



Sussex Branch Newsletter



MARCH 2018

Salmon Fly Workshop 17th February

I had the pleasure of attending the Salmon Fly-tying workshop last Saturday and thought I would share my reflections on what proved to be a most enjoyable day.

On arrival at Patcham, some time before 9 am the room was already set up with nine tying positions, forming three sides of a square. Alan Middleton was set up on the fourth side facing in. There were two envelopes at each position, carefully pre-loaded with the ingredients for the two flies that we would be tying, The Blue Baron and The Heather Dog.

I managed to find an image of the Baron on line, but couldn't find anything for the Dog pattern that we tied on the day. However, as we all agreed, the Dog's body of alternating red and black chenille resembled Dennis the Menace's jumper! Oh, and it was considerably easier to tie!



The Blue Baron (from the internet - I'm too embarrassed to use a photo of my effort)

Once we had assembled our tools and threaded our bobbins, The Blue Baron was first up. The teaching format for the day worked really well. While we gathered around his table, Alan would demonstrate the tying process as bite size chunks of 3 to 4 actions. Once we had asked any questions, we would return to our own vices and replicate what we had seen. Meanwhile, Alan would walk round offering help and encouragement. The pace was suitably relaxed and although I was probably the least experienced tier – by some margin – I never felt rushed or too far out of my depth. As well as sharing his vast skill and knowledge, Alan also kept us entertained throughout the day with his

many humorous and colourful experiences of fishing, fly tying and, dare I say, life in general!

Now, I have heard the term 'built wings' before, but other than noting the look of anguish on those in-the-know, I hadn't really either researched or understood what this technique involved. However, my curiosity and anticipation had been built up through the first part of the morning by such comments as 'if you think this part is tricky, wait until we start the wing'. When, finally, Alan demonstrated the process of splitting and re-joining small groups of fibres from different feathers, I was quite simply amazed that it was even possible to do what I was seeing with my own eyes. Unsurprisingly, Alan made it look easy. However, it probably took me an hour to assemble a couple of wings that looked vaguely passable. Worse than that was the next part of the process, where we mounted said wing. Needless to say, they soon started to fall apart once subjected to the slightest of even careful handling. Without doubt the trickiest thing I have so far tried in my short history of tying.

The Baron was completed on schedule just in time for a lunch break. I now understand why such patterns can take many hours to tie and, additionally, why you would not even consider putting such a delicate thing of beauty on the end of a fly rod! Although I would be the first to admit that there was plenty of room for improvement on my own fly, it was OK and there was a definite sense of achievement on completing such an intricate creation.

The afternoon fly, the Heather Dog, while still challenging for me, was a doddle compared to Blue Baron. No built wings and some decidedly un-exotic ingredients such as chenille! This took less than two hours and we concluded the days tying before 4 pm.

I'm sure the rest of the attendees would join me in thanking Tony Harrison for coordinating the activity and, of course, Alan Middleton for giving up his time and knowledge over the course of a thoroughly enjoyable and instructional day. I'm looking forward in anticipation to next year's workshop already and cannot recommend this highly enough as something a little different to the type of tying I had been doing beforehand.

Andy Wood

Chairman's Chat

Dare I say it, another interesting one. This is the fish exit (water intake) to a fish pass in a combined intake with a new hydro power site. As you see, this is all very sensible - a gate (penstock) to control the flow of the water into the fish pass and a means of draining the pass for maintenance and a shield to prevent debris from entering the fish pass and catching on the vanes.

Both are sensible and practicable additions to the pass/hydro power system to minimise maintenance - yes there is a BUT.

The gate is shown as closed to within 50 mm of the floor of the intake restricting flows to below that at which the pass operates i.e. 100 l/s (0.10 cumecs). So fish cannot swim up the pass because the water is too shallow over the vanes. In addition throttling the flow to the pass (obviously) reduced the outflow from the pass at the fish entrance (downstream) and hence reduces the attraction to the pass.

In addition the gate prevents the downstream



migration of kelts and to a lesser degree smolts. Would it be uncharitable of me to suggest that the hydro power owner/operator is reducing the flow to the fish pass to increase the flow to his turbines and thereby generate more electricity? Incidentally electricity from the turbines to the grid is paid for at twice the rate of power from the grid. You are paying this subsidy.

Yes the baffle does prevent most debris from entering the pass but also prevents fish exiting the pass.

Both these additions to the Approved Drawings have not been given consent and therefore are unlawful.

We have recommended that the gate be locked in the "up" open position immediately and that the only key is held by the Approving Authority or Angling Club. The baffle should to be removed immediately and replaced by a shield at least 1.2 m from the wall.

I have a horrible feeling that I will get involved in legal action over this project but it will not be the first time!

Tony W

BASS ON THE FLY

Most of the Beaches between Hastings and Littlehampton are shingle but during the big spring tides areas of sand are exposed at low water and bass feed close in.

A 7 or 8 wt trout rod, floating line, waders and a few Clouser Minnows are all you need.

Listed below are the dates for 2018 when the tides are right, get a tide table for your area and fish over the bottom of the tide, even when it blows a bit.

April	14 th to 21 st	26 th to 30 th	
May	1 st to 4 th	14 th to 20 th	27 th to 31 st
June	11 th to 19 th		
July	11 th to 18 th	28 th to 31 st	
Aug	9 th to 17 th	26 th to 31 st	
Sept	7 th to 15 th	23 rd to 30 th	
Oct	6 th to 14 th	23 rd to 29 th	

Give it a try,

Tight lines

BH

APRIL 5th SPEAKER STEVE SKUCE

We hope you all got the message that "The Beast from the East" (aided by that erstwhile suffragette Emma) caused us to cancel the last meeting on 1st March, to avoid Steve (and you!) possibly getting stranded.

Steve has graciously adjusted his diary to come to us on 5th April instead and we welcome him to fill us in on the latest from the Grayling front.

Let's hope there is not a hurricane or earthquake threatened this time!!

RETURN OF TROPHIES

Would all holders of trophies please return them by 15th March 2018 on a Thursday evening in order that they can be engraved in time for presentation at the end of season gathering. Initially they can be given to Roy Gurney until a volunteer can be found to take over this task.

SPRING AUCTION THURSDAY 19th APRIL

A reminder that auction entries should be sent to fdgsussex@capel29.plus.com (or, if you don't have e-mail access, to Roy at 29 Capel Avenue, Peacehaven, BN10 8NB). Download entry forms from our website www.sussexflydressers.org.uk or ask Roy (01273 581519) for a hard copy.

Knotweed and other menaces

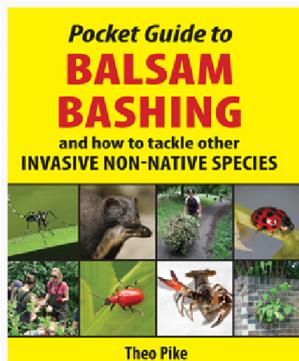
Ever wondered why the 2012 London Olympics cost us taxpayers so much? Well, I don't exactly know but I bet nobody surveying the Hackney site prior to construction gave the Japanese Knotweed a second glance. They should have done. It took £70m to eradicate before the first concrete slab was poured.



Japanese Knotweed

This I know because I have been re-reading *Balsam Bashing and How to tackle other invasive non-native species* by Theo Pike who I bumped into at the Wild Trout Awards last week. Though he likes to deflect, Theo is the undoubted authority on all things invasive.

I know the title of the book is a bit prescriptive but it truly is a good read. I never knew that the Freshwater Shrimp *Gammarus pulex*, a staple diet of chalkstream trout, was entirely absent from Ireland until misguidedly introduced in the 1950's to Northern Ireland. Now spreading south it is devastating the native population. Our good friend Himalayan Balsam (Britain's tallest annual plant) gets a mention as do rabbits that took me up short. My daughter, a keen spotter of crayfish, was horrified to read Theo's advice "It is illegal to release or allow to escape non-native crayfish crush underfoot."



Anyway it is very good bible to the law of unintended consequences; it should be mandatory reading for anyone keen on introducing beavers, wolves and their like.

Simon Cooper

FLY-TYING COMPETITION

A reminder of the patterns for this year:

Novice	Gold-head Gold Ribbed
	Hare's Ear #10
Intermediate	Teeny Nymph #12
Open	Copper John #16
Saltwater	Clouser Minnow #6
Salmon	Ally's Shrimp #8

Three identical samples of each fly to be submitted by **Thursday 15th March 2018** to **Paul Bond** or **Alan Middleton**.

2018 FDG ELINOR BANK COMPETITION

The Guild's 5th Elinor bank competition is being held on **Sunday 22nd April 2018**.

The organisers are glad to say they have been able to keep the entry fee at last year's price of £35. Sussex Branch intends to enter a team, plus individual members if required. If you are interested, contact **Brian Raw** on **01444 456704** or e-mail b.raw@talk21.com to arrange entry forms etc.

UPDATED 2018 FISHING PROGRAMME

Please find this attached as page 4 of this newsletter. Please get your entry forms as soon as possible to the organisers involved..

DON'T FORGET TO LET US HAVE YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS - ANY PHOTOS REPORTS AND STORIES (ESPECIALLY IF INFORMATIVE OR UNUSUAL) - ALL EAGERLY AWAITED BY YOUR EDITOR.

Published by the Sussex Branch of the Flydressers' Guild

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THE FLYDRESSERS' GUILD - SUSSEX BRANCH

FISHING PROGRAMME 2018

Competitions and outings Co-ordinator - Alan Wells

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<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DATE & DAY</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>ORGANISER</u>
<u>March</u>	4 th (Sunday)	Brass Monkeys Outing – Hazel Copse FULLY BOOKED	Bill Smith
<u>April</u>	7 th (Saturday)	Match v. Hastings F F – Powdermill Reservoir	Alan Wells
	14 th (Saturday)	Match v. Sussex S&TA, Duncton Mill	Roy Gurney
	TBA (Sunday)	Frank Darrah Pairs Competition – Bewl Water	David Painter
	22 nd (Sunday)	FDG Elinor Bank Competition	Brian Raw
	29 th (Sunday)	Chairman's Day – Moorhen Trout Fishery	Tony Woolnough
<u>May</u>	6 th (Sunday)	Match v. Eastbourne F F - Arlington Reservoir	Alan Wells
	17 th (Thursday)	Casting Clinic – Stanmer Park - 6.30	
	24 th (Thursday)	Branch evening at Arlington Reservoir	Roy Gurney
<u>June</u>	16 th (Saturday)	Carp on the Fly – Passies Pond, Lancing	Alan Wells
<u>July</u>	15 th (Sunday)	Stillwater Challenge – Chalk Springs	Roy Gurney
	21 st (Saturday)	Carp on the Fly – Falkenvil, Hailsham	Alan Wells
<u>August</u>	4 th (Saturday)	Carp on the Fly – Falkenvil, Hailsham	Alan Wells
	18 th (Saturday)	Carp on the Fly – Falkenvil, Hailsham	Alan Wells
	25 th (Saturday)	John Watt Competition – Grafham Water	Chris Nunn
<u>September</u>	22 nd (Saturday)	Match v. Dorking F F – Springhill	Alan Wells
<u>October</u>	7 th (Sunday)	Charity Pairs Competition – Bewl Water	Ray Love
	14 th (Sunday) TBC	Grayling fishing on the Test - Wherwell	Roy Gurney
	28 th (Sunday)	Branch Trophy Day – Duncton Mill	Peter Winder
<u>December</u>	2 nd (Sunday)	Branch Christmas outing and lunch – Brick Farm	Peter Winder