



Sussex Branch Newsletter



AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2004

The McNab – the Sequel

You may remember an article which appeared in the October 2002 issue about the McNab challenge between one of our members and some American clients of his. The member concerned is Dave Champness, who has been of immense help in publishing the Newsletter by e-mail. Whilst thanking him for this, I asked if the McNab challenge would be held again this year. Here is what he replied:

“The McNab is up in the air at the moment. The yanks want (I think) a home draw. They are looking at making your own bullets and shells ??? Not really my cup of tea, but we'll see.

It has had an odd side effect, this challenge. A year or so ago, I had never tied a fly; now I think I could tackle most. I have practiced constantly with the thought that I would need to do this in the back of my car. Consequently I have simplified some patterns to great effect, especially the Salmon flies. We are off again this very weekend to the Shin, and I have tied a fair few flies to take, including a couple of fully dressed traditionals, just to see how difficult it is. It really is that difficult, but I'm not unhappy with the results.

I have thought a bit about the dynamics and adjusted some patterns to give more life in the water. We'll see if they work, and I've also used some of the materials used for trout lures to see if that has an effect. It has been a great release for my stressful job, being able switch off and concentrate on something creative, and, dare I say, on occasions beautiful too.

A whole new level of thinking about fishing has been, and is being, revealed. The need for base information has led to a great number of books and a better understanding of the fish. This has led to a fair amount of experimentation, and even better knowledge, which in turn has led to a much higher success rate and a much more satisfying approach to my fishing overall. And all from one generous afternoon with Brian Hendry!!

I have acquired, through second hand stores and internet auctions, some excellent books, others somewhat flaky in their assertions, but all making me think more about why fish do things the way they do, and what can we do to capitalise on it.

I have attached a couple of examples, one or two not too clear I'm afraid, but it will give you some idea.”



Jock Scott (hairwing)



Jock Scott (fully dressed)



Golden Gunn



Shrimp Variant

THE APRIL SILVER

By Alan Chamberlain



In April of the 2002 season, whilst fishing at my local Society lake, I was chatting with a fellow angler who had earlier caught, killed and spooned a rainbow trout. He had deposited the result of the spooning on a nearby fence post. What caught my eye when I examined the debris of insect parts was two small nymphs, still alive and struggling in the intestinal ooze.

Unlike most nymphs that I had seen with body colours in various hues of brown or green, these had silver-grey bodies with prominent orange wing buds and, unlike the Ephemeroptera family, were arched downwards.

I took one home, still alive, and made an actual size drawing, noting the colour and shape. I also made two flies copying the natural as nearly as possible. These were deposited in a flybox where, despite subsequent visits to the lake, they resided until one early Spring morning in April 2004 when I revisited the lake, full of excited anticipation. Two desperate hours later, after trying every likely fly in my box, I began to wonder whether the delights of knitting or perhaps Morris dancing might provide a more satisfying way of passing time. A further plunge into my flybox revealed, buried under a mess of fur and feathery things, the still virginal 2002 nymphs. I tied one on as a dropper, leaving a pheasant tail on the point. I cast, and the take was immediate - a brownie of about a pound had taken the 2002 nymph. Over the next hour or so I landed and released 2 further browns and 3 rainbows all on the same fly and this despite a number of changes to the point fly. My next trip produced much the same result although I lost both flies - one to a trout and one to a tree. Thankfully my drawings and notes were still intact and I was therefore able to replenish my stock.

This should be the end of the saga, but it isn't - sorry !! I was working on our stand at this year's South of England Show with Peter Buss and Roy Gurney (well, somebody has to) and was boring them with the foregoing yarn. I showed them my nymph, whereupon Roy took it to a neighbouring Entomology Stand run by Dr. Richard Osmond. Much entomological investigation as to the

species ensued over the remaining Show days and was continued afterward between Richard and Roy over the e-mail. Finally the veil was lifted. My little nymph turned out to be the pupa of the Grey Boy midge, part of the Chironomus Plumosus group of aquatic flies which hatch, often prolifically, during the day in April and early May. Furthermore, Richard found reference to it, with fine photographs of the larva, pupa and adult fly in John Goddard's *Waterside Guide*, a copy of which I now own and recommend to every flytyer.

In thinking about a name, it seemed appropriate in all the circumstances to dub my nymph The April Silver. Try it early next season, fishing it almost stationary. I'd be really interested to hear how you fair.

The tying is simple and the materials are as follows :-

1. Hook: Mustad Shrimp/Caddis Size 12
2. Thread : Black or red
3. Tail: 2/3 Pheasant tail fibres tied short 3-4mm
4. Body: Silver grey floss
5. Ribbing: Black or red tying thread.
6. Wing-case: Orange goose biots
7. Thorax: Peacock herl

Editor's note:

The short tails are hidden behind the blue clip in the photograph.

GAME FAIR OUTING

A full coach-load of 49 members and friends duly set off at crack of dawn (well, it seemed like it to me!) and after an uneventful journey joined the five-mile traffic jam leading to Blenheim Palace. However, once inside, we were treated to one of the best ever shows – the stands seemed to go on forever! The fishing village was busy all day, and as our Chairman reports elsewhere, was fruitful for the Guild. Certainly the trade stands seemed to be doing good business, and some of our members returned with considerably lighter wallets, laden down with those “must have” items they had survived without for years!

The shooting section was particularly lively – there was the sound of non-stop gunfire reminiscent of those Hollywood battles between cowboys and Indians from early morning till evening – at least fishing is reasonably silent! The strength of country sports was amply demonstrated – some 150,000 attended the fair, which should keep the interfering politicians something to think about!

The vast expanse of the exhibits and demonstrations was too much for your editor to cover fully, and it would have been difficult for anyone to have seen everything on one day. We are now looking forward to next year's show, which will be at Beauvoir Castle, Leicestershire and Paul Bond is taking bookings now – despite the early start necessary of about 5.15 am! Many thanks indeed to Paul, who managed to provide seemingly endless prizes for the draw on the way back.

FRESHWATER CHALLENGE CHALK SPRINGS 2004



20 lb of happiness for Peter Winder

Some remarkable fish were taken at this year's Challenge, when 20 fished, taking 47 fish in all with a total weight of about 176 lb. Only 4 blanked in good fishing conditions – overcast but no rain and with the usual crystal clear water. Everyone enjoyed the generous barbecue provided by Chris Croucher, ably assisted by Lee Redman, and once again superbly organised.

Full results are:

Best rainbow:	Philip Ellis	10 lb
Best browns:	Peter Winder	20 lb
	Ian Dunk	15 lb 4 oz
	Andy Dunk	8 lb 13 oz

Best bag:

1 st	Peter Winder	4 fish	28 lb 14 oz
2 nd	Ian Dunk	2 fish	19 lb 8 oz
3 rd	Brian Hill	4 fish	15 lb

The prize of a tee-shirt for "Best blank of the day" was awarded to Paul Daltrey for honouring his commitment despite a last minute family crisis, and fishing only till 11 o'clock, missing lunch to boot!



Another happy angler



Steve Chow in action



Ian Dunk with his fine brown taken on a gold-head daddy

ASHBOURNE 2004



Lunchtime barbecue

Ten members ventured forth to darkest East Sussex to visit Asbourne at the end of June to sample this lovely water, situated in lovely surroundings and far from the noise of traffic. Some found it more difficult to get into contact with the hard fighting fish than others, but all had success, including a fine brown taken by Paul Bond. Many thanks to Doug Chalmers, the host, who provided a splendid spread with lots of liquid refreshment. This is going to be a must for future seasons!

MATCH v. CRAWLEY FLYFISHERS

This was the first friendly match against our old friends from Crawley F F and the first outing to Boringwheel Trout Fishery for the Branch. Unfortunately the weather clerk did not look too kindly on this, and the morning rain, wind and little sun was not good for fishing, though it was sunnier in the afternoon.

Both teams arrived at about 8 am to a mixed reception of weather, but the owners made us very welcome with coffee before we started.

Sussex won the toss and decided to take the boats for the morning session (that's the last time I'll take notice of the regulars who fish Boringwheel!).

The fishing from the boats was steady but not great, whereas nothing was being caught from the bank, so we thought we were in for a good win.

Changeover was at lunchtime, and again coffee served by the hosts in the gazebo overlooking the lake.

Now for the afternoon we were on the bank and Crawley in the boats – what happens? Crawley find all the fish and we struggle all afternoon.

Thus the result was a win for Crawley on this first encounter with a total weight of 94 lb 6 oz against Sussex total of 57 lb 4 oz.

Well done Crawley – despite the weather a great time was had by all. The fishery was great and I would like to hold another competition there.

John Cooper

MATCH v. ROTHER 5th SEPTEMBER
More volunteers are required for this match at Duncton Mill. John doesn't want to have to cancel again due to lack of support. Contact the organiser, Jim Harris (01444 454965) or John Cooper (01903 813376) **NOW!**

Chairman's Chat

We are rapidly approaching the tying season again and it appears that we may have a good number of new members for the classes. The branch has been represented at a number of events this summer. It is by attending local shows and events that the profile of the branch can be raised and new members recruited.

Not all events go as planned. I recently attended a pleasant country show at Michleham Priory with Brian Hendry. Things did not get off to a great start as there was a huge thunderstorm above us for an hour preceding the opening of the show. Michael Brayne did well to hide his carbon fibre rods during this period as he was supposed to be giving casting advice.

The Sunday was different; it just poured with rain all morning. Tying flies in Wellingtons and anoraks was the order of the day. Still, we generated considerable interest with the brave souls who did turn up. It is always a pity when all of the preparation is spoilt because of the weather.

The trip to the Game Fair seems to have been a popular excursion. I met a number of the branch on the Guild stand. The crowds were bigger than ever. Even here we managed to find people interested in fly tying who lived in Sussex, so we should see them in September as well.

We have a full programme of events throughout the winter; Paul has worked hard to book some of the top flight speakers to come to Sussex. Your support would be appreciated.

There are still a number of outings arranged before we are forced indoors. There is still time to catch that fish of a lifetime or even to get the story ready of the "one that got away". If you have put your name down for an outing please ensure that you turn up on time as a great deal of preparation has been done to see that these outings are a success.



It's that time again!!!!

Yet another year passes – and subscriptions are due again (on September 1st)! With this newsletter is your renewal form – you will note that subscriptions are unchanged again, for yet another year. Please return as soon as possible to Roy Gurney

THE NEW SEASON

As highlighted by the subscription reminder, the new tying sessions recommence on

Thursday, 30th September at 8 pm
At Patcham Community Centre
Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton BN1 8TA

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