



Sussex Branch Newsletter



APRIL 2020

LOCKDOWN

Welcome to the world of make-believe – or is it make do and mend? I suppose this gives everyone an opportunity to get flies tied and that tackle cleaned, repaired and sorted and ready to go.

Sadly we have had to cancel all events (or have had them cancelled for us) and our programme looks rather emasculated for the near future.

Just for the record the following events have suffered so far (and no doubt more to come):

Autumn Auction

Thursday night meetings (including the end of season gathering)

Chairman's Day

Brass Monkeys

Match v. Salmon & Trout (Duncton)

Match v. Hastings FF (Powdermill)

South of England Show

All fisheries have been requested to close so:

NO FISHING

Watch this space for future news!!!

out of the smoke” and away from the current pressures of his job in the EA.

I decided on Springhill Fishery at Pembury, partly as it was about half way between me and Sam's place in Forest Hill, but also as an opportunity to try out a venue which was an earlier abortive outing versus another club and is only about an hour or less away for many in SFDG.

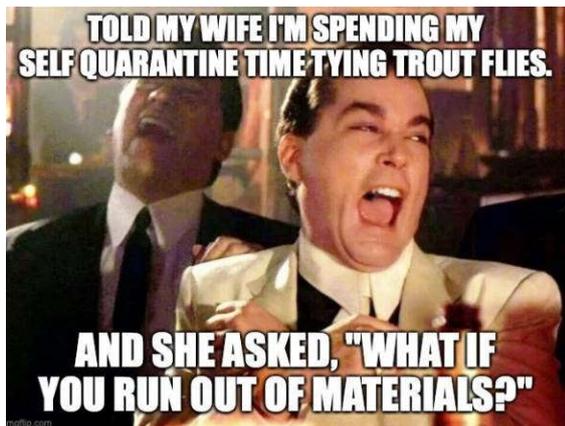
We arrived at about 8.30 - the lodge car park overlooks a beautiful valley with lots of birdlife which Lee the owner encourages with feeders - I saw chaffinch, sparrow, goldfinch, tits, starling and robin in just 5 minutes and you could hear a woodpecker in the background. However, as the lakes are set in a quite a steep sided valley, access for disabled anglers would be problematic and it was pretty dicey for us on occasions as it was so wet but perhaps this might be less of a problem in a “normal” spring.



The lovely setting of the main lake at Springhill

We decided upon the “all waters” 4 fish ticket at £40 pp. This allows you to fish the main lake and the two small ponds stocked only with browns (there is a third one, but it is out of commission at present with a leak), plus £2 extra for the pot for the tagged fish; Lee brought us out a coffee while we set up. There are a variety of ticket options, including some catch and release, though I do dislike it when there is a time limit (4 hrs) on 2 fish tickets. Picking the 2 fish plus 2 catch and release could have been a good option to reduce the pressure on a less experienced angler and allow a more relaxed approach when the weather is changeable.

The main lake, with rainbows only, is about 120 m x 50m at it's widest, with about a dozen well made casting platforms with sawn log seats. The west side of the lake has plenty of casting room but is more restricted in places on the east side;



Sam's Springhill Success

At something of a loss as to what to get my eldest son for Christmas I had the inspired idea of giving a fishing voucher for a day's fly fishing with Mr Wells Snr (OK some would say the wooden spoon option).

As his last 2 outings with me had resulted in blanks, Sam was somewhat dubious about his chances but delighted at the prospect of a day

depths run to about 12 ft. The water was a little coloured but not overly so.

We started on the platforms nearest the southern end, with Sam on a full floater and me with a midge tip and both had takes within minutes on damsels but failed to hook up. This was something of a false dawn as takes dried up quickly. So after about 30 minutes I tried a Di-3 with a Growler and hooked twice in quick succession, losing one and being broken by another. However, perseverance with this setup eventually produced a 1 ½ lb fish for me.



AW's first

I then decided to move down to the north end of the lake which the wind had been blowing into all morning, figuring this might create a concentration of fish. Casting across the wind near the reeds I quickly hooked into a better fish which swiftly dragged my line into the reeds and deposited my fly there! However, knocks and nips were encouraging and eventually produced two more fish to the midge tip and damsel, including my best of the day at 3lb 2oz.

Meanwhile, having had a briefing on how to fish a slow sinker, to my delight Sam had landed a couple of trout from my original platform so the duck had been broken!



A sight for sore eyes for Sam

I then spent an hour pottering around the two "brownie ponds" with not a hint of a fish. This may have been a poor day to judge these as there was a lot of colour in the water on one of the ponds and this early in the season there was little insect life to imitate. However, those I talked to were of the opinion that these were not easy to fish and were best approached with more imitative flies in later spring/summer. So I went to the east side of the main lake and took my final fish on the Di-3 /Growler combination

with a very slow figure of eight retrieve. Sam carried on for about another 30 minutes or so with no takes but the improvement in his casting technique was clear during this period and he was just made up to have some fish in the bag. So we left at around 3.30 with Sam having greater confidence, improved casting, a little more knowledge of varying his approach and keenness to go again.

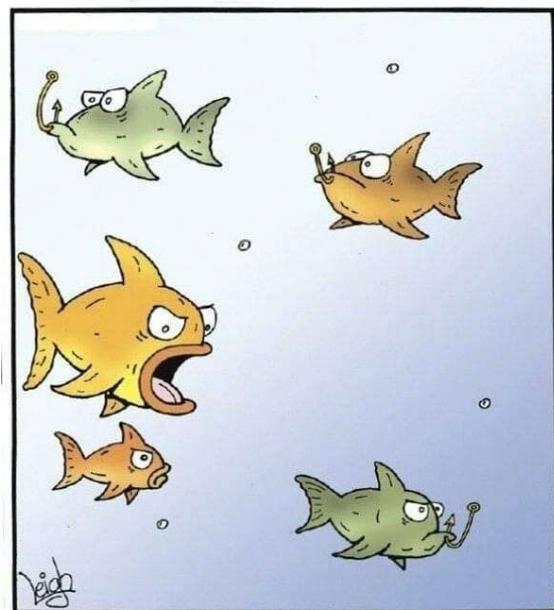
As for the fishery the jury is still out. Whilst I managed my 4 fish, it was hard work. I had been told that there were plenty of fish as stocking had taken place the day before and this may have had some bearing on fish behaviour. There were short bouts of what I call "mackerel madness" when a fish is hooked from amongst a pod and then some of the rest charge about snapping at flies, but this subsided quickly and generally fish were hard to tempt.

Of the 6 or 7 anglers around, no-one was pulling them in at very regular intervals and other catches were mainly to damsels or small black buzzers but the fish were high quality, fully finned and fought hard.

It's perhaps harsh to judge Springhill on one visit at the end of a very wet winter. Lee and his wife are very welcoming and knowledgeable and when the sun came out in the afternoon you could see what a lovely spot this would be on a late spring/early summer day. There are plenty of nice pubs as well within a short drive.

So after some useful advice from Lee's wife, Sam and I wended our way to the Half Way House at Brenchly to sink a well deserved pint of excellent Kentish ale - a great end to a successful outing.

Alan Wells



"I don't care what all the other kids are doing, you're *not* getting your lip pierced!"

FOUND AT LOLZombie.com

Chairman's Chat

Here we are again in Romania, on the river Gilort in Albeni. Again this is not a Commission but a request for help, i.e. support at no cost! I am not sure that they will want our support as I had to condemn this design as completely inappropriate.



Proposed Rock Ramp

For a start the pass is in the wrong place, during a flood, many fish will swim past the entrance to congregate at the toe of the weir; they naturally wish to get as far upstream as possible. By eye the pass is too steep, it should be at a slope of no steeper than 1 in 20. No resting pools are shown; these should be at 1.0 m changes in head (i.e. steps).

There was no mention of river flows of Q95 (when fish start to migrate), Q10 (when fish stop migrating and take refuge from floods) or Mean Annual Flow to identify 5% to 10% which should be the pass flow to attract fish.

As I have said before, to the layman, rock ramps seem simple structures, whereas they are very difficult to design hydraulically and structurally. Imagine trying to predict water velocities between those rocks. Other people's rock ramps have washed downstream, due to lack of fixture to the bed (we concrete the rocks in), flow through the rocks, rather than over (we seal the bed of the ramp with concrete). Calculating the size of the rocks which may weigh tonnes, and then lifting and placing such large rocks with precision is not easy. If rocks are on an existing concrete apron, they have to be secured with 5.0 tonne stainless steel chains. Not just a pile of rocks after all!!

My latest news is that our remaining Client, now thinks that we (me) should have a "head to head" - in Edinburgh!

Tony W

Ray's Ramblings

I've been writing these Ramblings for the Sussex Branch for more than eighteen months now but I didn't realise how far they were circulating till I talked with a friend on a Grayling fishing trip to Wherwell a while ago and he said that his branch were forwarded a copy each month - it's nice to know that they're getting a wider audience and so far I've not had any adverse comments - though perhaps there have been and Roy is just not telling me.

You may recall that last month I wrote about some quick tie flies - one of which used small red glass beads and I found that to get them on the hook I had to use barbless hooks. I have for many years tied all my Grayling flies on barbless hooks using originally the Knapek hooks and later the Hanak range. In any events where catch and release was compulsory such as the European events or the Association of Major Flyfishing Clubs matches I simply debarbed my normal flies.

I remember at the first European event in France many years ago that at my first peg, fishing it for thirty five minutes, I hooked twelve fish and landed only three. I soon learned how to land fish using barbless hooks after that. On a more recent AMFC match at Grafham Water we could catch eight fish, killing the first four and then releasing four more using barbless or debarbed hooks. Using barbed flies I killed four but also lost three fish but after I debarbed I caught another four that were returned without losing another fish. And those quick tie flies that I mentioned last month were all on barbless flies that were recommended to me by a friend who fishes a lot of competitions and now only uses barbless flies for all of his fishing.

They were tested on a recent fishing trip and while using them I landed three fish and lost one. To get my fourth fish I changed to a pattern on a barbed hook and on that I lost two fish before I landed my last one. So based on these results barbless flies seem to have the edge and they're certainly easier to remove if they get stuck in a net or in your flesh. There is of course the issue that barbless flies, because they have no barb, penetrate deeper and so could cause more damage to a fish. So perhaps I'll just carry on using my barbed flies and debarb them when I'm on catch and release. I certainly don't relish the prospect of tying up my complete collection of flies on barbless hooks!

Ray Burt

End of "season" gathering 2nd April

Another victim of the times – and with it the draw for the **rod-raffle**. Rest assured this will happen sometime – possibly on the first Thursday in September instead of a speaker.

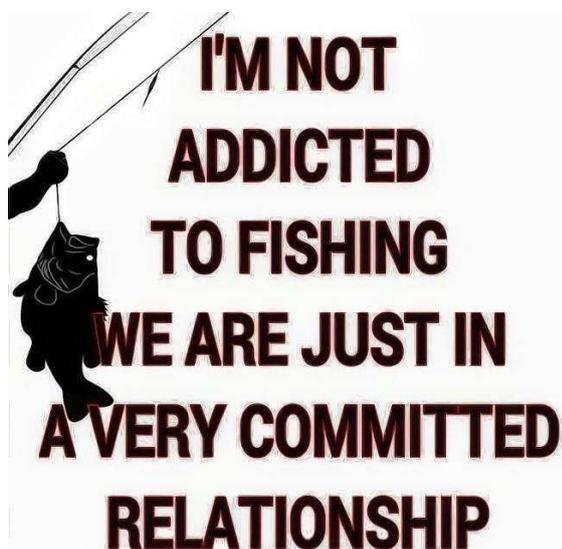
Copper Wire

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, Australian scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 200 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 150 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the Aussies, in the weeks that followed, an American archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet and, shortly after, a story was published in the New York Times: "American archaeologists, finding traces of 250-year-old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network 50 years earlier than the Australians".

One week later a Council in Essex, reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in Colchester, Jack Lucknow, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely buggar all. Jack has therefore concluded that 250 years ago, Britain had already gone wireless."

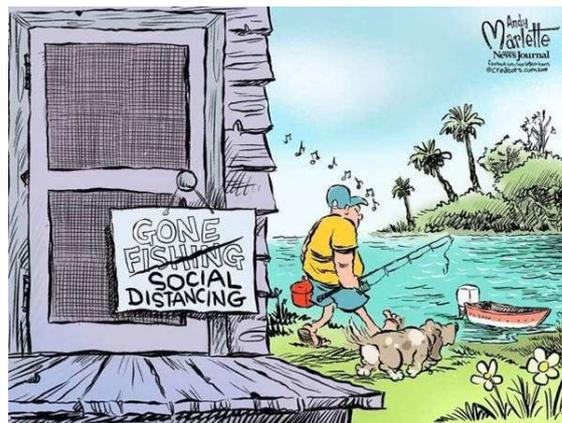
Just makes you bloody proud to be British, doesn't it?



Auction 19th March

As you know we had to postpone this Auction and we will be advising in due course as and when we can re-instate it. If the worst comes to the worst, we will put it in as the Autumn Auction in October (coronavirus permitting!).

If in the meantime vendors wish to withdraw any items we have listed, let Tony Harrison or Roy Gurney know.



DIARY OF A POMMIE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

August 31 - Just got transferred with work from Leeds UK to our new home in Karratha, Western Australia. Now this is a town that knows how to live! Beautiful, sunny days and warm, balmy evenings. I watched the sunset from a deckchair by our pool yesterday. It was beautiful. I've finally found my new home. I love it here.

September 13 - Really heating up now. It got to 31 today. No problem though. Living in air-conditioned home, driving air-conditioned car. What a pleasure to see the sun every day like this. I'm turning into a sun-worshipper – no blasted rain like back in Leeds!!

September 30 - Had the back yard landscaped with tropical plants today. Lots of palms and rocks. No more mowing lawns for me! Another scorcher today, but I love it here. It's Paradise!

October 10 - The temperature hasn't been below 35 all week. How do people get used to this kind of heat? At least today it's windy though. Keeps the flies off a bit. Acclimatizing is taking longer than we expected.

October 15 - Fell asleep by the pool yesterday. Got third degree burns over 60% of my body. Missed three days off work. What a dumb thing to do. Got to respect the old sun in a climate like this!

October 20 - Didn't notice Kitty (our cat) sneaking into the car before I left for work this morning. By the time I got back to the car after work, Kitty had died and swollen up to the size of a shopping bag and stuck to the upholstery. The car now smells like Whiskettes and cat poo. I've learned my lesson though: no more pets in this heat.

October 25 - This wind is awful. It feels like a giant blow dryer. And it's hot as hell! The home air conditioner is on the blink and the repair man charged \$200 just to drive over and tell me he needs to order parts from Perth The wife & the kids are complaining.

October 30 - The temperature's up around 40 and the parts still haven't arrived for the air conditioner. House is an oven so we've all been

sleeping outside by the pool for 3 nights now. Bloody \$600,000 house and we can't even go inside. Why the hell did I ever come here?

November 4 - Finally got the air-conditioner fixed. It cost \$1,500 and gets the temperature down to around 25 degrees, but the humidity makes it feel about 35.

November 8 - If one more person says 'Hot enough for you today?' I'm going to throttle him! By the time I get to work, the car radiator is boiling over, my clothes are soaking wet and I smell like baked cat. This place is the end of the Earth.

November 9 - Tried to run some errands after work, wore shorts, and sat on the black leather upholstery in my car. I lost 2 layers of flesh, & all the hair on the backs of my legs, now the car smells like burnt hair, and baked cat.

November 10 — The Weather report might as well be a recording. Hot and sunny. Hot and sunny, Hot and sunny. It never changes! It's been too hot to do anything for 2 months and the weatherman says it might really warm up next week.

November 15 - Doesn't it ever rain in this damn place? Water restrictions will be next, so my \$5,000 worth of palms might just dry up and blow into the pool. The only things that thrive in this hell-hole are the flies. You don't dare open your mouth for fear of swallowing half a dozen of the little b's!

November 20 - Welcome to HELL! It got to 45 degrees today. Now the air conditioner's gone in my car. The repair man came to fix it and said, 'Hot enough for you today?' I wanted to shove the car up his arse. Anyway, had to spend the \$2,500 mortgage payment to bail me out of jail for assaulting the stupid sod. Karratha! What kind of sick, demented idiot would want to live here!

December 1 - WHAT!!!! The FIRST day of summer!!!! You're kidding me!

2019 TROPHIES

Having had our end of season shindig cancelled, it means that presentation of trophies will be delayed until the current situation changes. With luck we will be able to do this on the first day of the "new" season on September 3rd at the same time as the Rod Raffle Draw.

The honours list is as follows:

Peter West Trophy - Biggest Rainbow from Sussex water

Bill Black Northbrook Farm 10 lb
Tony Harrison Chalk Springs 10 lb

Brown Trout Cup - Biggest Brown from Sussex water

Tony Harrison Chalk Springs 7 lb 10 oz

Members' Reservoir Plate - Best Fish from Sussex Reservoir

Andy Wood Arlington 5 lb 10 oz

Frank Darrah Memorial Trophy – Pairs

Sally & Roy Page 11 fish – 27 lb 10 oz

Charity Pairs

Cancelled

NEW – Jack Jupp Memorial Shield* – best blue from Sussex water

Tony Harrison Northbrook Farm 7 lb 4 oz

Branch Trophy Day

Jimmy James Memorial Trophies – Best Bag

Bill Black 6 lb 10 oz

Peter Winder 6 lb 8 oz

Plowman Trophy – Best fish

Peter Winder 2 lb 12 oz

Best Brown, Tiger or Brook trout

None caught

Gemma Winder Shield – 4 lakes challenge

Not accomplished

Stillwater Challenge – Chalk Spring

Jim White Pairs

Ray Burt & Tony Harrison 18 lb 14 oz

Best Fish

Paul Davis 3 lb 10 oz (brown)

Best Bag

Tony Harrison 9 lb 12 oz

Brass Monkeys Day 2020

Cancelled

* The Jack Jupp Memorial Shield was originally awarded for our outing to Ashbourne. As this venue is no longer available, we have reallocated the trophy accordingly.



FRENCH CONNECTION

I have heard from **Terry Tullett** who sends his regards to all who remember him – he is most frustrated by the French lockdown which is similar to ours, save they have to fill in a form if they go anywhere, which also bans him from crossing a field to the river he can see from his house. It does not seem to occur to the authorities that the last thing an angler wants is anyone near him whilst fishing!

I also had a letter from **John Rush**, sent at the end of January, and written whilst prone in his hospital bed after further surgery on his back.

I spoke to him (on 1st April) and he cheerfully answered, coming in from mowing his extensive lawn! He had final surgery on 14th March and is now regaining full mobility thanks to a series of titanium rods anchored to his coccyx – without pain!

In his letter – penned before the Covid-19 saga – he wrote:

“...To things of a greater priority, I've got all of my fishing gear up tight and together ready for the new open season in March. My wife has bought me a magnificent anglepoise lamp, so whilst recuperating I will be tying some new flies to entice those little beauties onto my hook.

I've been laying in bed making a mental note of where I've seen those never-caught fighting fish swimming in the River Vezere, within 10 miles of our 12 acre farm, bordered by the river.

If any of your chums in the club are interested in coming down here for a holiday, with or without their family, to fish the river is free once they've got their permit, then get my phone number from Roy, get a cheap flight and I will give you any info for a cheap different kind of holiday as there is so much to see and do in the Dordogne – known as the land of a thousand chateaux. Living here is a totally different way of life – don't take my word for it but get yourselves out here.”

John's details are:

John Rush
La Ferme Baillard
24620 Peyzac/Le Moustier
France

Phone: 0033 553 501316

As you now have more time to read we repeat this offer to help fill the time!

“Flyfishing and Fly Tying”

Phillip Ellis has a full collection of “Fly Fishing & Fly Tying” in bound binders since its inception in 1990. If anyone is interested in a binder or two let him know. Donations to the branch. He is trying to clear out his loft!

Phillip also writes:

If members are at home tying and need specific help with a pattern or short of materials, I for one happy to help over the phone, email or post.

I am sure that others will also be willing to assist, so if you wish to contact a particular person, contact Roy Gurney on 01273 581519 or e-mail roygurney33@gmail.com if you want contact details

LET'S BE CLEAR. THE LOCKDOWN MEANS NO FISHING. FOR NOW WE CAN'T LEAVE OUR HOMES FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE REASONS STATED BELOW. STAY SAFE

People in the UK will only be allowed to leave their home for the following purposes:

Shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible.

One form of exercise a day – for example a run, walk, or cycle – alone or with members of your household

Any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

Travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home

Police will have the powers to enforce the rules, including through fines and dispersing gatherings. To ensure compliance with the instruction to stay at home, the government will:

Close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship
Stop all gatherings of more than two people in public – excluding people you live with
Stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals

Parks will remain open for exercise, but gatherings will be dispersed.

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Chairman:	Tony Woolnough	01273 483833
Secretary:	Simon Rickard	07799 484166
Treasurer:	Bill Black	01323 763807
Membership:	Roy Gurney	01273 581519

Editor: ROY GURNEY

29 Capel Avenue, PEACEHAVEN, BN10 8NB

E-MAIL: fdgsussex@gmail.com

Visit our web site

Sussexflydressers.org.uk