



Sussex Branch Newsletter



OCTOBER 2009

AUCTIONS 2009

Either enclosed with this newsletter, or attached separately if you receive by e-mail, are the catalogues for our auctions:

Thursday 29th October - Flies, fly-tying tools, fly-tying material, miscellaneous items and books

Tuesday 3rd November - Miscellaneous tackle, clothing, rods, reels and lines

Both start at 7.45 sharp – viewing from 7 pm

COMMITTEE

Correction from last newsletter

With a typical blunder from your editor, it was wrongly stated that Paul Bond was standing down as Secretary after the 2010 AGM. In fact it is our Competitions Secretary (who has built up our outings and events programme so brilliantly) Paul Davis who will stand down then. He will continue to consolidate the programme next year (subject to re-election) leaving a very sound platform for his successor, so give some time now to think about his replacement.

It is with great relief we can say that Paul Bond is willing to soldier on as Secretary, at least for the time being!!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

(and old ones too)

We welcome several new members this year, and trust they will enjoy and gain benefit from our classes, meeting and outings. Don't forget too that we have available sweaters, polo shirts, caps etc with the Branch logo, all available from our Equipment Officer, Andy Steer.

"Fly Tying for Beginners", the beginners' course manual, is also to be had from him at the bargain price of £10 (r.r.p. £16.99). "The Fly Tyers' Bible" by the same author, Peter Gathercole, is also available at the same price.

September Speaker Chris Elliot

A good turnout of over 35 attended the first night of the new "season", and we were treated to a masterful display of Chris's art – his mounted fox was so beautiful I, and others, wanted to take it home! The items on display were so perfect – no wonder he is in such great demand.

Add to this, Chris is a very entertaining speaker, and kept everyone's full attention with his anecdotes and explanations of his art.

His story of crossing London in the rush-hour with a lion and a baby giraffe (both had died at Whipsnade Zoo) in the back of his Anglia estate caught everyone's imagination!

It was a welcome return – we last saw him some eight or nine years ago – and we should not leave it so long next time.

On our next speaker's evening we welcome:

SHAUN LEONARD

Thursday 29th October at 8 pm

Shaun, formerly with Sparshott College, has recently been appointed as Director of the Wild Trout Trust, so we may expect some news on this front as well as the main subject originally planned, i.e. the addressing of habitat issues and possible solutions, touching on stocking. It may well be that some of us have problems with some aspects of stocking, e.g. exclusive use of triploids? Now is the time to raise your concerns!!

As usual, coffee and tea will be available at the half way break.

WORKSHOPS on Tying Nights

It is planned to hold some workshops on tying nights for those members who want to “brush up” on various aspects of fishing and/or fly tying. So far we have volunteers to cover the following subjects:

- Furled leaders
- Replacing rod-rings
- Braided loops
- Splicing lines
- Reservoir fishing
- Carp flies and fishing
- Salt water fly fishing

In order to arrange a programme, would all who are interested in any of these subjects please contact Paul Bond, our Secretary, and let him know of your interest so that suitable dates can be allocated. Suggestions for other subjects which might be covered are also welcomed.

Jonathon Glover Trophy

This trophy is awarded annually to a member who has given outstanding service to the Branch. The last three winners are not eligible, and they are Chris Croucher (2006), Paul Bond (2007) and Paul Davis (2008).

Nominations, please, to John Plowman, Paul Bond or Roy Gurney as soon as possible – voting slips will be issued later with the short list. The trophy will be presented at the AGM on 17th December

ANGLING TRUST

Your Branch is a “club” member of this very important organization for two reasons – it is necessary to cover our insurance for the events we organise and, whilst we do not have any waters of our own, we have always supported the ACA (now Fish Legal – a part of the Angling Trust) in the past which does so much to protect our fishing in lakes, rivers and canals.

Angling Trust needs more anglers to become individual members (of whom there are already some in the Branch) to swell their influence with Government ministers and civil servants – numbers count in the amount of political clout organizations can muster.

Contact Roy Gurney for membership leaflets or to read the newsletters, the latest of which are available on Thursday meeting nights.

WANT SOME HELP?

Albert Horne has offered his services if you would like some assistance on some chores including:

1. Scissor sharpening (he will loan you a pair whilst this is being done)
2. Loading line and backing on reels
3. Attaching braided loops to lines, etc
4. Sort out problems with lines, etc

All he asks is a contribution to Branch funds, so do take advantage of his offer – if anyone can do it “the best” it is Albert!!

CHAIRMAN’S CHAT

At the time of writing the Sussex Guild’s involvement in Game Fairs / Agricultural Shows for 2009 has finished. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped in both small and large ways. The publicity these events give to the Guild is essential to our continued progress.

The most recent show was the “Game Fair” at the South of England showground, but in reality it was very much a smaller version of the main summer show. There was little evidence of support from fishing tackle manufacturers and retailers. However, those of us on the Guild stand had a good time accompanied by our colleagues from the Salmon and Trout Association and the Environment Agency.

Close to us was a split cane rod builder from Hurstpierpoint with some delightful cane rods but I am afraid the prices were way above my budget. The risk of slipping down a stream bank and breaking such a valuable rod would worry me every time I went fishing. I am sure many anglers, like me, do not realise the value of the kit they take with them every time they venture out.

Some years ago I lost an old and valued net over the side of a boat during a squall on Rutland Water. This caused me to list and value my fishing tackle- the result was frightening. We are all aware of the cost of major items such as rods and reels but just imagine how much it would cost if you lost your tackle bag and its contents. Reels, spare spools, lines, fly boxes and, of course, flies all mount up. I urge you all to make an inventory of your kit and check your insurance policy for the small print. Does one bag of tackle count as one lost item or do all the lost items count individually? Make sure you have the cover you require.

Finally, welcome back to all existing members and welcome to all new ones. I look forward to enjoying the winter programme your committee has organised.

Tight lines

John Plowman.

South of England Autumn Show and Game Fair

This year the weather was much kinder than last, though still very windy on the Saturday – at least we were not in danger of drowning or freezing! Setting up on the Friday was greatly enlivened by the antics of our neighbours, SATA, whose efforts at erecting their tent merited an award for comedy at the BAFTAs!

Despite the better weather visitors passing the stand were not plentiful. Maybe the lack of truly “game” exhibitors near our pitch had something to do with it. It seems quite difficult to lure folk away from the main attractions and the “shopping arcade”, but we were very pleased to meet with several prospective fly-tyers, and hope to meet up with some of them at Patcham in due course.

Many thanks to the demonstrators and helpers who manned and erected the stand – some photos will follow in the next edition.

CANE RODS

One exhibitor in the game section at Ardingly did catch the eye – opposite our stand was a newcomer to the Show, Andy Victor. Andy makes the most superb cane rods and kindly let us try some out on the casting lake – a joy to use, especially a 7' #5 weight quad section which really stole the show.

Most of his rods are virtually custom-made to order, so if you are considering a top-range Sage or Hardy, why not think “cane” instead?

Andy is based in Hurstpierpoint and we are hoping he will give us a talk one evening when you can all see his masterpieces.

In the meantime why not visit his web-site at www.andrewvictor.com

The bigger they are the *Ardea* they fall

By Paul Davis

I'm not too surprised when some shoves a brown envelope into my hands with furtive glances. Well unless it contains a large amount of used twenties and a whispered warning to make yourself scarce before Mr Big catches up with you. Therefore when, at one of our recent Thursday tying evenings at Patcham, the chairman of the main guild, Alan Middleton, thrust a brown envelope into my paws I thought it might be a pay off from the main guild to stop writing these articles. However looking at the scrawl on the front - *Ardea cinerea* - it was clear that a few Grey Heron feathers wouldn't buy many personal desert islands. Alan indicated I should cast these treasures widely so I passed them on to whoever fancied them as I didn't need any for myself as I still largely had most of a complete set of wings from a dead Heron I found whilst out walking last March.

It occurred to me that only a few people decided to have some – and I wondered whether this was down to the fact that heron, specifically herl from the primary and secondary feathers (the main flight feathers of the wing), is hardly used in trout flies these days. Now this is obviously linked to supply and demand – with Heron being a protected species the material doesn't appear in catalogues for sale and it is only available to those who make use of any dead bird or discarded feather found on their countryside outings. It set me thinking that maybe it might be worth tying up a few of these old patterns (and as I surprisingly discovered some quite new patterns). I dusted off my memory banks, had a rifle through my fly boxes and came up with the following patterns, rather sadly probably only one of the older ones and one of the new ones are still used regularly and familiar to most fishermen today – I'll leave you to decide which ones they are!

Before falling into the detail of the patterns I should mention that any of the long wing feathers or even the tail feathers from a heron yield very usable herl and it should be cut off and used very much like pheasant tail fibres. However heron herl is more fragile than pheasant and I apply the following tactic when making a herl body as it makes it slightly easier to tie and also more

resistant to fish teeth and gives a nicer segmented abdomen effect than herl alone: When laying down the underbody of thread do not clip off the waste thread but keep it attached. Then when the heron herl is tied in take this trailing piece of thread and wrap it around the herl. Grasping both the herl and the thread wrap the body as normal and then tie both the herl and thread at the thorax point.

Nymphs

Grey Nymph

One of the David Collyer trio of nymphs for the reservoirs – probably the most famous of the three as this fly was used to catch the fly caught record rainbow trout back in the early 1970's. In my tying I have substituted the very precise description of 'grey with white tips ostrich herl' for just plain white ostrich herl. I also prefer slightly longer tails than some may tie or consider in proportion but I think this gives the fly slightly more 'wiggle factor'. With either of these modifications the fish don't seem to care!



- Hook: Size 10 Heavy Wet Hook (e.g. Kamasan B175)
Thread: Black
Tail: Tips of 4 or 5 strands of heron herl. These are the tips of the herl that are tied in to form the body.
Body: 4 or 5 strands of heron herl.
Rib: Silver oval tinsel
Thorax: Grey with white tips ostrich Herl. The waste ends of the heron herl are tied over the back to create wing cases.

Blue-Winged Olive Nymph

A BWO nymph version devised by John Veniard (there are literally dozens of BWO nymph variants out there and it was only a matter of time before one incorporating heron appeared).



Hook: Size 14 Medium Weight Wet Fly Hook (e.g. Drennan Trad Wet Fly)
 Thread: Olive
 Tail: Fibres from a grizzle cock hackle dyed yellow
 Body: Thread underbody wrapped with Heron herl that has been dyed olive green.
 Rib: Fine Gold Wire
 Thorax: Dark Olive seal's fur. A yellow dyed Goose breast is tied in over the back to create wing cases.
 Legs: One turn only of short-fibred grizzle hen hackle dyed yellow.

Irish Shrimp (Not Illustrated)

An interesting Irish pattern that uses heron feather slips rather than the herl to create the shell-back on a shrimp pattern. If a quicker sinking version is desired, wire can be wound on the body before it is dubbed with fur.

Hook: Size 8 or 10 Medium Weight Shrimp Hook (e.g. Kamasan B100)
 Thread: Ash Coloured (e.g. Uni-Thread 8/0 Grey)
 Tail: A few fibres of bronze mallard drake scapular feather.
 Body: Blue grey seal's fur, mixed with hare's ear
 Rib: Silver tinsel
 Thorax: Blue-grey heron's wing feathers, laid back along hook, add held down at bend of hook by first turn of tinsel ribbing, to suggest curved back of shrimp.
 Hackle: A few turns of soft grizzle cock hackle, dyed olive-grey.

Spiders

Although spiders were known about and described as far back as the early 1800's (some of the first descriptions of these little creations were found in an 1807 document written by Yorkshire farmer - John Swarbrick) it was only during the late nineteenth century that the spider pattern really became recognised from the publishing of the classic book "Yorkshire Trout Flies" by Thomas Evan Pritt in 1885 and re-published a year later under the title "North Country Flies". For those who like ironic facts Pritt was a Lancastrian!

Pritt's belief in the spider pattern was based around commonsense thinking basically his reasoning was that it was far more difficult to create a perfect imitation of an insect and to impart life afterwards, than to produce an impressionistic resemblance of an imperfectly developed insect, struggling in the current.

From 1886 onwards the spider patterns' recognition spread until 1916 saw the publication of "Brook and River Trouting" by H. H. Edmonds and N.N. Lees. This tome caused the spider patterns popularity to soar higher than ever. Both Pritt's, and Edmonds and Lee's books are considered to be THE bibles on the tying and

fishing of North Country Spiders and are well worth reading.

In brackets after the name I have given the number of the fly as published in the two books. At the end is a recently invented pattern rather than one of the 'old timers'!

Old Master (Pritt No. 39)

Designed to imitate a small dipteran e.g. a midge. Pritt notes, "This is a capital killer from April to the end of August, on warm days, or in the evenings. It was originally dressed by Bradley, of Otley, and in his time he caught many heavy dishes of trout with it. It bears some resemblance to 'Greenwell's Glory'."



Hook: Size 14 Medium Weight Wet Fly Hook (e.g. Drennan Trad Wet Fly)
 Thread: Ash Coloured (e.g. Uni-Thread 8/0 Grey)
 Body: Thread underbody wrapped with Heron herl.
 Hackle: Small light mottled feather from the underside of a woodcock wing (a feather near the 'armpit' seems to work well)

Editors note:

This fascinating article will be continued in the next edition – Paul never does anything by halves!!

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBS?

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