



Sussex Branch Newsletter



JUNE 2020

Noake Akiba

I have been busy making scrubs for health care providers with a group of local volunteers. It's been keeping me pretty busy during lockdown. I've also made some scrub bags - bags in which used scrubs can go after shift and can go into washing machine keeping contacts minimum.



When I'm not sewing I try to tie some flies. These are rather fat sparkle dun... I guess during lockdown we all seem to be putting on some weight and it's no exception to flies I tie!



Bye for now,
Take care,
Stay safe.

Noake

Chairman's Chat

A job from the past; a set of radial water level control gates in Leicestershire with a "fish pass" on the left. The Client's plan was to remove the gates which were built to maintain the water level upstream in the canal for boating. Unfortunately this type of gate is undershot, consequently debris block the gate between the gate and the concrete cill. It follows that regular maintenance is required and at time of flood a jet of water at up to 3.0 metres per second prevents fish migrating upstream. The pass on the left has a jet parallel with the gates when the fish are swimming parallel with the river bank.



Tilting Gates

So what to do? We identified three Options;

1. refurbish the existing pass on the left,
2. build a bypass channel on the left side of the photograph and,
3. remove the gates and cut a Deil pass into the concrete cill and raise the cill crest (with concrete) to ensure water enters the fish exit of the pass.

The Client (bless him) chose the bypass channel on the left which was OK until it was found that this land was owned by landowner in the USA ! Considerable argument followed, with many meetings and correspondence. Finally the Landowner gave his approval and a bypass channel in the form of a pool and weir pass was built.

Another one bites the dust.

Keep locked in and safe – due to my wife’s health I shall be off the road for at least 12 weeks – cabin fever anybody.

Tony W

Ed’s note:

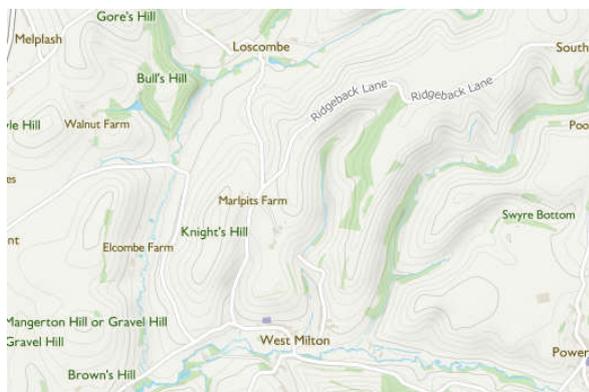
Tony doesn’t mention his own health – he goes in for a minor operation soon (?). We all wish him well.

STARTING OUT

By Alan Wells

In these strange and rather anxious times I sometimes lull myself into the land of nod by trying to remember fish caught in particular competitions or venues. I know some will say that is fairly easy for me as the numbers are quite small but I have found it quite effective in blanking out the more depressing worries of the day as I drift off. This has then extended into trying to remember the fishing of my youth in rural Dorset. So with no current fishing expeditions to write about I thought that it might be interesting if members contributed pieces about how they started off in this engrossing and sometimes fabulously frustrating pastime, as Phillip Ellis did recently.

I was born and brought up in the tiny village of Melplash in West Dorset, about 6 miles north of Bridport, in the mid 60’s. My best friend from primary school days was a dairy farmer’s son, who lived about 2 miles away at Elcombe. At weekends and in the holidays I would run with my brother to the farm and spend all day helping out with my mate’s chores but the bonus here was a little stream which ran the length of the farmland. This was packed full of beautiful little brown trout, along with eels, sticklebacks, minnows, bullheads and lampreys. This was a tributary of the Mangerton River which flows into the Asker and this in turn into the Brit which flows through Bridport and to the sea at West Bay.



Our earliest attempts at fishing for trout were literally with bamboo poles cut from the cottage garden, a bit of 10lb nylon, a size 10 hook and a

fat earthworm. It took us a lot of trying but eventually we managed to catch some 8 inchers and to repeat the oft used phrase – we were hooked. My mate was given an old split cane coarse rod built by his uncle and I managed to save enough pocket money to buy a whippy little blue 5 ft or so fibre glass rod with a wooden handle, which came as a kit with a centre pin reel and some line. So as soon as the morning jobs were done we were off for the day. Occasionally we would use a float but most of the time we managed with free lining, feeling for the takes. Most of the fish were around 8 or 9 inches, with a 10 or 11 inch fish being a specimen, and a 12 incher a “monster”. Whilst small in comparison to the bloated rainbows we fish for today, these were the yellow bellied, red spotted beauties we all have in mind when we think of brown trout.



The River Asker

The game changer for us was discovering spinning. Some of my mate’s cousins had spinning rods with “Intrepid” fixed spool reels and caught far more than us using these methods. Having saved up for the Intrepid we started using Devon Minnows but found that little Meps style spinners were more effective. So now we expanded our expeditions- northwards to Loscombe and then as we all got bikes- to West Milton and Powerstock. Sometimes we had permission to fish, but these were not gentlemen’s fly fishing waters, so few land owners bothered about a few kids ,who in fact returned most of their catch, keeping only the occasional larger fish for the pot or to sell to the local fish and game retailer to fund acquisition of new gear. There was one occasion when the local bailiff on the chalk stream at Hooke threatened to confiscate all of our rods but he

relented when we promised never to return to those heavily stocked waters.

We did attempt "fly fishing" once or twice having read about it in books but we had no idea what a fly line looked like, so attempts to throw our shop bought flies using just monofilament from a fixed spool were pretty much doomed to failure. So we returned to the tried and tested spinning and worms and travelled further afield onto the Brit at Netherbury and Pymore where a few bigger specimens were caught.

Continued on next page

Starting Out - continued

Our only taste of stillwater fishing in fact came about in my home village of Melplash. The local squire, Sir Peter Tiarks, was a mate of Peter Scott's so had had a waterfowl lake dug in the grounds of Melplash Court, where my mum worked as a cleaner. We discovered he had stocked this with brown and rainbow trout and with my connections a few of the local lads were given permission to fish there. The owner probably thought this would be a stick and pin affair but when he caught wind that we were hauling out 3- 5lb trout on worm and spinner he sadly stopped our access. It was fun while it lasted and we also took some huge eels but they and the trout sadly perished in a pollution incident in the feeder stream emanating from the owner's own dairy farm. It was a sad end to see lovely trout being raked in and buried on the banks by the Court's gardeners.

Like many others my fishing stopped for a long period from mid-secondary school until my 30's when I was reintroduced to fishing by a friend via the coarse element and since then to the fly fishing I so adore. I am just hoping, along with many others, that we can soon resume our beloved sport and seek some solace in it's peace and focussed concentration in these troubled times.

AW

Quiz

Answers to last month's quiz:

1. Cutthroat trout
2. Marina Gibson who runs the Northern Fishing School.
3. I have dropped this question from the answers as I got it wrong – it was a **Loch Earn** rainbow that was disqualified as being "a cultivated fish" Apologies to those who spent time researching this one but let's face it most of us have plenty of time on our hands
4. The River Frome at Islington near Dorchester. (I have accepted "an unspecified Wessex river")
5. The Jock Scott.

The winner drawn from the mailbag is:
Des Watson.

This month's quiz:

1. The fly became so popular that Austin became utterly sick of tying it, and one of his customers said that the "Dorsetshire Frome" (river) stank of the fly from Maiden Newton (town) to the sea. **What is the name of this famous fly?**
2. Who is this former world champion?



3. Which fishery was Sam Holland, a pioneer of "big trout" breeding, associated with?
4. Which fly fishing "territory" extends over parts of both Argentina and Chile?
5. On the banks of which river was this "temple" built and by whom?



Answers to wellsywells@btinternet.com

This was written before the partial lifting of the shutdown was announced, but is well worth reading:-

WHY I'M NOT GOING FISHING

Staying at home, thinking of others during coronavirus

By Mark Bowler editor of "Fly fishing & Fly Tying"

It's been difficult for fishermen over the past week to understand why fishing cannot be included in the range of permitted 'exercises' in lockdown outlined by the government originally – walking, jogging and cycling. For me, adding cycling to this exercise list has confused the issue of isolation and exercising outside, and with the public in general (was this down to Boris

- he was responsible for the free Boris Bikes scheme when Lord Mayor of London, after all?). There must be all sorts of individual sports enthusiasts who are perplexed at how cyclists can pedal wherever they like, whilst they are marooned at home. However, the crux of the matter is that coronavirus – at this point in time – transcends any of that petty argument.

So, whenever I've dreamed of wandering down to my local river and fishing for olive and March brown feeders (which has been around about lunchtimes most days this week) I then think of all my friends and family who are in the 'at risk' category – and of all the doctors and nurses who have to tend those who are stricken with coronavirus and putting their own health at risk (over 50 doctors have now died in Italy).

If you think of all those people you know who've had an organ transplant, are having cancer treatment, or are pregnant, or have pre-existing medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes then you'll probably have built quite a long list of acquaintances who are extremely vulnerable to this virus. Add to that anyone that's elderly, and the vulnerable list gets unnervingly long.

At the moment, the frustrated angler's sole responsibility is about flattening the curve of infection by slowing down the rate of spread of the disease through the elimination of cross-contaminating with other people – hence the current lockdown and the twometre distancing rule. We know that if too many people get this virus at the same time and require hospital treatment as this disease reaches its zenith over the next few weeks, then our hospitals will become overcrowded, and then any of those vulnerable people who are hospitalised are going to be placed in far greater danger of not pulling through this peak period of infection, simply because there are insufficient ventilators to cope.

Apart from this, I have no intention of getting this virus in the near future. An ambulance driver, who lives down the road, told us two days ago he had transferred his first coronavirus patient into hospital. "This is serious", he warned. Personally, I have no desire to lie in a crowded hospital corridor, coughing into an oxygen mask clamped to my face. It is not on my "bucket list". With any disease, one of the key reasons for spread of infection is movement of people. So, what the country doesn't want at the moment is the UK's estimated one million anglers all escaping from the house, travelling to their favourite places, buying fuel and supplies for the day, mixing in other communities, and clambering over stiles and gates, sitting on benches and leaning over bridges, and then returning home. Whilst I believe we have every justification for considering we are the perfect isolation sport, then there are many others – canoeists, shooters, wild campers, climbers, hill-

walkers, paragliders, surfers, sailors, windsurfers, cross-country skiers, and many others who all think the same, and believe they should be allowed out, too.

Human nature, being what it is, means if other people see anglers on the water whilst they are out for their once-daily exercise, they automatically believe they have every right to do likewise. Before we know it, the countryside is invaded with outdoors sports enthusiasts, and we've escalated into the same mayhem of infection as we saw last weekend, which resembled an August Bank Holiday, rather than a lockdown in a deadly pandemic.

So that's why I'm staying at home, and I hope all other anglers will do the same to stop the spread. The quicker we can flatten the infection rate, then the sooner we can get back outside again.



Ray's Ramblings

Back in April I wrote about barbless hooks and catch and release and it got me thinking about the differing rules that fisheries have. For example at Duncton Mill they do not allow barbless hooks but I have not seen this at any other fishery. Catch and release is allowed at most of the large reservoirs, Bewl, Grafham and others but at most small waters it is not allowed. Exceptions to this are the canal like stretch at Meon Springs, Frensham, Chigboro and Rib Valley. Again most small waters only allow a single fly but at Chigboro, Rib Valley, Brick Farm and Coltsford Mill droppers are allowed.

Coltsford Mill also allow extra fish to be purchased once the limit has been reached and I believe I'm right in thinking that Moorhen do the same while at Meon Springs you pay for the number of fish you catch. At Chalybeate Springs they do not allow indicators nor Snake flies and Chalk Springs have a size limit on the fly that can be used (one inch) and they also insist that foul hooked fish have to be returned. Browns have to be returned at Chiphall and Powdermill Reservoir and at the latter they do not like the use of boobies although the rule actually says "Ledgering on the bottom with sunk lines with static floating flies (booby flies) is not permitted" I consequently steer clear of using boobies there but have used a Fab washing line style on a floater - I can't see that that can be classed as Ledgering on the bottom! There has in the past been a lot of adverse comments about the use of Boobies and Indicators saying it's not really fly fishing but I feel as long as it's within the rules of the fishery it's up to each individual how he wants to catch his fish and as Bob Preston wrote in a recent letter in Trout and Salmon magazine at this time we should be attracting youngsters into flyfishing and the indicator method is quite suitable as a starter method as it obviates the need for frequent casting and once they have caught their first fish they will most likely go on to try other methods.

Fly fishing has been developing for countless years but there are those that feel that their way of fishing is the only way and do not want progress - but if we hadn't had progress we'd still be using horsehair lines, gut casts and blow lining with live flies.

On a lighter note, amongst the fishing books that I've been reading during the lockdown is "Tall Tales and Wee Stories" by Billy Connolly. In one chapter he recounts some of the things that keep him awake at night one being how does pubic hair know when to stop growing - another is how does the guy who drives the snowplough get to work in the morning- and yet another is what did the guy think he was trying to do when he accidentally discovered how to milk a cow? I've also read two books about dogs. One is "Nigel" by Monty Don about his Golden Retriever that has appeared countless times on his gardening programmes and the other is "Max the Miracle Dog" by Kerry Irving who was involved in a car accident that meant he lost his job, left him with chronic neck and back pain and with severe depression and the Springer Spaniel yard dog that he met when his wife encouraged him to walk to the local shop. A really moving story of how a dog got Kerry's life back on course.

Ray Burt

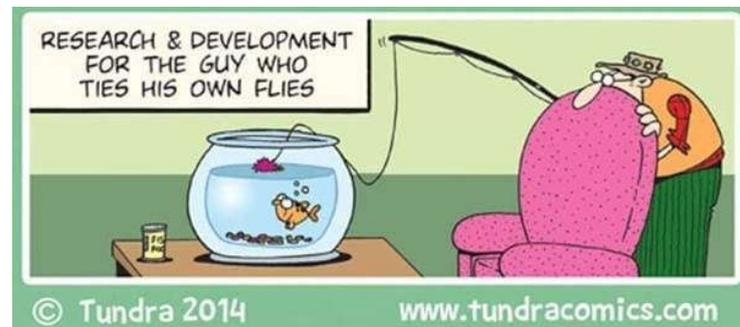
Note from the Editor

First apologies for the late publication of this Newsletter - I am afraid that your editor, having suffered shortness of breath for some time (and ignoring it) had to be dumped in A&E by his wife. Within 15 minutes of checking in I found myself in bed and receiving excellent treatment by the dedicated NHS staff, working 12½ hour shifts. After two days of extensive X-rays and scans, etc, I had an angioplasty and fitted with a stent. Now I can breathe again!

In the event, some of the items are now out of date and I am so pleased everyone is now fishing again, with some great reports on the success rates. I can't wait to get out there myself!

Simon Rickard has kindly offered to produce the July issue so inundate him with articles and photos, please!

RG



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AND NOW FOR SOMETHING NOT ABOUT FISHING!!

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 PerthThe 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!



Stop Press:

Alan Middleton has kindly offered members a virtual fly-tying demonstration and instruction via Zoom (available via free app if you haven't already got it). This will enable you to ask questions if anything is not clear. Would any one wishing to take advantage of this great offer please register their interest via our e-mail fdgsussex@gmail.com and we will contact you again with fuller details of start date, what flies you want demonstrated etc.

Whilst we are hoping to be back in our "home" at Patcham on 3rd September, we have doubts that this will be possible – and in any case the virtual teach-ins could be available sooner if there is sufficient interest (and not necessarily on Thursdays if alternative mutually acceptable days can be agreed).

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