



Sussex Branch Newsletter



JULY 2011

Heathfield Show.

This is the first agricultural show of the year for the Sussex Guild and one which unfortunately can usually be relied upon to produce bad weather! 2011 was to be an exception - it did not rain!

However, the show site is at the top of a hill so there was a stiff, cool breeze blowing from behind our tent which, although we were sheltered inside, my casting demonstration in the arena was not the most elegant. The forward distance was easy but putting a tidy loop in the back cast needed careful concentration.

The day started early at eight when Bill Smith and I set up the stand. We carefully covered our tables with freshly laundered white cloths and I arranged our fly boxes while Bill's wife made our first mugs of coffee of the day. At this point I managed to completely upend my coffee mug, causing a waterfall of coffee to fill two of my fly boxes and then give a pale brown colouration to the previously pristine table cloth.

After convincing Bill's dog that his towel should be used to soak up the coffee we covered the offending damp patches with old FDG magazines and fortunately the rest of the day went well.



John and Bill on duty

With the help of the display banners from the main Guild our tying area looked impressive so Bill and I had many visitors some of whom could become members next September.

John Plowman

Casting Clinic

A brief report was in last month's edition, but was largely commenting on the weather! The following report is concerned with the technical matters and will be useful for some of us who were unable to attend :-

The casting clinic held recently at Patcham Park proved a useful exercise for those eight or so that attended and on the whole most of the attendees could cast a good length of line. Michael Brayne and Phillip Ellis, both GAIA instructors, offered advice to those that required it for about two hours.

This annual event is a great opportunity to try other rods and lines and what was noticeable was some of the rods were not balanced tackle.

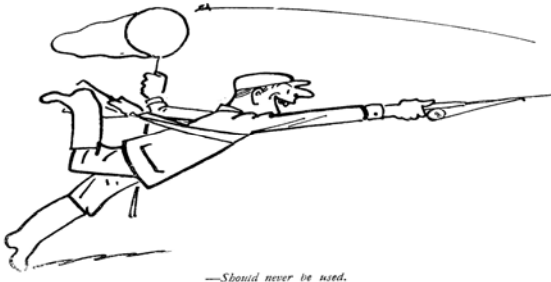
It is very important that the line matches the rod: i.e. a 6 rated weight line with a 6 weight rod not a 5 weight line with a 7 weight rod. It just tends not to work very well with the line dropping on the back cast with a lighter line. It is possible to go up a weight but be careful as you then overload the rod and potentially can break it. We were able to demonstrate by balancing line and rod how casting improved. When you own rods with different line ratings it is a good idea to put the sticky label on the reel that comes with a new line or mark with a waterproof pen so you always know you have the correct rated line.

Remember always try and have the first 10 yards of line in front of the rod tip - not more, not less. This will make all the difference as it is designed to load the rod. Instructors often suggest marking the line at the 10 yard point with a water proof pen to eliminate guessing. Recently I watched an angler at Meon Springs cursing and swearing as he walked around the fishery as he was not catching. Neither was he casting well as he was not casting with enough line in front of the rod tip to load the rod: and no, I did not help as inevitably you are told to go away in the Anglo Saxon fashion!

Phillip Ellis



Too much force—



SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOW 2011



The new tying tables

The first day was very quiet for the Country Pursuits area of the show and we had a disappointing number of visitors to the stand, resplendent with the new tables and display boards organised by our chairman, Tony Woolnough. Friday was somewhat better, with some very interested potential members registering their interest.

Saturday was much busier, with a far greater number of members of the public coming our way and a steady stream of interested viewers. It was very pleasing to have some new faces demonstrating, and a big thank you to all who kept the flag flying at this flagship show – Bill Black, Richard Burbidge, Mike Guest, Ray Bond – and of course the old hands Brian Hendry, Phillip Ellis, Tony Harrison, Jim Harris, John Plowman and yours truly.



Bill Black and Brian Hendry on duty

With two good shows under our belts this year, we look forward to recruiting more new members over the rest of the shows – do let Tony Woolnough know if you would like to join in – we always need more demonstrators and you do get in free!

Bass v Mullet

by Howard Dodsley

I'm lucky enough to live on a houseboat in the River Adur estuary at Shoreham. I am also lucky enough to have a very understanding wife therefore I tend to spend a lot of my spare time from mid April to October on the banks fly fishing for Bass and the occasional Grey Mullet which I'll come back to later. 2010 was for me the hardest year for fly fishing for Bass and I only landed 10 fish for the season compared to 76 fish for 2009. By the way, this is just from the river Adur and not the Hot Pipe! I'm pretty sure the very cold start to last season didn't help matters. It seemed to keep the fish out at sea in the warmer depths. Even the coastal fishing boats reported a drop in catches and had to get well off shore to make up their catch. I tried fishing away from my favourite spots with different flies and different tide times to try and locate the fish. I finally had a word with myself and decided "the fish just ain't there so you ain't gonna catch 'em". Bleeding obvious I hear you say but the thing is I'm used to fishing blind for the Bass if they are not showing. Usually having a good idea when they should be headed up or down stream should give you the edge. Ok, like most wild fish they are unpredictable but there is a limit to how much water flogging one does. I decided after writing too many blanks in my log book than catch returns to knock it on the head. This is where I get back to the Grey Mullet - a fish that enters the river in April and comes and goes with each tide until October. They are in abundance, one of our best fighting fish and you can see them. The Grey Mullet is mainly a bottom feeding fish and as many of you will know can be very difficult to catch especially if they can see you.

Here are a few tips I hope will help:

They might seem unbothered by a fly being repeatedly pulled past their noses, but if you are on view forget it. Therefore being stealthy and using your rivercraft are going to increase the odds of a hook up.

Then the flies, which should be fished on or close to the bottom and when mullet are in shallow water: usually in and around the margins in the evening is best.

A small box of maybe 4 or 5 patterns should do. Green gold head nymphs, Czech nymphs or anything that looks like a grub or shrimp. The Weed fly which resembles a tuft of green weed can be very good and the Bread Fly which resembles (you guessed it!).

This season I am going to experiment tying most of my Mullet flies on cranked hooks so as to flip the fly over so it can be twitched along the bottom and not snag so easily. This method should also increase the chance of a hook up too, as you are more likely to connect with the top lip of the fish. More often than not the Mullet will suck in the fly; you strike and just pull out the hook if it is pointing down. So tying on cranked hooks should work as the fish's top lip is tougher and larger than the lower. You could try Kamasan B810 extra long for this purpose. Or try

making make your own cranked hooks using trout extra long lure hooks and a pair of long nosed pliers. OK, I will report back after testing the new flies. Any thoughts? Drop me a line at howie@flyfishingsussex.com
Tight lines

Howie

Weil's Disease

This report from the "London Evening Standard" and "Daily Telegraph" should give us warning not to be too casual when fishing:

Andy Holmes, MBE, an Olympic rowing gold medallist, had developed blisters and broken skin on his hands during a 26-mile sculling marathon and is thought to have fallen into the water.

He later developed flu-like symptoms before being admitted to hospital and died aged 51 on 24th October 2010 while being treated in intensive care at King's College Hospital after suffering multiple organ failure and a brain haemorrhage.

A post mortem examination confirmed the cause of death as leptospirosis, or Weil's disease - a bacterial infection found in the urine of wild animals. One of his two brothers, Simon Holmes, a doctor, told the inquest he had stayed fit and healthy since his Olympic wins in 1984 and 1988 but called him twice for advice when he fell ill. "He talked about his fever and feeling very unwell, and in the second phone call he started talking about muscle pain."

Gabrielle Griffith, Mr Holmes's wife, said: "He and I both thought it was just flu, but as the week went on we went to an NHS walk-in centre and they thought possibly it was glandular fever. Then we went to a GP and they suggested we went to an emergency room - so we did that the next day."

Consultant neuropathologist, Dr Istvan Bodi, confirmed the diagnosis of Weil's disease during the post mortem. "I think the theory is that contaminated water got into circulation via minor injuries. The chances of recovery from this condition would be very low; it wasn't only the brain - basically every single organ was infected."

BRANCH TROPHY DAY

Don't forget – let Peter Winder have your entry form **now** for:

Brick Farm Lakes **Sunday 25th September**

Trophies for best bag, best fish, etc. The cost is £40 for a 4 fish ticket and includes a buffet lunch in the fine new lodge.

Remember, this is THE branch day when all the trophies are up for grabs!

Albert Horne – 89 not out!

We wish (belated) many happy returns to our Albert whose birthday was on 27th June. Still the envy of us all for his fly-tying skills and ability to cast a line second to none.

Chairman's Jottings

What do we know about our quarry? - Vision

One of the most interesting questions asked by fly fishermen is "can fish see?"

This has caused a number of arguments between anglers and academics. Only fish know the answer and they are unable to tell us directly but we get some clues from their behaviour.

What we know of fish vision is that they do see colour, as they have both rods and cones in their eyeballs. The clue is that if they did not see colour, how is it that they can discriminate between different coloured flies of the same type? Fish have the three chemicals in their eyes, which allow them to see the colour spectrum as we do, but also a fourth chemical to let them see in the ultra violet range. This is an important difference between what we see and what fish see. It follows that two flies which appear to us identical, may well look very different to a fish.

The eyes of fish are set at the side of the heads leaving an almost blind spot in front; this also means that they do not have binocular vision and therefore have difficulty in judging distance. Their shortcomings explain why so many fish ignore my flies!!

Viewed from underneath, the surface of the water appears to resemble a mirror. Fish have a cone shaped vision window just above their heads that allows them to see food on or near the surface in great detail. Everything beyond this cone is hidden by the mirror effect of the water surface. Fish can only identify food inside the "window".

So what does this mean to the angler?

- Fish have poor distance vision hence they may stick to wind lanes
- The colour vision of fish is superior to ours
- As fish approach a fly their vision improves greatly, hence some may turn away at the last minute.

Tight lines

Tony Woolnough



DON'T FORGET YOUR ENTRIES FOR THE "BIG FISH TROPHIES"



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 2011 for browns and 31st December for other categories.

Trophies will be presented at the Dinner.

CARP ON THE FLY Passies' Pond – 4th June 2011

Still waiting for a report – but the pictures tell the story!!!



Bill Smith with a beauty



Wayne Duerden has an armful



Even the chairman scored!



You can see why Tony Harrison is smiling



Bill Black with another

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Chairman: Tony Woolnough 01273 483833
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