many people who don't normally come to other Branch fishing events.

We secured the 20 places and all was set. The weather was kind to us and there was a light drizzle first thing which cleared later giving blue skies but slightly windier conditions. This wouldn't normally be a problem but it did cause quite a leaf fall which made fishing in the main river a bit tricky. I should explain that the fishery comprises 1.5 miles of single bank of the main river and 1.5 miles of carriers (carriers are the name for man-made streamlets that criss-cross the Test valley and were used, at least back to medieval times, to maintain the flow of water and also to flood the fields of the valley to ensure a good fertilisation of silt during the winter).

The main river was not as clear as it could be and this has been a problem that has plagued the lower Test this year due to the higher than normal rainfall and also construction work disturbing silt. However it was clear enough to see fish – mainly trout, and some of these were actually rising and taking from the surface. The grayling were a little more elusive and a little deeper down. I managed to bag a small fish around the half a pound mark on a weighted hare's-ear on my second or third cast from the main river and a few others also made an early mark. Whilst I can usually refer to everyone's efforts in a normal report, due to the sheer number fishing it would be difficult to mention everyone – therefore only the exceptional, unusual or bizarre will get a mention!



Wayne D nets a good fish from the main river.

You might think that the place was overcrowded with 20 people but we seemed to melt away after the initial 'get a fly in the nearest water' syndrome and at no time did it ever seem crowded. The second carrier stream was absolutely gin clear with perfect visibility and every fish could be seen (as well as them seeing us). This was the spot that most appeared to get fish from, with a friend of Philip Ellis showing how effective the Czech nymphing method could be with a tally of around 20 grayling (and the odd trout) during the day!

Now grayling are normally quite an obliging fish, and providing you don't spook the shoal (they do tend to shoal up in the autumn) by casting like a demented stockie-basher, you can usually winkle out a few fish before the rest wise up.

Today something different was happening and the normally obliging grayling was being a touch more temperamental – living up to their name of 'Lady of the Stream'. However the normally spooky and very twitchy trout weren't – maybe because they knew they were out of season! These fickle creatures were snaffling the flies – wet, dry and nymph, often in front of the grayling – the clear water meant you could see them dashing to intercept the fly. Exciting stuff but very annoying when they are out of season and you are trying to catch grayling! It seems that most people had more trout than grayling during the day!

However the elusive grayling did yield to some of us, with some managing to catch their first ever grayling on the fly – and as such congratulations should definitely go to Neil Pickering and Tim Stacey.



Norman Thelwell understood what the fishing was like on the Test at Timsbury!

So why the title?

Well, Norman Thelwell the cartoonist and artist lived in Timsbury. Thelwell gave us that iconic image of a fat little girl and an even fatter, more cantankerous pony that enter the English language under his name. So did the Test at Timsbury behave like a Thelwell pony or a thoroughbred stallion? Well neither really, but somewhere in between, like a comfortable old mare who can surprise at times but normally just delivers the goods!

Paul Davis



Is it Rodin's Thinker? No more like Rod-in's Tinker as Tony W contemplates fly choice.

Weir Wood

You may have read in the angling press that Michael Evans has taken over the rights for fishing in Weir Wood Reservoir, and that it was re-opening as a mixed trout and coarse fishery. As a result, our vigilant secretary asked Michael to give us a talk next year, but he has replied that Weir Wood will not revert to a trout fishery until 2010, and he thought it best to defer till then.

Those who remember Weir Wood when it was a trout fishery will wish him well and I am sure will want to renew their acquaintance with this lovely water.

TIGHT LINES!



AND MAY ALL YOUR FISH BE THIS SIZE!!

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