

# The Flydressers Guild Sussex Branch



## Newsletter

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Flydressers Guild

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### Fishing License Renewals

Have you updated your fishing license yet.

### Birthday Presents at Avington.

As a gift for a "zero" birthday friends clubbed together to buy me a 4 fish ticket for Avington fishery which had been on my bucket list for some time. For those few who don't know, Avington is famed for its clear waters (it's fed by a carrier of the Itchen) and big fish,

particularly its massive browns. I think the record currently stands at 27 lb, so a 4 fish ticket comes with a hefty price tag of £130. I had prepared by watching numerous videos, particularly from clearwater fishery specialist Martyn Williams. His patterns on first glance appear very gaudy and very heavily weighted but the videos and reviews attested to their efficacy at Avington, Rockbourne and Dever etc. So, I tied up a small boxful which could have been mistaken for Xmas decorations. (See below)



I visited the fishery late on the Sunday to get a clear idea of the layout and the one chap still fishing with his son, said the fish had been keen and he had taken 4 up to 8lb and 2 from the catch and release lake.

To make sure I could have an early start I stayed overnight in the Premier Inn at Winnal on the outskirts of Winchester, which is about a 20-minute drive from the fishery. Avington does do its own accommodation but you need deep pockets and it's really aimed at families or groups of anglers. Anyway, I arrived with plenty of time for an 8.00 am start and it being a Monday there were only 2 other anglers one of whom was having lessons and the other a regular who had pulled in a 17 lb brownie the previous week. Guess which one I followed around? It was cloudy early on and hence even with polarised glasses it was tricky to see fish in Lake 1. I had a few desultory follows but decided to move on to Lake 2 which had apparently fished well the previous day. The clear water encourages weed growth and it takes a little time to work out the depth you can fish to avoid too much snagging but get down to the level fish are cruising at. This is very much a sight fishing water but if it is cloudy and or windy this is not so easy to do



and unfortunately these conditions happened periodically during the day.

## Lake 2 at Avington

My first fish came to somewhat "blind casting" but in an area where I had seen some movement. It took a hot-headed tungsten beaded Blue Flash Damsel, with an emphasis on the blue as shown below.

I somewhat underestimated its weight as Avington fish tend to be very deep in comparison to their length. I had bullied it away from the weed beds it had been cruising through but it careered around the bankside reeds for a while before I thankfully netted it. Although the fishery stipulates a minimum 6lb BS leaders, I would recommend 10lb as a better bet to cope with the weight of the fish and the risk of weeding. I used 10 lb BS Seaguar Soft Plus which has a smaller diameter than many fluorocarbons of the same BS. It's always a good feeling to get a fish in the bag early in the morning and it later transpired to be 6 lb 5 oz in weight- not a bad start!

There was something of a lull for about an hour and a half as the fish seemed very wary of flies – perhaps due to heavier fishing over the weekend. I did miss one sight take, attempting to strike when I should have just continued the retrieve. The other angler had gone to the far side of the lake to fish around a large oak tree. This is a known hotspot with a steep drop off to deeper water and he said that when the sun came out you could see about 10- 15 fish going up to double figures, podded up here. However, they seemed to be rather fly shy, occasionally following but turning away at the last moment. Having joined him on that side of the lake he said he did not mind me fishing close by as there were plenty of fish in the area. I changed my fly to the Copper Firebird Stalker shown below. It was only possible to flick the fly out a short distance with

a side cast, due to the low branches and then keep the fly moving at the end of a very short retrieve by pulling it on a fixed line parallel to the bank.



I watched a fish follow and take with only inches left on the pull and after a spirited tussle a 4 pounder came to the net. My fellow, rather frustrated, angler accepted my offer of one of the successful flies from me but as I was demonstrating my technique from the previous catch- bang another take. This one was obviously a better fish and I could do little as it pulled line from the reel and careered off parallel to the bank, my line running under my fellow angler's. There commenced a precarious ducking under his raised rod with very little room to spare between the tree trunk and the water. After picking up extra weight from the weed it had swum through, I had to ask the chap if he could net it, as my net was about 25 yards away. Fortunately, I was able to steer it into his net and banked what proved to be a 7 lb 8 oz rainbow. Just to rub salt into the wound I asked him to take this photo but hey he'd had a 17 pounder the week before so this was chicken feed!



**Best fish of the day.**

With 3 fish in the bag by 12.00 it felt like a good point to stop for lunch. My compatriot was getting a lot of interest on the fly I had given him but they were still coming short, so eventually he moved away to try out other areas of Lake 2. After lunch I persevered at the oak tree for a little while but did not get any takes so moved back round to the end of the lake. I think this is important at Avington as the fish can become quite mobile, so if you can see no fish or get no interest in an area within 15 minutes or so, move on. The sunny spells had become somewhat shorter which made stalking for the big browns a bit of a non-starter so I concentrated on getting my final fish in a swim where I could see greater activity. The final fish was great fun as it spotted my fly, chased from a distance and took all in plain sight – a classic clear water catch and another 4 pounder in the bag.



**A weighty bag. Kindly conveyed back to the lodge on the quad bike!**



**The C & R Lake- a relaxing spot for other halves?**

As it was still only about 2.00 pm, I spent 30 minutes on the catch and release lake and managed to winkle out a further 2 fish around the 2 lb mark. I had a look in the carrier where apparently there are 1 or 2 escapee browns but with the long drive back to Brighton in prospect, I weighed in, gutted my fish (they have a wet room set aside for this on site) and set off for home. Whilst I hadn't managed to land one of Avington's giants, I had really enjoyed my day and come away with a very satisfying bag of fish. What a nice birthday present! Your turn next Keith?

**AW 16 4 25**

### **SFDG V OVSF at Lakedown - PB's and Pierced Ears**

What an unusual outing! First and foremost, as we finally defeated a somewhat depleted Ouse valley team. We agreed that as OVSF could unfortunately only muster 6 anglers to our 12, the top 6 catches for SFDG would be compared to theirs to work out the result. It

was a beautiful morning but the fishing was a little tricky & only myself, Des Watson from OVSF and Steve Smith managed to get our three bag before lunch at 12.30. The highlight of the morning being a fine 6lb brownie for SFDG debutant Steve Matthews. A first ever brownie for him on the fly - what a start!



The “highlight” of the break was some minor surgery performed by Des on Peter Winder’s ear. Pete had decided to add some ear piercing to his left ear in the form of a fly firmly stuck in it. After discussion of various possibilities such as a visit to Uckfield’s Minor injuries unit or, less generously, complete amputation, Des produced the strange looking equipment which he said had performed removal of stray hooks on other occasions.



The offending article with some of Pete’s claret!

Pete rather bravely (some would say foolishly) said he would prefer an attempt at removal rather than a potentially long wait at a hospital. With several rather anxious onlookers Des performed the removal ,not without some pain for Pete it has to be said. He was then administered with some plasters to stem the flow of blood by one of the bar staff and stoically went on to fish through the afternoon. Joshing aside the episode did highlight the need to have a decent first aid kit on hand. Fishing improved a little in the afternoon particularly for Andy Wood, who had a frustrating blank session in the morning. He went to the southerly end of Lake 2 which was an area which had proved fruitful for others in the morning and using a stalking bug provided by yours truly, caught his 3 fish. However, amongst these was a personal best rainbow of 12 lb shown below! Well done Andy!



Several others who had struggled in the morning picked up fish in the afternoon, such that by weigh in time our top six totalled 70 lb 9 oz compared to 50 lb 2 oz for OVSF. Andy obviously took best fish and was given a 2 fish ticket prize. Des achieved best bag (Andy couldn't have 2 prizes) rewarded with a six pack of Lakedown beer ,Steve Matthews took home a nice bottle of red for his best brown (the only one of the day) and we all caught a fish. Well done everyone!