



## Sussex Branch Newsletter



DECEMBER 2019

### A comprehensive coverage of "Heavenly bodies"

By Egbert Willems

Another inspiring guest speaker, this time from our own Branch no less, Alan Middleton.

Fortunately he lowered his usual and not insubstantial (?) speakers' fee for us so that we were able to host him on the first Thursday in November.

His talk considered some of the various bodies we can tie, starting with the tinsel body. Alan showed us the Wickhams Fancy, where he stressed the need for a good underbody to create a smooth tinsel body. Three layers of tinsel were applied with touching turns, before the brown hackle and metal thread were added. Then the final hackle was applied.



As a self-confessed 'good' fly-tyer, it was clear for all to see that this self-deprecating remark was highly inaccurate. One of the take-home messages was that there are many ways to tie a fly, but you should stick to what works for you.

On with the second segment of the evening: the various ways to apply dubbing. The material of choice was SLF: Straight from the Living Room Floor (or synthetic living fur). The shagpile carpet was hailed as the best source of free dubbing ever. Dubbing can be applied straight to the (un)waxed thread. The thread Alan uses is often black or white, with few exceptions as the dubbing should mask the thread colour, except at the head, which can be changed with a magic marker.

The dubbing loop creates a tighter body, and with the use of a bobbin holder or dubbing

spinner can be spun and applied, allowing for a thicker application of body.



On with further stories on the Test, with Trophy wives unable to catch trophy fish and giving apparent b\*\*wjobs whilst re-affixing reels for incompetent corporate clients!

The most difficult body tonight was the woven body Montana, using white tying silk, hackle tip tail and green and black chenille. Mind boggling moves followed to weave the body in either the shuttle weave or using a crochet hook. Black over the top and green underneath, a fly I have not tried myself yet but will definitely need some practice!



After the coffee break we focused on the May-fly, using the simple methods that allow Alan to tie 1000's of these. As there is no money in making flies in the UK; cheaply, readily available but effective materials are necessary to keep it cost effective (something impossible in my opinion given the amount I have spent recently on tying materials!).

The alternative title for this part:

*"Tying flies with materials you should not use using tools you should not have bought"*

There are three methods to create the detached body for a May-fly pattern, allowing a big body on a small hook:

- 1) the latex body (Copydex textile glue ,£3.63) smear a blob of glue on a smooth plastic

surface like a ruler, apply several pheasant tail fibres and allow to dry. Once dry carefully peel off and roll into a body. (Lacking Copydex and a ruler I tried this using a Tefal baking tray and regular PVA hobby glue giving me satisfactory results. All PVA adhesives could be used for this body, but Copydex will have higher latex content. However, as Alan said, the flies are one take only and will be destroyed following a fight with a trout, so be prepared with plenty of reserve flies when using this pattern). The body is applied to a size 10 short-shank hook. The wing is then created using long fibre hackle from some feathers you cannot use for anything else. These fibres are harvested using the PetitJean magic tool set (£37.20) and tied to the body in a bunch, at roughly 80-90 degree angle to the body. A grizzle hackle is applied and secured with a double whip finish.



- 2) The second method uses a body rolled from sheep's wool, impregnated with the Copydex glue and pheasant tail fibres added. Add more glue and when it is dried will have a nice yellowish colour. The rest of the fly is as described above. This method will create a more resilient and re-usable fly and is Alan's favourite May-fly body. (Having tried this myself I agree that it gives a slightly thicker and more natural looking body, although a bit more fiddly and creating sticky fingers...)



- 3) The third method saw Alan use a dubbing needle set in a vice and slightly waxed, after which the tying thread is applied, making sure it is not too tight. Then the pheasant tail fibres are attached. The body is created from a bunch of deer hair tied to the needle,

folded back and secured with further turns of the thread, making sure to keep firm pressure, but not too tight. The thread is tied off and then hopefully, when rotating the body, it will slide off the needle. This can then be applied to the hook and the rest of the pattern as above.

The May-fly will need a slightly stronger leader (up to 12 pound) otherwise casting this fly will have your leader turn into an Arran sweater in less than 5 minutes!

At least, that is what I understood. Being a Dutchman with a Scottish background I luckily did not need a translator but do apologise in advance for any mistakes in my recollection of this excellent talk.

Thank you Alan!

**EW**

## FLY-TYING COMPETITION

Once again we will be following the Main Guild patterns. However we have given optional hook and material choices for our internal competition for novice and intermediate, but they would be good practice if you wish to enter the main Guild competition too. We would encourage all to have a go at them (or at least one of them) to join Noake, Alan W., Jim H. et al on the roll of honour!

Our Rules are:

- Novice** – for those having no more than one year's experience
  - Intermediate** – for those having no more than three year's experience
  - Open** – for any Branch member
  - Salmon** – for any Branch member
  - Saltwater/Pike** – for any Branch Member
- Members may enter for as many classes as they choose above their lowest qualifying standard.**

The patterns for this year are:

Novice                    **The Red Zebra Devil Nymph**  
**PATTERN - see Autumn 2018 "Flydresser"**  
**Substitute grub hook #12 and grizzle**  
**For Coq de Leon if you don't have it**

Intermediate        **The Adams**  
**PATTERN - see Autumn 2018 "Flydresser"**  
**Substitute hare's ear if you don't**  
**have muskrat**

Open                      **The Rubber-legged Stonefly Nymph**

**PATTERN - see "Fly Tying Bible" – p 146-7**

Salmon                    **The Cascade**

**PATTERN - see Spring 2014 "Flydresser"**

Saltwater/Pike        **Grey Mullet**

**PATTERN - see Summer 2019 "Flydresser"**

Three identical samples of each fly should be submitted by **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020** to **Brian Hendry** or **Alan Middleton** or to Roy Gurney if they are not around.

## Don't Grill Your Carp

**Brian Hendry has a tip for Carp on the Fly :**

Carp on the fly has turned out to be very popular with the Branch and the venues we use rightly specify unhooking mats. Unfortunately when we buy them they don't come with instructions!

Let me explain - I'm sure some of you follow F1 motor racing and are aware of the track temperatures affecting tyre wear and grip and, we are told, that while air temperature is say 24°C the track surface can be above 45°.

The same sun that heats up the track also heats up our mats, so a carp from water at say 15°C is plonked onto a synthetic surface of up to say 45-50°, so it's no wonder they jump about a bit! Therefore a few suggestions we should try to follow if possible:-

keep the surface of the mat wet and face down on grass in the shade until required, re-wet the mat frequently - even if it means stopping fishing for a minute to do it - the carp will thank you - they might even hold still for the photo!

"Tight lines"

**B.H.**

Looks like before you tie the fibre, it is made into a bundle and seal the end with heat. You can make a batch of them.



Their articles range from fly fishing (in this case using marshmallow flies) to fly tying techniques, just like any other fly fishing magazine! The difference is that normally Japanese goes top right to bottom left, so a book/magazine opens from left to right. We also use left to right side horizontal writing as well – this can be seen in the captions next to the photos.



The magazine has over 120 pages. One of the most interesting articles (for me) is about a rural life pursued by a keen fly fisher/hunter who moved, as a family, to a small village in southern Japan. They are trying to farm some birds including geese, turkeys and peacocks, to collect fly tying materials!

**N.A.**

## Japanese Fly Fishing Magazine

**By Noake Akiba**

I wanted to briefly introduce you to a fly fishing magazine I subscribe to...in Japan. This is their 118<sup>th</sup> issue, and they publish irregularly 3-6 issues each year. The cost is about £10 plus my parents sending it over to England!



In their latest issue, they featured 'marshmallow' flies. As I am a novice fly fisher let alone fly tier, I had never heard of such flies. They are dry flies using either Antron like fibre or specially designed marshmallow fibre.

## BEAUTIFUL BLUE

Howard Dodsley (Howie) says "This will certainly not be the biggest, nor is there a category?"

Anyway I caught this 5½ lb Blue trout from one of my club lakes at Edburton. Thought you might like to see this unusual fish too.





**Howie's Blue "Jaws"**

## Where do you keep your fishing tackle ?

Well it not only your fishing tackle you need to secure you also need to secure your fly-tying equipment and supplies.

Some years ago I built myself a chest to put all my fly-tying kit in . It was about 2'6" w x 1'6" h x 2' d, and I spent some time putting brass corners and handles on it so that it looked more like a piece of furniture.

I had it in the garage while I stored all the hooks and tools in it and put all the fur and feathers in it. That was the last I saw of it as overnight the garage was broken into and the kit was taken. It was the only thing taken, not the new drill or the power sander. And whoever it was carried it over a car and did not mark it.

Called the police who sent out an officer to check the locks and door for fingerprints etc. nothing found, was given a crime no. and told to contact my insurers. I was also told it would probably be sold at a boot sale, but I could not seize it if I saw it.

Luckily I had a new for old policy and they paid up, with a recommendation to put an alarm on the door. They did ask for an itemised list of the contents and value which is where it got interesting.

I put all the tools supplies etc on a spread sheet along with full description and costs. Well I suspect you all think you only spend a few pounds on capes, threads, hooks and tools. I did not think it would come to much, but it was 4 figures. On top of this they paid out for time and materials building the chest. So any of you IT experts put all your kit in a spread sheet.

Now why did they pick my garage ? Two weeks before I renewed my fishing licence over the counter in the village Post Office as did I suspect did two other fishermen who had all their carp kit taken from from either garages or sheds in the area. Since then I have always got my licence on line not local.

**Tony Kaatze**

## Chairman's Chat

Sometimes (other people's) simple hydraulic structures go wrong, in this case a fish pass built from precast concrete blocks. It is a principle in river and sea defence work to use precast units wherever possible as this minimises temporary works and hence cost. In this case it turned out to be inappropriate as the hostile environment of the river can be very damaging. One pass we designed in Benburb in Northern Ireland had the temporary works washed away three times, resulting in a massive claim from the contractor, which I successfully resisted.



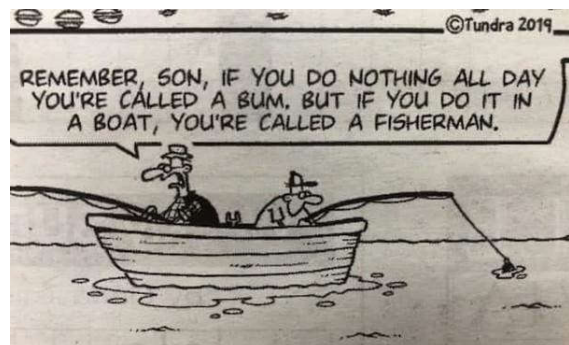
## Terminally Damaged Fish Pass

As you may know, I have decided to retire from work, due mainly the fact that I could no longer cope with the clients, who have started to get me down big time.

To more good news - you will all have an equal opportunity to volunteer to be the next Chairman. I shall be stepping down at the next AGM – please form an orderly queue, everyone will have the same chance to be elected !

Assuming I am replaced, thank you for all your support; the good news is, no more bad jokes or unlikely stories.

**Tony W**



*Perhaps, with the cold weather now with us, it is a good time to repeat John Plowman's informative article:*

## The strange behaviour of water.

Now that the cold weather is with us there are still some hardy souls who keep fishing on days when most sensible people are indoors tying flies for the new season! For those addicted fishermen these notes may help.

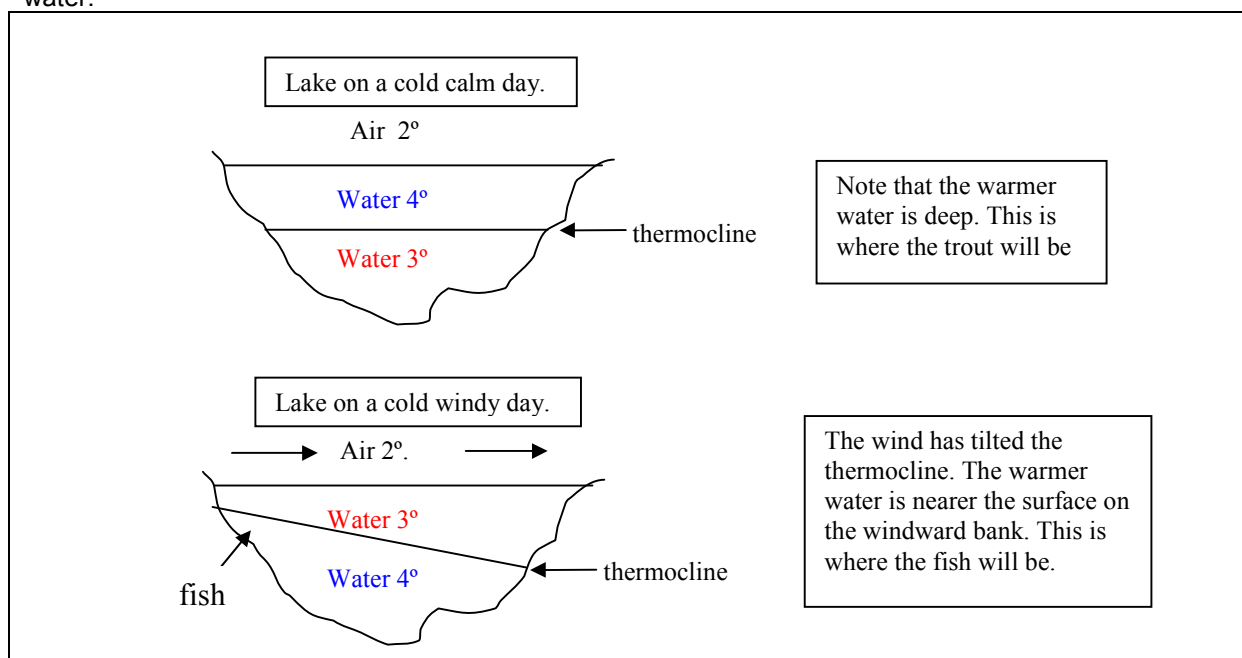
All of us recognise the old style thermometer where a line of coloured liquid moves up and down a narrow tube to indicate temperature. The liquid is usually mercury or dyed alcohol. This begs the question "Why is water not used?" Your answer may be that for temperatures below 0°C the thermometer would freeze and break. This is correct but there is a more fundamental answer than that.

Most substances expand when heated and contract when cooled. This is not always true for water. There is a range of temperature for which **water expands when cooled**. When water cools from 100°C to 4°C it behaves normally i.e. it contracts. **However, below 4°C it expands and continues to expand as it changes to ice.**

We normally expect warm water to rise and cool water to sink but below 4 deg. the opposite happens: **WARM WATER SINKS!**

Without this strange behaviour of water our deep oceans would be mostly ice at the bottom and life as we know it would not have evolved! On a more mundane level knowledge of the behaviour of cold water can help us with our early and late season fishing.

So, when air temperatures are close to freezing then fish with the wind behind you and find the deep water.



## Ray's Ramblings

I don't know if Roy's request for contributions to the Newsletter has helped but it's not difficult to send him an Email of your recent fishing trip, a new venue you've been to, some fly that has brought success or some new item of tackle that you've bought.

As an example of the latter a while ago as a result of a competition in *Trout and Salmon* magazine, I became the owner of a new rod - a Wychwood RS fly rod nine and a half feet for a size seven line. As it has performed so well I've bought other models in the same range and I've been really impressed with them. Not so impressive have been Greys rods though. I bought an eight and a half foot four weight Streamflex some time ago - I've used it twice

and broken it on both occasions, costing £40 each time for a replacement section.

Martyn Grey also broke a Greys rod at John O'Gaunts when we fished there and more recently I broke a nine foot five weight Greys rod that I had won at Moorhen Fishery, whilst playing a good brownie at Chalk Springs on only its second usage. I had a chat with Wendy Rogers at Moorhen on my next visit and she said that if a breakage occurs in the first two or three times of use it's probably a fault in manufacture and that I should contact Greys. This I did and after Greys contacted her I received a replacement section free of charge. I'll have to remember to thank Wendy when I'm next down there.

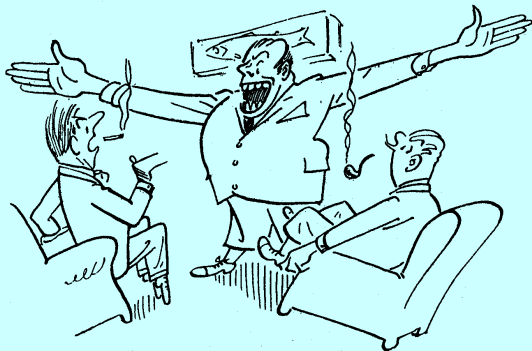
Other rods that I've found good are the Snowbee models - to save money keep an eye on their

discontinued ranges. Their Spectre reels with the cassette spools that enable you to change lines quickly are also excellent.

Last month I told how I started fly fishing and news of the passing of Bob Church in September reminded me that one of the first fly fishing books I purchased was his "Reservoir Trout Fishing" that was published in 1977. Bob was a great angler and a major figure in the rise of stillwater trout fishing and was awarded the MBE in 2015 for his services to angling. I thought I'd got all of his books- one of which I was a contributor to - but found that his last "Memories and Reflections" published in 2015 was not in my collection but a swift search on Paul Morgan's *Anglebooks* website soon sorted that out. It will probably have to wait to be read though because after recently reading books on Grayling I've gone on to "Nymphing the New Way" by Jonathan White which fully explains all branches of the French Leader technique and then "Grayling Flies" by Steve Skuce which not only lists the tying of seventy flies but also gives interesting accounts of how the flies originated.

**Ray Burt**

## ENTRIES FOR THE "BIG FISH TROPHIES"



The categories are:

- Best fish from Sussex water
- Best fish from Sussex reservoir (inci. Bewl)
- Best brown from Sussex water
- Best brown from Sussex reservoir or river.

**Final date of catching is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.**

Trophies will be presented at the End of Season Gathering on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.

Enter via e-mail [fdgsussex@capel29.plus.com](mailto:fdgsussex@capel29.plus.com) or phone 01273 581519 or mail details to:

Roy Gurney, 29 Capel Avenue, Peacehaven, BN10 8NB.

## AGM 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Be there!! Let us have your views and elect your officers for 2020. Your voice must be heard!!**

## Editor's Note

This is a bit of a "bumper" edition as welcome articles have been received from members – let's keep it up and fill January's too!

Sorry it is a bit late – it had been intended as an early reminder of the AGM and nominees for the vacant offices but we're still waiting for the latter!

There is room however for me to say

*MERRY CHRISTMAS*

*and a happy and prosperous*

*NEW YEAR*

to you all

## "EQUIPMENT"

Ideal time to remind everyone of the range of items which David Painter has to offer – polo shirts, sweaters, hooded jackets in all sizes and colours, with the Sussex Branch logo, plus other assorted items of Guild and stock items. Just in time for that Christmas present you want (and may not have been given?).

See David on Thursday evenings or e-mail him at [painterchrl@aol.com](mailto:painterchrl@aol.com)



## Published by the Sussex Branch of the Flydressers' Guild

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