



Sussex Branch Newsletter



APRIL 2010

CASTING CLINIC Thursday 14th May

A casting clinic will be held on the playing fields in front of Patcham House (opposite "The Black Lion"). We hope Albert Horne will be fit enough to demonstrate how to cast a full line with what appears to be a mere flick of the wrist, but our other qualified instructors will be there anyway. We will start soon after 6.30 pm, and continue till the light fades. Just bring your rod and line and improve your skills.

FLY-TYING COMPETITION 2010

The winners of this year's competition are: -

Novice: Allan Lakin
Intermediate: Fred Wassell
Open: Paul Bond

Our esteemed Judge Albert Horne has commented on the entries and had the following to say: Generally all submitted flies were of a good standard but had one or more faults.

In the **Open** the flies either had a good hackle and poor wing / tail or *vice versa*. Judging was very close at this level.

At **Intermediate** level the submitted flies wings had not been rolled sufficiently and had separated by time of judging, which spoilt the good overall presentation.

The **Beginners'** entries were of good standard but with slightly long tails.

Many thanks to all of you who took time to enter the competition.

ENTRIES FOR OUTINGS

We know some of the events are in the dim and distant future, but it is essential that organizers know what sort of support they can expect in order to confirm arrangements with venues hosting events.

Get your bookings in now and let the organizers know as soon as possible of your intentions. Of course commitments such as holidays can change but provided sufficient notice is given, any deposit will be refunded or cheque cancelled.

Get your diaries out and note the dates from our programme – and then send off your booking form to the organisers!!

It's Not Unusual

By Paul Davis

Sometimes a fly pattern just looks right when we see it for the first time. We just know that it will catch fish. Most of us are well aware of the majority of patterns and their variants so being shocked seeing a pattern for the first time and getting the urge to give it a swim as soon as possible is quite unusual or so I thought.

I was idly tying at the vice and browsing the web for some background noise/inspiration when I came across a Rex Hunt video (yes that annoying antipodean, a bit like an Aussie John Wilson, who keeps saying Yibbada and kissing fish). He was fly fishing for brownies on a lake near Ballarat. He was using an imitative pattern – attempting to copy the mayfly larva and stick caddies that abounded in the shallows – therefore with my UK thinking cap on I was expecting the fly to be a GRHE or a PTN – but imagine my surprise when the fly was called a 'Tom Jones'.

A Tom Jones? I'd never heard of this fly but it was really getting among those wild fish and I had to find out more. I was expecting it to be just a variant of a well established fly but imagine my surprise when it turned out to be the most 'killer' fly I had seen in a long while.

The Tom Jones must be a Welsh fly – right? Wrong! It is as Aussie as Fosters and it has a very long history in its native Australia. It was developed in 1971/2 by a English ex-pat called John Lanchester who was a member of the Southern Fly Fishers. His original pattern was tied to represent Redfin fry (or Perch fry as we know them in the UK) that infested the big hole below the wall of Cairn Curran Reservoir in the State of Victoria. Since then it has become THE benchmark by which all other flies on the Victorian stillwaters are judged – so much so that G.E.P. Rowney, in his book, "Pursuit of Fly Tying", calls the fly one of the most successful flies in the book!

The Tom Jones fly is equally at home tempting fry feeders or as a searching pattern on rivers and stillwaters. It seems to be one of those wonder flies because it has a slim profile, subtle colours, and yet its fuzzy outline make it an imitator of nothing specific but seems to be a little like everything. When viewed from a fishy perspective it seems to imitate scuds (freshwater shrimp), damselfly, stick caddis etc.

The fly is so good that in the 1999 World Championship in Victoria the guide to the French team, Luke Despoja, introduced it to them and using

Luke's own version in the lake sessions, they won second place in the event!

It has many modern variants with and without bead heads as there are fishermen (rather like the GHRE) but the following are the John Lanchester original dressing (as best as I can track it down) and the most popular modern version that can be found in most Australian's wet fly boxes. I have also added in my version using a substitute for the impossible to source kangaroo/wallaby fur, that is unless someone out there has some of Skippy they would be willing to part with!

Tom Jones (John Lanchester's Original)

Hook: Longshank 8 or 10
 Thread: Black
 Tag: Red Floss
 Tail: Black Squirrel (plus 6 or so fibres of red cock hackle if rainbows were the quarry)
 Body: Olive Green Rayon Chenille
 Wing: Olive Green Kangaroo fur
 Rib: Gold Lurex



My version of John Lanchester's Original Tom Jones and photographed by Mike Guest

Tom Jones (Australian Modern Variant)

Hook: Longshank 8 – 16
 Thread: Black
 Tail: Black Squirrel
 Body: Olive Kangaroo, Wallaby or Rabbit Dubbing
 Wing: Tuft of Olive Green Kangaroo, Wallaby or Rabbit Fur
 Rib: Copper Wire



A Modern Tom Jones tied and photographed by Antony Boliancu



A Modern Tom Jones tied by John Lanchester and photographed by Philip Bailey

Tom Jones (My Variant)

Hook: Longshank Barbless 8 – 16 (size 14 Partridge Flashpoint Dry used in the photo)
 Thread: Black
 Tail: Black Squirrel
 Body: Olive Rabbit Dubbing
 Wing: Tufts of Natural Mature Seal's Fur drawn between thumb nail and forefinger to curl the hair.
 Rib: Copper Wire



My version of a Tom Jones and photographed by Mike Guest

Tying Sequence

1. Tie in the black squirrel tail.
2. Tie in the copper wire
3. Start the dubbing
4. Wind up the body to about half way along the hook shank.
5. Wind in the rib to the same point.
6. Tie in the first wing of seal's fur. The wing should be sparse
7. Wind in the second half of the dubbing
8. Wind in the rib to the same point. Tie off the the dubbing and wire rib and cut off.
9. Tie in a second wing of wallaby fur, again sparsely, leaving enough space for the head.
10. Form the head with the tying thread. Varnish the head.

Paul Davis

Peter Winder has a go at the Troutmasters

Last October I was fishing with a friend when the banter turned to competitions.

This eventually led to a challenge: "I bet you can't get to the Troutmasters' Final!" This only left me November and December to qualify – so to Duncton Mill in November where a fish of 4 lb 12 oz was enough, and on to Brick Farm in December where one of 3lb 12 oz did the trick.

This double chance was cut to one when the dates for the fish-offs came through – I had booked a holiday over the weekend of the Duncton date and so it had to be Brick Farm for a 10 am start on a bitterly cold morning with a strong north-east breeze. For those who know Brick Farm, I was pegged on the last position on the left side of the lake from the car-park towards the dam, with the wind right in my face. I chose an intermediate line with a short leader (8 ft) because of the wind, using a size 10 standard Cat's Whisker. First cast, count to five, as I think the fish will be up in the water and chasing. A pull straight away, but no firm contact. Second cast, speed up retrieve and fish on and landed! Fourth cast a second fish, and then a quiet spell. Just before the whistle to move, and the third fish is landed. Three in the first half hour! A move to the left on to the dam with the wind over my left shoulder was much more comfortable for casting. Same tactics, same fly, produces a fish first cast, and then a better fish comes adrift (with much grinding of teeth) – but keep concentration going for two more in rapid succession – finished on 50 minutes! This gains a maximum time bonus, and is followed by an anxious wait in case somebody lands a big fish. However, all is well and I run out the winner by a fair margin.

So it is now on to the final to represent Brick Farm and the Guild at Grafham Water on 10th May 2010. If anyone can give me any tips on Grafham it would be much appreciated – my e-mail is

peter.winder2@ntlworld.com or home phone 01273 245201.

Peter Winder



BLESS YOU . . .

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT LINES

Onion Skin Dye

With cheap animal fur available in the form of rabbit or squirrel some of you may be tempted into dyeing your own. If you initially do not want to go to the expense of using commercial dyes then try natural ones. I have dyed rabbit and dog fur successfully using the method below.

When you peel an onion prior to cooking, save the papery outer skins in a paper bag until you have about two pints of loosely packed skins. Give them a quick rinse in cold water to remove any soil and then put them in a pan of water just enough to cover them and then boil the skins for about 30 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow to cool. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve or cloth and save the liquor. Return the liquor to the pan and boil vigorously to reduce the volume to about ½ pint. Allow to cool and put into a sealed bottle. This is your dye.

To dye your fur, first remove all traces of grease by washing in detergent and then rinse well. Add your fur to a pan containing your dye, bring to the boil and add about a tablespoon of salt as a mordant (this fixes the dye into the fur and stops it washing out) and stir well. When you are happy with the colour then remove the fur and rinse well in cold water, dry between paper towels and then use a hair drier.

When I last used the onion skin dye it produced a lovely dark golden yellow colour to some pale dog hair. Give it a try!

Tight lines

JOHN PLOWMAN

CARP ON THE FLY Important! – Change of Dates

Due to a double booking, the original date of 21st August is not available. The owners, the Frosts, have been most helpful and have offered two alternative dates, and Paul Davis will now run two events on:

Saturday 31st July 2010

and

Sunday 15th August 2010

Those of you who have already signed up have three options: have a choice of dates, can come on both or can cancel completely.

If you intend to come on both dates and have signed up you need to do nothing – the £10 deposit you have paid will cover the cost of fishing on both days.

If you wish to cancel completely and not come on either date you need to let Paul know so that he can return your £10 deposit.

If you wish to come on one of the days and not the other, then let him know as soon as possible.

If you haven't booked yet and now want to come on either or both of the above dates, contact Paul as soon as possible and let him have the £10 deposit.

Paul's contact number is **01306 621157** or e-mail flytyer@inbox.com.



Masonic Trout & Salmon Fishing Charity

I must write to thank members of FDG Sussex Branch who have very generously given their time and experience in helping this charity this year and last. Having put an advert in your newsletter last year, a number of volunteers have come forward.

I must thank Bill Smith, Richard Foster, Terry Tullet, Tony Harrison, Phillip Ellis, Peter Winder, Mark Carr-Brown and John Plowman for at least offering their help, past and present.

The charity takes disadvantaged and disabled youngsters out for a day's fly fishing and countryside experience. The volunteers act as casters for the children 1:1 and endeavour to help the youngsters to catch a trout. They also benefit from a free meal and a chance to fish some very exclusive waters. The reward is to enjoy the company and see the delight on the youngsters faces during the day.

Brian Raw

BASS FISHING

Brian Hendry has been hard at it working out the most favourable times for the outings in which several of you have expressed interest.

The provisional dates are:

Monday 14th June – meet at 17.00 hrs
Monday 28th June – meet at 17.00 hrs
Monday 12th July – meet at 16.00 hrs
Monday 26th July – meet at 16.00 hrs
Monday 9th August – meet at 16.00 hrs
Thursday 26th August – meet at 17.00 hrs
Thursday 9th September – meet at 16.30 hrs
Meet at Carat's Café car park, on the eastern end of the southern (sea) side of Shoreham Harbour.
Back-up plan if the sea is rough is to relocate to the river at Norfolk Bridge, Shoreham – free parking at Adur Recreation ground. The tides are about one hour later at the bridge.

Show Demonstrations

We are still short of volunteers for some of the shows at which we give demonstrations. These are vital opportunities for us to attract new members, as well as being very entertaining in themselves.

The most pressing requirement is for someone to man the stand at the Sussex Angling Show at Ardingly, particularly on the Saturday, 8th May, but also on Sunday the 9th.

Tony Woolnough would also appreciate some help in setting up at Michelham Priory on Friday 9th July and a couple of demonstrators are needed for the Sunday, 11th July. Similarly the Autumn Game Fair at Ardingly needs a couple for the Saturday, 2nd October. Let John Plowman know if you can help – you don't have to be an expert – just tie the odd fly and chat to the punters!!

LIBRARIAN

We are still waiting for someone to take over the non-onerous task of looking after the Branch's stock of videos, CDs, DVDs and book. All that is required is the ability to log in and out items on loan and to make them available on Thursday evenings (the stock is held at Patcham). Surely there is a volunteer out there somewhere?

Penshurst Park Fishery

One of the positive results of attending shows was a kind invitation for the Branch to give a demo at the open day of Penshurst Park Fishery.



Brian Hendry setting up

Brian Hendry and Roy Gurney took up the invitation from Gary Turvey, their chairman, and after a slow drive through heavy mist in Ashdown Forest, arrived as the members were putting the finishing touches to their marquee on the lakeside.

The house, Penshurst Place, was virtually invisible through the mist, until the sun slowly burnt its way through, lighting it in silhouette – a truly fairylike vista. This heralded a lovely spring day for the event when the members and guests enjoyed some fine fishing and a sumptuous lunch.

We did manage to tie a few flies but spent much of the time just chewing the fat with everyone - many thanks to Gary and all the members who made us so welcome.

The syndicate is limited to fifty members, but is looking for a few new members to bring it up to strength. If anyone is looking for some exclusive fishing in these beautiful surroundings on the Kent/Sussex border, why not take a look at their website: www.penshurstflyfishing.co.uk

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